


Fall 2014

# Southie versus Roxbury: Crime, Welfare, and the Racialized Gubernatorial Politics of Massachusetts in the Post-Civil Rights Era

Daniel T. Kirsch

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**SOUTHIE VERSUS ROXBURY:  
CRIME, WELFARE, AND THE RACIALIZED GUBERNATORIAL POLITICS  
OF MASSACHUSETTS IN THE POST-CIVIL RIGHTS ERA**

A Dissertation Presented

by

DANIEL T. KIRSCH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2014

Political Science

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Brian F. Schaffner, Department Chair  
Political Science

*for Morgan*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No simple acknowledgments page can give sufficient weight to the number of people who deserve more than a simple “thank you” in the completion of this project. There are too many, but at least a few who helped me find his passion for this subject deserve at least a mention: Jerry Mileur helped me brainstorm this thesis after recruiting me to UMass, and Ray LaRaja helped shape the project in its early stages. Melinda Tarsi demonstrated how to use statistical software to analyze public opinion surveys, and Barbara Morgan, the fantastic Political Science and Legal Studies librarian at the W.E.B. DuBois Library at the University of Massachusetts, tracked down many of the Massachusetts gubernatorial speeches that could be utilized in this work. Joe Hanley of the Boston Election Department, as well as Mark Melnik and Mingsheng Kang of the Boston Redevelopment Authority were able to retrieve precious documents for me that became fodder for the many tables of data that went into this document. The staff of the Julian P. Kanter Commercial Archive of the University of Oklahoma was helpful in an earlier draft of this project that did not survive the final edit, but I am grateful nonetheless. There is a trove of information there waiting to be mined. Eswaran Selvarajah of the Boston Studies Group provided a striking visual aid to illustrate the central points of the thesis, found in the Appendix.

Lonce Sandy-Bailey, Bob Lacey, Rebecca Root, Patrick Campbell, Paul Rego, Chris Cronin, Paul Adams, Guliz Dinc Belcher, David Claborn, Alec Ewald, Sarah Kennedy Marusek, and Carlos Suarez-Carrasquillo all set examples for me in completing their own doctoral dissertations at UMass that carried me through the difficult times, when it seemed this project would never be completed. Their perseverance and friendship will always be treasured. I would also have been nowhere without the administrative support of Donna Dove, Jennie Southgate, Stephen Marvell, and Barbara Ciesluk.

Tatishe Nteta provided much-needed remote feedback when I began a full-time job a prohibitive distance from Amherst. Before he officially was part of the committee, he gave professional guidance and feedback on the style and substance of my work was exactly what I needed. During the oral defense, his notes were particularly incisive as well as thoughtful, current, and in keeping with the best traditions of scholarship. Ralph Whitehead served as the outside reader, and provided much-needed perspective and political expertise of the non-political science variety.

I am extremely fortunate to be able to count such learned scholars as George Sulzner, Vin Moscardelli, Jeff Sedgwick, Sheldon Goldman, Dan Kryder, Mark Hulliung, John Zumbrennen, Tom Lobe, Lori Marso, Richard Fox, Zoe Oxley, Byron Nichols, Laura Jensen, Steve Teles, Steve Sargent, Robert Hislope, Bernard Yack, George Ross, Robert Art, Jeffrey Abramson, Jytte Klausen, Steven Burg, Peter Woll, Joya Misra, Craig Thomas, and Mike Hannahan among my teachers. All have influenced my thought, scholarship, and teaching style.

My colleagues in graduate school also have played as much or more of a role in developing my values as a serious scholar and in my socialization into the profession. I

sat in hours-long seminars over weeks and years in harsh New England and upstate New York winters with Ehud Eiran, Shefali Misra, Lili Peaslee, Micah Zenko, Martin Steinwand, Sarah Staszak, Maja Catic, Marketa Reichert Phares, Steve Nemeth, Bob O'Meara, Nick Archer, Kristen Abatsis McHenry, Alison Dale-Riddle, and Dave Ciuk. I am proud to call them all classmates and friends.

While working as an adjunct at a few institutions, then a publishing professional, and later as a full member of a faculty, I encountered many co-workers with whom I collaborated and whom I deeply respect and who all encouraged me in my goal toward finishing my dissertation, including Stacy Evans, Wayne Klug, Joe Reilly, Pat Murray, Earl Catagnus, James Bourbeau, Kathleen Anderson, Nan Hood, Maureen Malone, Tom Durwood, Michael Armato, Kevin McMahan, Anthony Dell'Aera, Paula Dohnal, Ben Hall, Emily Hickey, Vanessa Torrado, Kate Coughlin, Scott Harris, Clint Attebery, Andy Marinkovich, Ryan Petti, Jason Ronstadt, and unfortunately too many others to mention.

I'd like to thank some of my favorite authors, Eric Schickler, John Gerring, Mark Waid, Amanda Seligman, Alana Jeydel, and Adolph Reed, Jr., for answering my correspondence about writing and political activism.

My family, including my dad Tim and stepmom Sue, my mom Kathy and stepdad Grant, my brother T.J. and his wife Crissy, my brother Alex, my stepbrothers Ethan and Evan, provided much love and support, and my mother and father both unexpectedly attended the dissertation defense, making it an incredibly special day.

Carol Ruxton, my mother-in-law, also very ably doubled as my copy editor for the final draft. It helps to have a retired English professor in the family, or two: Andrew McLean, my father-in-law and all-around great guy, regaled me the first time we met in person with his stories of finishing his thesis in one year back in the 1960s, and encouraged me to finish so that I could keep my "union card" of a completed doctorate in my wallet. Cory, Reyna, John, Kay and the kids have all welcomed me into their family with open arms and much-needed encouragement over the years.

Dean E. Robinson served as dissertation committee chair, and through several false starts, new drafts, job movements, and spotty schedules, he was always in my corner. He told me he believed in the project, but he also provided extraordinary feedback and went the distance to ensure that the work always kept up with current scholarship and the highest standards of quality. The debt I have to him I hope to pay forward to my own students.

Finally, my wife has built a home of peace and happiness with me, which I never could have expected. She and our cats have accommodated too much of my seclusion.

As with all academic work, any faults as presented reside solely with the author.

*Wayne, Pennsylvania*

*September 2014*

## ABSTRACT

### **SOUTHIE VERSUS ROXBURY: CRIME, WELFARE, AND THE RACIALIZED GUBERNATORIAL POLITICS OF MASSACHUSETTS IN THE POST-CIVIL RIGHTS ERA**

SEPTEMBER 2014

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Racial and ethnic divisions at the national level and their effects on politics take on an abstract character when not discussing specific communities. To obtain a reliable, consistent, and potentially reliable measure of a relationship, demographic information and voting behaviors at the small community, submetropolitan level must be examined in high-turnout, same-office elections over a protracted period, ideally in a polity with a penchant for racial tolerance. The political language of Boston has been mired in racialization since at least the Civil Rights era, particularly since the Boston antisegregation busing crisis of the 1970s. While previous research has focused on the busing crisis itself as a marker of national politicization of local ethnic and racial cleavages, the focus has not been on the consistently central political conversation of Massachusetts to demonstrate both the totality of the rhetorical and electoral focus on racial divisions and the immediate effect of such strategies on the respective racially predominant communities of Boston. Through archival research in combination with demographic and electoral data, it can be observed Massachusetts statewide political candidates, alternately nominated by the two major parties, completely adopted the Reagan strategy of poverty-shaming and race-baiting that had gained success during his three campaigns for the presidency and his successor's successful linkage of that strategy to Massachusetts itself. It was in the post-Reagan era that this strategy found a permanent home with Republicans, who won four consecutive gubernatorial elections by utilizing this strategy, activating the white-working class neighborhoods of Boston while alienating the majority-black neighborhoods. In order to maintain the new base of white working-class voters, each new Republican candidate had to adopt the previous formulaic combination of rhetoric and policy planks, no matter how inappropriate or irrelevant such positions and rhetoric were with each successive election. Gains were consolidated by credit-claiming about the policies enacted during Republican administrations to further disadvantage the so-called underclass, populated by social welfare beneficiaries and drug-affiliated criminals. These policies were political ends in themselves to further the Reaganite political program for the next successive election until the strategy reached the point of diminishing returns when racial diversity reached a critical mass in Boston in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Racial and ethnic divisions at the national level and their effects on politics take on an abstract character when not discussing specific communities. To obtain a reliable, consistent, and potentially reliable measure of a relationship, demographic information and voting behaviors at the small community, submetropolitan level must be examined in high-turnout, same-office elections over a protracted period, ideally in a polity with a penchant for racial tolerance. The political language of Boston has been mired in racialization since at least the Civil Rights era, particularly since the Boston antisegregation busing crisis of the 1970s. While previous research has focused on the busing crisis itself as a marker of national politicization of local ethnic and racial cleavages, the focus has not been on the consistently central political conversation of Massachusetts to demonstrate both the totality of the rhetorical and electoral focus on racial divisions and the immediate effect of such strategies on the respective racially predominant communities of Boston.

Through archival research in combination with demographic and electoral data, it can be observed Massachusetts statewide political candidates, alternately nominated by the two major parties, completely adopted the Reagan strategy of poverty-shaming and race-baiting that had gained success during his three campaigns for the presidency and his successor's successful linkage of that strategy to Massachusetts itself. It was in the post-Reagan era that this strategy found a permanent home with Republicans, who won four consecutive gubernatorial elections by utilizing this strategy, activating the white-working class neighborhoods of Boston while alienating the majority-black

neighborhoods. In order to maintain the new base of white working-class voters, each new Republican candidate had to adopt the previous formulaic combination of rhetoric and policy planks, no matter how inappropriate or irrelevant such positions and rhetoric were with each successive election. Gains were consolidated by credit-claiming about the policies enacted during Republican administrations to further disadvantage the so-called underclass, populated by social welfare beneficiaries and drug-affiliated criminals. These policies were political ends in themselves to further the Reaganite political program for the next successive election until the strategy reached the point of diminishing returns when racial diversity reached a critical mass in Boston in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

By examining demographic and partisan changes in the city of Boston from 1970 to 2010, this study asks if there a link between the inaccurate but heavily implied racial tropes and stereotypes concerning issues like welfare and crime, and the fortunes of Republican candidates for governor in the state of Massachusetts.

Were one to exist, Boston could lay claim to the title as the capital of white American cities. Of the 366 metropolitan areas in the United States, Greater Boston ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in total population, and 5<sup>th</sup> in total non-Hispanic white population, as of the 2010 Census. Of the ten largest metropolitan areas, Greater Boston has by far the highest non-Hispanic white percentage of the population, at 75%. In the 2010 census the percentage of white residents dropped to 47% compared to more than 50% in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Compared to other major cities in the Northeast, Boston has always had a larger percentage of white residents. In 1950, for example, Boston had a higher proportion of white residents than New York, from both the city and regional perspective.

The black population in the city of Boston alone is one of the oldest and most established in the United States. The proportion of total black residents in the city has remained virtually unchanged in the last five decades, at just over twenty percent. The black population in absolute terms (150,000) is greater than the black populations of Newark, New Jersey; Jackson, Mississippi; Montgomery, Alabama; and only slightly less than Cleveland, Ohio; New Orleans, Louisiana; St. Louis, Missouri; or Atlanta, Georgia. The black population in Greater Boston is almost double that number.

In terms of other racial and ethnic groups, Boston has a substantial Asian-American population and a growing Latino one. More than a quarter-million Asian-Americans reside in the region, and the emerging Latino population in the region has surpassed 400,000.

Despite important demographic changes in the past decades, the city of Boston is very segregated. This is clear from the city's black-white dissimilarity index of housing nationally, which scores city of Boston as 75 out of 100, which is considered "very high."<sup>2</sup>

Thus white Bostonians are not likely to share a residential area with Bostonians identified with a racial or ethnic minority. Historically white neighborhoods such as the upscale Beacon Hill, the nearby Back Bay, the Irish American stronghold of South Boston, and the Italian American North End are worlds apart from historically black Roxbury and the majority-black neighborhoods of Dorchester.

According to some scholars, the United States has witnessed something of a "sea change" in racial attitudes in this now-passing generational era.<sup>3</sup> Following the successful election of President Obama in 2008 and, before that Governor Deval Patrick in 2006,

this might appear to be the case. But for at least two decades prior, many white Boston residents showed anything but a willingness to transcend racial attitudes. Indeed, as this study will demonstrate from 1970 to 2010, white allegiance to the Republican Party in greater Boston can be clearly identified and accounts for the Republican Party's success in gubernatorial elections. The key has been a strategy that denies the national party's emphasis on lifestyle-oriented issues such as religion, marriage equality, abortion and contraception, but does rely on what this study will refer to as "racial conservatism."<sup>4</sup> If conservatism refers to a philosophy of limited government, less regulated markets, and the maintenance and promotion of "traditional" values, racial conservatism refers to the policy emphasis on those domains in which minorities are central to the narrative. At least since the 1960s, those policies have included welfare, criminal justice, affirmative action, and, more recently, immigration.

Republicans in Massachusetts have been more successful in winning statewide offices than their enrollment numbers would have predicted. Despite a 5-to-1 Democratic advantage in party enrollment, Republicans won four straight gubernatorial races in the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>5</sup> They did this through a language and policy of racial conservatism. This meant opposition to social welfare, promotion of "tough-on-crime" policies such as the death penalty and mandatory minimum sentencing, as well as "nonracial" positions on tax and revenue reduction. Recently, Republican candidates to state offices have championed policies that are decidedly hostile to immigration, as other Republican parties in New England have done.<sup>6</sup>

Over this era, partisanship among Boston neighborhoods is striking. As this study will show, the racial and ethnic composition of city wards is strongly correlated to the

support for Republican candidates for governor. The so-called “black wards” of Boston consistently rejected statewide (and national) Republican candidates since Governor Sargent in 1974. Indeed Roxbury, the home to the greatest number of black residents in the state, historically and presently, virtually never votes the same way as South Boston which remains predominantly white.<sup>7</sup>

### Methodological Overview

Through construction of an 1) historical political narrative; 2) the utilization of of statistical data on racial/ethnic demographics and electoral outcomes; and 3) content analysis of campaign speeches and political statements, we can observe how each neighborhood responded to racial conservatism in gubernatorial politics. This dissertation therefore offers a city-level view of racial conservatism in gubernatorial elections.

### Data

1. This study drew on an exhaustive body of secondary scholarship on the history of Boston, and related work on urban politics that takes Boston as a central case. This literature establishes the developments that both sets Boston apart from other cities, but also illustrates the way the trends are representative of patterns common to the Northeastern United States. Furthermore, to construct the historical context in racial and ethnic residential patterns, partisanship trends and relevant political and economic developments that establish the context of the study.
2. The data comes mainly from the City of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, United States Census, the Boston Globe, and the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). The BRA uses the same ward boundaries drawn by the Boston City Council in 1925 and that are used by the city and the state to set



election boundaries within the city at the city government, state government, and congressional district level. The data cannot be reliable as they come from official sources at the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in their annual election reports. Through several special requests to the City Clerk's office, precinct-level data from the major elections from 1995-2005 were obtained. The rest were on the website the city maintains.<sup>8</sup> The state's annual report "Massachusetts Election Statistics" was used to confirm the data found at the city level.<sup>9</sup> Although data on race and partisanship exist in the period preceding the 1990s, the reliability and consistency of the available partisan and racial data only fully coincides during the 1980-2010 period.<sup>10</sup> Thanks to a thorough archive of Boston city election returns, not only are citywide returns possible, but so are neighborhood returns.

3. Through an historical analysis of campaign rhetoric and themes as reported by the newspapers and through television advertisements and official speeches (in Chapter 4), the extent of racially focused content in gubernatorial campaigns will be considered. As scholars of racism in American politics have noted, we would expect Republicans to rely on coded, anti-minority appeals after 1968, as hypothesized by both Carmines and Stimson (1989), as well as Mendelberg (2001). Particular focus on crime and welfare after the 1960s is the hallmark of Republican strategy, especially in regards to the white constituent support they wish to reach. Information on campaign rhetoric is from the *Boston Globe*, which is the flagship paper of Boston and New England. It regularly reports on the transforming nature of Boston's neighborhoods, and it also reports regularly, of course, on partisan campaign rhetoric utilized in the state. To the extent that ads themselves have mobilization

consequences or are controversial, they are reported in the *Boston Globe*. The *Globe* endorses candidates, and it delivers daily newspapers more than just to the city of Boston. It has a massive circulation in the greater Boston area, and penetration beyond the borders of Massachusetts. In short, the *Boston Globe's* beat is all of New England. The study also attempted to draw on platform data, but platforms ceased being printed in the *Boston Globe* after 1972, and few candidates or party members read them today. Campaigns are analyzed here in the speeches, writings, public statements, and campaign commercials that.<sup>11</sup>

### Methods: The Research Question and Case Selection

Gerring notes in his explanation of how explanatory variables can exist without a multiplicity of cases, that “what distinguishes the case study method from all other methods is its reliance on covariation demonstrated by a single unit.” Further, the case study method attempts to “illuminate features of a broader set of units.”(343) For this analysis, the within unit variation over time is essential to the analysis. This study looks at patterns of racial and ethnic demographic characteristics of neighborhoods, alongside indicators of party support over time. If racial conservatism shapes the electoral fortunes of Republican candidates for state office in Boston, it becomes the “crucial case” according to Gerring.<sup>12</sup>

### Why Boston?

Some additional points about Boston as a case are worth considering. First, Boston is a city with historically low diversity but with a reputation for liberalism, as evidenced by support for the Democratic Party. Second, it is also a city in which race has been a visible point of conflict in city politics, so much so that politicians like Reagan

and Nixon both alluded to and capitalized upon political developments in that city (read: busing). Third, the Boston area itself is both geographically and culturally almost synonymous with New England. The utility of studying Boston, however, is not its disproportionate numerical influence in the state, but in its role as the “Hub” that actually sets trends and drives change culturally, economically, politically, and racially in the state. Finally, insofar as Boston shares a media market with New Hampshire, home of the first-in-the-nation primary since 1952, Boston voters/readers are something a barometer for appeal and influence of certain types of political rhetoric.

### Why Gubernatorial Contests?

Another methodological choice that was made was to study the gubernatorial elections themselves, without attention to state legislature or statewide legislative races. There is a simple reason for this decision: it is the grandest and most noticeable office in the city of Boston, even exceeding the mayor, and it straddles the line between city and suburb. It occupies the “corner office” on historical Beacon Hill, indicating the center of power in the city. It is thus the most visible and most popular political office in Boston, and the most competitive. The turnout levels, campaign spending, rhetoric, and overall strategy seem to reflect that level of attention. It is also notable that gubernatorial elections have only been midterm elections since 1966. Formerly, they were biennial elections, thus this newer calendar opens up new possibilities for study. Further, it demonstrates the degree to which Massachusetts governors and politicians in general have come to occupy a central place in American politics in the last half-century. Surely the breeding ground for nationally prominent politicians deserves the spotlight in a way that perhaps no other state does. Finally, if the center of Massachusetts culture is indeed

the Hub of Boston, then learning how they win or lose elections in their backyard is vital to understanding the dynamics and parameters of national political debate.

### Conclusion

Boston and Massachusetts politics are reflective and constitutive of national trends. For example, Reagan rhetorically attacked the poor black population of the United States in speeches *first* to Boston-area voters in both 1976 and 1980. Indeed, the foremost example of racialized television advertising, the Willie Horton/tough-on-crime campaign of George Bush in 1988 was directed at the Democratic presidential nominee and Governor of Massachusetts Michael Dukakis, whose Massachusetts Republican opponents had unearthed the story and fed it to the Bush campaign. By the time of the next state election, in 1990, Democrats and Republicans were racing to distance themselves from Dukakis-style “liberal” governance.

The outline for the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature related to historical and urban studies of race and politics in the United States, especially drawing from the subfields of American Political Development, survey research on implicit racial bias in U.S. elections, and urban politics and history.

Chapter 3 discusses the characteristics, racial/ethnic and political, of neighborhoods of Boston themselves. It also explores the trend of white migration to the suburbs and how the Republican party has been able to capitalize on that trend.

Chapter 4 examines the trends presented in chapter 3 in relation to gubernatorial contests in the state. The racial conservatism evident in Republican candidates’ speeches,

which resonate with suburban white constituents of the Greater Boston region, *and* to a consistent and discernible subset of majority white neighborhoods in the city.

In Chapter 5, the study reiterates the main findings and considers the implications with respect to new developments in Boston city politics, state politics, and the broader national landscape of race and politics in the United States.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Census data collected by *US2010: Discover America in a New Century*, a project of Brown University and the Russell Sage Foundation, found at <http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.censuscope.org/us/rank\\_dissimilarity\\_white\\_black.html](http://www.censuscope.org/us/rank_dissimilarity_white_black.html). For a visual representation of this phenomenon, see: The definition used by CensusScope, a nonprofit that utilizes census data to generate reports, defines it this way: “The dissimilarity index measures the relative separation or integration of groups across all neighborhoods of a city or metropolitan area. If a city's white-black dissimilarity index were 65, that would mean that 65% of white people would need to move to another neighborhood to make whites and blacks evenly distributed across all neighborhoods.

([http://www.censuscope.org/us/s40/p75000/chart\\_dissimilarity.html](http://www.censuscope.org/us/s40/p75000/chart_dissimilarity.html))

<http://www.businessinsider.com/most-segregated-cities-census-maps-2013-4?op=1>.

<sup>3</sup> Bryant II, Wilbur. "Racist Propensities of Whites in Black/White Relationships versus Racist Propensities of Whites in Endogamous Relationships" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta Hilton Hotel, Atlanta, GA, Aug 16, 2003*, [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p106033\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p106033_index.html).

<sup>3</sup>For a public intellectual take on what this phenomenon means politically, see “A Job Too Big for One Man” by Orlando Patterson, April 4, 2009, *New York Times*,

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/04/opinion/04patterson.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/04/opinion/04patterson.html?_r=0).

<sup>3</sup>For a statistical look at this phenomenon, one brief study of the Millennial generation is a helpful look: “6 new findings about Millennials” by Bruce Drake, March 7, 2014

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/03/07/6-new-findings-about-millennials/>

<sup>4</sup> Prominent actors such as William F. Weld have indeed publicly denounced the national party's platform in those areas, while still maintaining a viable state party that shares the same name.

<sup>5</sup>Weld and Scott Brown, Republicans in the state saw no statewide victories in the 1980s for either the U.S. Senate or the corner office, or in any other constitutional office.

<sup>6</sup> See 2006 Massachusetts Republican Party Platform.

<sup>7</sup> The one exception being 1990, in which the Democratic candidate had explicitly defamed the Roxbury neighborhood as “a bunch of drug addicts.”

<sup>8</sup> “Election Results” at City of Boston.gov, <http://www.cityofboston.gov/elections/results/>, accessed June 12, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> *Massachusetts Election Results* at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

<sup>10</sup>Several reports from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, with special thanks to Minsheng Kang and Mark Melnik from the BRA.

<sup>11</sup>Most were found on videos of historical candidate campaign statements and debates, and other public speeches on C-Span.org.

<sup>12</sup> See Gerring, John, *Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

## CHAPTER 2

### RACE, CITIES, AND AMERICAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The following review of scholarly literature concerning the relationship between conservatism and race (racism) draws from these research streams: 1) race and American political development; 2) survey and experimental research on implicit appeals to anti-black and anti-Latino sentiment; 3) studies that follow evolution of white perceptions about welfare and crime in the United States; and 3) urban politics.

#### Race and American Political Development

Race and American Political development represents a subset of a broader scholarship on “American Political Development” although researchers in the former would suggest that there is no meaningful way to separate the two. The subfield of American political development (APD) has features that separate it from the dominant, behavior approach in political science. Scholars working within this tradition often use historical and comparative methodologies to examine development and change in American politics. Most of the work in APD relies on detailed historical analysis and draws upon primary and secondary sources in order to explain political and policy outcomes. The study of the “the state” itself and the democratic (or not) nature of formal institutions (such as political parties) is central to the APD mission of historical scholarship for deeper and more comprehensive understanding of politics. APD scholars thus pay careful attention to the state and political institutions.

The race and APD scholarship considers the ways racial ideologies interact with state formation and institutional development to produce political and policy outcomes. As with the broader APD field, ideas and institutions are carefully considered. The

seminal work is Rogers Smith's *Civic Ideals*.<sup>1</sup> In an exhaustive examination of federal case material, Smith shows that three traditions interact to shape beliefs about citizenship in the United States: liberalism, republicanism, and ascriptive Americanism.

Much of Smith's work has also helped define the field of race in American Political Development, and the larger field of APD itself. Rogers Smith and Desmond King, in a recent book that followed two earlier articles, have created the framework of "racial alliances" to explain the terrain of race and American politics. The essence of their thesis concerns "alliances" which are "coalitions of state institutions and other political actors and organizations that seek to secure and exercise governing power in demographically, economically, and ideologically structured contexts that define the range of opportunities open to political actors."<sup>2</sup> Thus, racial alliances themselves are central to American politics, and institutional structures have been built on the foundation of racial orders attempting to perpetuate their own power.

Through examples that look at the presidential politics of Andrew Jackson, Andrew Johnson, and Harry Truman, King and Smith deftly argue that American political leaders tend to enlist black and white racial differences to their advantages, so long as the championing of a racially charged cause can assist in furthering existing political goals. Those goals may coincide with racialized values of the American electorate. For example, most white Americans in the pre-World War II period were not bothered by the racial segregation of public and private facilities, which, in turn, encouraged the formation of segregated labor unions and activist organizations such as the National Negro Congress and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. This mobilization of northern black activists and workers was instrumental in the Civil Rights

movement despite the fact that members of these organizations were predominantly from the northern cities that lay outside the supposedly peculiar American South.

Where King and Smith's work is perhaps most helpful is through the prism of negotiating the increasingly variegated demands between racial alliances. What was once a self-perpetuating, path-dependent set of institutions created to encourage new purchase into an aging assembly of politically powerful elite actors, is now more than ever subject to crosscurrents of age, class, and gender which themselves attempt to form alliances of political difference that privilege particular identities.

Klinkner and Smith's *The Unsteady March* (1999) builds the case that significant progress toward racial equality can occur only under certain, historically infrequent, conditions.<sup>3</sup> In a breathtaking sweep of the historical record, these authors identify the "political opportunity structure" in three factors that together equal the formula for racial change (though not necessarily occurring simultaneously or in concert): 1) military mobilization necessitating black enlistment, 2) patriotic themes of inclusion and democracy when battling a foreign power that seems apparently to lack such values, 3) and protest movements that force political leaders to respond to calls for remembering those values.<sup>4</sup> They also find that periods of progress are always followed by retrenchment.

In keeping with the historical tradition of American Political Development, Klinkner and Smith draw on the past to offer insight to the present. They identify "eleven significant similarities in the policy and political debates of the late nineteenth century and the current era."<sup>5</sup> These similarities include rhetoric focusing on state and local authority, the "color-blind" argument in political discourse, laissez-faire liberalism's



popularity, and a tendency toward emphasizing and promoting the imagery of black criminality by the dominant white racial alliance.

Ira Katznelson, in his titular “coda” to *The City in American Political Development*, celebrates the return to attention to urban studies within the discipline of political science and discusses the importance of cities to American political development.<sup>6</sup> To learn the “structure and behavior in American political history” as Katznelson puts it, such attention is essential. Katznelson offers a similar view of “orders” (later “alliances”) elaborated by Smith and King. The goal for understanding city politics historically is to “examine the quest by machine politicians and reformers alike to bias political participation in order to secure power.” He paints with a fairly broad brush that calls for looking at statewide actors who campaign explicitly *against* or appeal to certain populations within an urban regime.

Katznelson’s primary exhortation is one of further research into the hows and whys of social interaction among peoples of different groups, often divided by race, class, or religion. He also urges careful examination of how political institutions treat minority groups within urban political regimes. Katznelson believes that cities are fertile ground in the American Political Development tradition of attempting to reconcile constitutional democracies founded upon a social contract of toleration, with deep and increasing polarization because of their ever-present tendency toward heterogeneity. For Katznelson city politics are not only about city government actors or candidates. They are inclusive of, and even drivers of, regional and state, and sometimes national politics.

Under the broad umbrella of American Political Development scholarship, a relatively recent work by Robert Smith is relevant to the present study. In *Racism and*

*Conservatism* (2010) Smith argues that what is usually called “systemic racism” is virtually synonymous with conservatism in America.<sup>7</sup> Smith traces the “Conservative Movement” in America to rise of Ronald Reagan and his presidency. Conservatism in America, he posits, is unique compared to others around the world because it cannot be linked to an historical order that does not rest on *racial hierarchy*. American conservatism has its roots in the evolution of slavery and capitalism.

His thesis is compelling. Smith points out that Reagan began his 1980 campaign for president in Philadelphia, Mississippi, a small town with no distinguishing features other than it was the site where three young civil rights workers were murdered by Ku Klux Klan members in cooperation with local authorities in 1963. Reagan invoked “states’ rights,” which Smith rightly identifies as code for racial segregation, in his speech several times. Here Reagan was not defending federal intervention for civil rights, but opposing it.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the clearest expression of Smith’s thesis is the following assertion:

Although Reagan perhaps protested too much and too often, it is the argument of this chapter that his antiblack policies derive not from his racial views but from his ideology. That is, it was Reagan’s doctrinaire, principled Lockean conservatism that resulted in racist policies and practices. This conservatism required him to oppose any use of government power to secure civil rights for black people because to do so violated core conservative principles of limited government, individual liberty, and states’ rights.<sup>9</sup>

Smith further articulates the striking correlation between the rise of the conservative movement to white reaction to and rejection of policy benefits derived from civil rights laws and War on Poverty programs. The figure of 1964 Republican presidential nominee Barry Goldwater figures significantly into his argument, as well, in that it was the first clear example of the Republican party capitalizing on racial

resentment in an open, combative manner that would soon evolved to a central place in American political conversation. As Robert Smith explains:

There is a near political science consensus on the significance of the 1964 election in reshaping the partisan relationship between racism and conservatism in the United States. Carmines and Stimson, who pioneered in studying this race based partisan shift, saw that during the 1950s and early 1960s, the key issue that distinguished liberals from conservatives centered on the New Deal. During this period, such attitudes had no correlation with issues of race. Beginning with the 1964 election, however, this pattern began to change. Race increasingly became the key issue that divided left and right sides of the political spectrum and organized peoples' attitudes on a variety of other issues--including what by then were closely associated questions of social welfare policy. Race was now the central issue cleavage in partisan politics.<sup>10</sup>

According to Smith, Reagan felt compelled to both make significant cuts in social programs that disproportionately benefitted black Americans and also roll back most enforcement of civil rights legislation to the extent he was able to exercise discretion in his role as the chief executive, and his support for these actions among his electoral base of support was apparent in his resounding victories in 1980, 1984, and the election of his successor in 1988.

Leaders of the Democratic party soon appreciated the ways racial resentment could be used for the purpose of winning elections. In 1984 and 1992, respectively, leaders of the party had commissioned studies that found working-class white voters were being lured to the Republican side simply through appeals to racial resentment and stereotype, the so-called "Reagan Democrats." Politicians like Bill Clinton eventually employed the same strategy. In his campaign for the White House, Clinton condemned the rapper-activist "Sister Souljah" for comments in which she seemingly agreed that black rioters in Los Angeles should kill police officers after the Rodney King verdict. His condemnation was widely seen as a symbolic gesture to distance himself from the

association of the Democratic party to African Americans. In that year, Clinton also left the campaign trail to oversee the execution of a mentally disabled black man, Ricky Ray Rector. With these and other examples, Smith demonstrates that at the national level, race had already been a prominent and perhaps decisive factor in American national politics decades before the election of the nation's first black president.

Feagin too makes the case that the Republican party relies on whiteness to get elected and thus governs primarily for whites. Whiteness and white supremacy are collective political identities which see as inevitable, or at least currently desirable, the predominance of white political power in the United States. Through his "White Racial Frame" Feagin makes a historical case that the white view of American development has been the dominant view, and that it has required the demeaning of African-Americans and Native Americans. This has been true, he demonstrates, from the European and British colonial era through the Founding of the Republic, and into the modern political era. His work is even more historically thoroughgoing than Smith's, and he takes the reader through into the progression of each era of the white racial "undemocratic" frame into the modern day. Feagin too mentions the Goldwater-inspired "Southern Strategy" as Robert Smith does, but makes clear that these patterns were discernible before the 1960s. For example, in "Urban Black Revolts and White Reactions," he provides evidence that white conceptions of black behavior as "criminal" were clear also in the 1930s and 1940s with talk of a "negro problem."

By the time of the Reagan administration itself, Feagin explores how the focus of U.S. policy shifted from a War on Poverty to the War on Drugs. Tighter and more punitive law enforcement has created "black criminality": "Having a record, they often

lose the right to vote, serve on juries, get decent-paying jobs, rent public housing, and secure normal loans of various kinds. As a result of these state-imposed difficulties, they frequently end up back in prison.”<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the 1990s era of Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole and throughout the George W. Bush Administration, Feagin builds the case that the Republican Party moved so forcefully to capture white votes that it compelled the Democratic Party to employ similar strategies. What is unique about Feagin’s treatment, however, is his characterization of the white racial frame as an *authoritarian* frame. He describes his definition of authoritarianism thus, in describing the work of 1940s social scientist T.W. Adorno:

For decades now, social scientists have found many close ties between the authoritarian orientations of whites and their negative and hostile attitudes toward specific racial and ethnic outgroups...These researchers found that those with more authoritarian socio-political views differed from those with less authoritarian views in their greater willingness to submit to authority, their tendency to be fearful of and stereotype others, and their great concern for social ranking and the status quo.<sup>12</sup>

This is not necessarily a unique formulation in itself, but very interesting in its application to racial division in the United States. As Feagin explains “Social science research indicates that the level of societal threat can make a difference in the activation of strong authoritarian views,” and playing to fears to the social order—crime in the 1980s and terrorism after 2001—has been key to Republican success.<sup>13</sup>

### Symbolic or Implicit Racism

For several decades, social scientists in the behavioral tradition have studied and debated the change in racial attitudes since the 1960s, and how these changes related to political developments over time.<sup>14</sup> Numerous studies have show that symbolic racism is

associated with whites' racial policy preferences. Symbolic racism refers to the following beliefs:

- (1) blacks no longer face much prejudice or discrimination;
- (2) blacks' failure to progress results from their unwillingness to work hard enough;
- (3) blacks are demanding too much too fast; and
- (4) blacks have gotten more than they deserve.<sup>15</sup>

Sears & Henry (2002) point out that the theory of symbolic racism can predict whites' policy preferences, outweighing other variables like ideology, party identification, and even, such things as beliefs in blacks' genetic inferiority. The concept of symbolic racism is not only unique and distinguishable from traditional and more general conservatism, but is also a "blend of anti-black affect and individualistic values."<sup>16</sup>

In her work on "racial priming" Tali D. Mendelberg takes insights from the political science and sociological exploration of implicit bias.<sup>17</sup> The essential thrust of her research is explicated thus in her 2009 work:

Parties often, but not always, construct implicit appeals to mobilize racial stereotypes, fears, or resentments. But intent is a cause, not a characteristic, of racial appeals. We cannot rely on intent alone to distinguish between implicit and nonracial appeals. I define an implicitly racial appeal as one that contains a recognizable, if subtle, racial reference. Implicit references can be visual or verbal. The modern norm of equality was established at the same time that television came into widespread use, so the party of the right has often made use of visual cues to construct its implicit racial appeals. Television allows a party to separate the visual and verbal content of its communication. It can introduce racially loaded images but avoid using racial words that would alert viewers to the racial meaning of the message.<sup>18</sup>

Mendelberg pioneered the serious analytical study of racial appeals through a mixed-method approach of experiments, survey research, and historiography. Her experiments consisted of showing a group a news segment featuring an African American

convicted felon and rapist, while another group saw a story about pollution in the Boston Harbor. As Mendleberg explains:

I measured participants' level of racial resentment in advance of the experiment, then exposed them to their randomly assigned message, and then asked them a series of questions about their political opinions and predisposition . . . The results show that the implicit racial message primed racial resentment. Resentful people exposed to the implicit message expressed more racially conservative opinions than their counterparts in the control condition (their opinions on nonracial matters remained similar to those of the control group). Unresentful people showed no movement, except in a slightly more racially liberal direction.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, Mendelberg's results (which she references again in 2008 and 2009) show that "priming" occurs when implicitly racial campaign themes are emphasized and that this priming results in a direct political consequence of being more likely to support candidates that take more racially conservative public policy positions. Such evidence has extraordinarily important implications.

Mendelberg reviewed political history for evidence of the use of implicit, coded appeals in U.S. elections and finds them in abundance. She argues that the "Race Card" has been played in political campaigns that have utilized racial "code words" to activate racial stereotypes and prejudices among whites.<sup>20</sup> Those code words, as previously discussed, evoke negative views about blacks in those policy domains in which whites believe blacks are a problem (e.g. criminal justice, welfare, etc.).

One point that Mendelberg asserts relevant to this study in her book was that that gubernatorial elections are an appropriate barometer of the national mood, citing the success of several governors in 1994 and 1998 elections who championed their opposition to "crime" and "welfare."<sup>21</sup> She neglects to point out that these governors are largely elected during "midterm" elections halfway through and not coincident with election to the White House, and if anything those governors tend to reflect the desires of

a smaller, older, whiter, and ultimately more conservative electorate that votes during the midterms. Indeed, as will be seen in chapter 4, a former prosecutor in Reagan's War on Crime, Bill Weld, swept every county in Massachusetts to win back the governor's chair in his 1994 reelection campaign, citing his success in fighting crime and welfare, and giving very little time to much else.

Social welfare has become a routine topic of conversation during these midterm campaigns, as people are less focused on international and even national issues of concern to the federal government, despite the fact that Congress is also re-elected during these elections. Domestic concerns rule the day, and "domestic" might as well be synonymous with the term "social welfare" which encompasses the heavily racialized welfare state, the health care regime, education, and even the judicial system.

Mendelberg has inspired her own followers, notably Charlton McIlwain and Stephen Caliendo, who have published a recent book<sup>22</sup> that primarily examines the appeal to racial priming that occurs when a white candidate (usually a Republican) faces a candidate of a minority race (usually a Democrat). Their contention is simply that there is a relatively small universe of terms and images that television and radio commercials can use to reinforce racial stereotypes that are both effective and still socially acceptable. They also look for this evidence where one would expect to find it, in, for example, the cases outlined above.

McIlwain and Caliendo stay away from identifying racial appeals from candidates who target minority populations rather than their opponents. Although this approach excludes research into the history of racial appeals, this contribution is valuable in terms of identifying whether a candidate's racial identity can be exploited during a major



political campaign, but that the approach must be coded and implicit, rather than explicit. This led the research team to examine several statewide campaigns, and of course into the 2008 presidential campaign of John McCain against Barack Obama.

The words McIlwain & Caliendo find used by most of white Republican candidates referring to themselves were “trustworthy” and “hardworking” while the references they made to the alternative candidate, a black Democrat, were “untrustworthy” “taking advantage” “liberal” and often “criminal.” All of these words, the authors assert, are racial code words used to reinforce stereotypes about black candidates that would be enough motivation to force voters to choose the white Republican who is “trustworthy” and “hardworking.”<sup>23</sup>

Again, this work is tremendously valuable, but more work ought to be done of the sort Mendelberg has done, simply because there have been many more black in political ads than there have been black candidates, and much more mention of issues such as crime and welfare, as well.

### Crime, Welfare, and Racial Appeals in American Politics

A significant body of work shows how racist stereotypes have produced disparities in poverty and welfare provision, and in rates of arrest and incarceration. These statistics—the disproportionate representation of blacks and other minorities on welfare and in prison—served to reproduce the stereotypes behind these patterns.

In the area of criminal justice, the late Sociologist and Criminologist Coramae Richey Mann’s classic 1993 work, *Unequal Justice*, first demonstrated vast racial inequalities at virtually every stage of the criminal justice system. Mann cites both statistical and anecdotal data that demonstrates persuasive evidence of racial bias against

racial minorities at every stage of the criminal justice process.<sup>24</sup> The chief accusations of racism against prosecutors focus on the decision to use peremptory jury challenges solely on the basis of race to exclude jurors from juries. The statistics are compelling. Perhaps the more disturbing statistics are from the area of death sentences. A majority, 54.6 percent of executions from 1930 to 1984, were for black defendants. In virtually every study Mann cites, the presence racial discrimination in sentencing defendants to death should be an obvious conclusion of researchers. Further, 90% of those executions for rape and murder offenses were African-Americans during this time period.

Mann showed that at every stage of the criminal justice system African-Americans receive harsher treatment, from arrest to bail to plea bargaining (yet it is implied persuasively that African-Americans are more likely to try to plead guilty in hopes of a lesser sentence, whereas this lesser sentence almost never occurs) to jury selection, to indictment, to length of sentencing, to severity of sentencing, up to and including the death penalty.<sup>25</sup>

While *Unequal Justice* pioneered the combination of qualitative and quantitative research into criminology, political science has been making severe inroads into the criminal justice in the form of the new concept of the “carceral state” meaning the network of institutions in the United States that increase the authority of the judicial/law enforcement/prison system at the expense of accepted definitions of liberal democracy. Much of this work implicitly and explicitly explore the racial inequality inherent in the growth of the carceral state. Vesla Weaver and Amy Lerman’s work has contributed significantly to the above literature. They have found that the criminal justice system today in the United States fundamentally has several characteristics. For instance, it is

racialized to the point of an inclination generally among police to profile black men and women in their routine police work<sup>26</sup>; create a system wherein black citizens have a fundamental distrust of their government as a result primarily of a history of negative contact with the criminal justice system;<sup>27</sup> and it also disenfranchises a gigantic swath of the population, as it perpetuates racial differences, embedding them as class differences within American democracy with a series of steps in the process of incarceration that forbid re-entry into functioning citizenship.<sup>28</sup> By conducting focus groups and field interviews with hundreds of previously incarcerated citizens, Lerman and Weaver have given voice to the unenfranchised in American democracy, exposing a massive rift between the concept and the execution of that ideal.

Marie Gottschalk has also contributed original research to this burgeoning field with exhaustive research, putting the current administration of the carceral state within the context of American Political Development explicitly:

The government now exercises vast new controls over millions of people, resulting in a remarkable change in the distribution of authority since the 1970s in favor of law enforcement and corrections at the local, state, and federal levels. Today the United States is the world's warden, incarcerating a higher proportion of its people than any other country. The United States has built a carceral state that is unprecedented among industrialized countries and in U.S. history. The emergence and consolidation of the U.S. carceral state is a major milestone in American political development that arguably rivals in significance the expansion and contraction of the welfare state in the postwar period[...]. The carceral state has condemned millions of people in the United States to "civil death," denied core civil liberties and social benefits because of a criminal conviction. An estimated 6 million people have been disenfranchised either temporarily or permanently because of criminal conviction. This is about 2.5 percent of the total U.S. voting-age population, or 1 in 40 adults (Uggen, Shannon, and Manza 2012, 1). Millions of Americans have been denied federal benefits such as public housing, student loans, and food stamps due to their criminal records. Thanks to a prior run-in with the law, many people are ineligible to receive state licenses for a range of occupations--from hairdressing to palm reading to nursing.<sup>29</sup>

Gottschalk's real service to the discipline is not only a perspective on how wildly out of place the current system is within American political development, but also how out of step with the rest of the world the United States system is.

Lawrence Bobo and Viktor Thompson's "Unfair by Design: The War on Drugs, Race, and the Legitimacy of the Criminal Justice System," find that African Americans and white Americans have significantly different views about the criminal justice system.<sup>30</sup> Through an exploration of existing literature, public opinion, new surveys, and original focus groups, Bobo and Thompson reach this conclusion: "whether focused on the general character of the criminal justice system or specific sectors of it—such as judges and the courts, prosecutors, or police—African Americans by and large see a system suffused with racial bias, and most white Americans do not."<sup>31</sup>

Black and white Americans have different perceptions of the criminal justice systems, which are reinforced by entirely *dissimilar probability* of contact with the criminal justice system. Incarceration rates, as will be noted in chapter 4, are entirely disproportionate toward black offenders. The War on Drugs particularly has had a negative effect on the black population in the United States, with the population of incarcerated individuals skyrocketing from 300,000 to well over 1 million in just twenty years, from 1980 to 2000, the majority of new inmates being African-American, despite constituting only 12 percent of the overall population.<sup>32</sup>

Bobo and Thompson's work takes a hard look at different perceptions, different treatment, different sentencing, and different political implications of what they call an obviously racialized system of incarceration in the United States. Their focus-group evidence is especially convincing, as it elaborates the narrative that ordinary Americans

have about the racialized nature of the criminal justice system. It also echoes Smith and Klinkner's work in that it calls attention to the inequality in treatment and also in the perception by whites of a "color-blind" criminal justice system.

Another stream of work looks at the relationship between racial inequality and social welfare in the United States. Jil Quadagno's important *The Color of Welfare* (1994) traces the origins of social welfare policy from the 1930s and into the post-civil rights period.<sup>33</sup> Quadagno shows how and why blacks and other minorities were excluded from key provisions of New Deal policy—like workers' rights and unemployment insurance, and access to Federal Housing Assistance loans. Not surprisingly, through the century, African Americans trailed whites in socioeconomic status; and, in the 1960s when enrolment into Aid With Families With Depenent Children expanded, blacks were disproportionately represented.<sup>34</sup>

Robert C. Lieberman, in his seminal book, *Shifting the Color Line* (1998) highlights the vast evidence pointing to racial bias within the administration of social welfare systems in the United States, as well as their association of welfare in the popular mind with black and brown people.<sup>35</sup> Like Quadagno, Lieberman traces the history of the welfare state in the United States since its purposeful founding in 1935 with the Social Securty Act. He divides his work into three parts, covering, respectively, AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, also known commonly as "welfare"), UI (unemployment insurance), and OASDI (Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance, commonly known as "social security").

Lieberman carefully recounts the history in which politicians became obsessed with alleged fraud and abuse by recipients of welfare. This concern was always

exaggerated and reflective of deep bias and prejudice against those on assistance. Starting in the 1960s,

Politicians and administrators, especially at the state and local levels, developed an obsession with rooting out “fraud” and “abuse” from ADC around this time....When Americans looked up in the 1960s, they discovered.....that poverty was still there. But poverty had a very different face from the one it showed during the Depression, an increasingly black face...Particularly in the great industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest, poverty and growing public assistance rolls were increasingly concentrated among African-Americans who appeared to be benefitting unworthily from the largesse of politicians who could manipulate benefits for political gains.<sup>36</sup>

Lieberman explains that “[t]his newly racialized view of American poverty . . . was far from accurate, but the institutional structure of ADC left it exposed to political attacks that raised the stock of such views.” And importantly that

Although the “backlash” against social welfare and civil rights policies is usually attributed to the splintering of the civil rights movement, the explosion of racial hostility into violence, and the foundering of the Great Society in the middle of the decade, race-laden hostility to ADC was already building in the late 1950s and early 1960s--a “frontlash” as it were--as an outgrowth of ADC’s structural weakness.<sup>37</sup>

Lieberman devotes significant attention to the welfare reform—“The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act”—bill signed by Democratic President Bill Clinton after passage by the Republican Congress. It is widely seen as a compromise bill at the time, but it was punitive: it ended the federal guarantee of subsidy to poor families (by imposing a 5-year maximum) and it established work requirements without guarantees of jobs or job training, child care and other support services. It also ended automatic enrollment into Food Stamps and Medicaid.

Lieberman asserts without hesitation, “Popular rhetoric and symbolism surrounding welfare are overwhelmingly negative, and they rely heavily on racial imagery that is sometimes quite explicit.”<sup>38</sup> He is clearly frustrated by the inability of the

political system that distorts the mission of the welfare system, which is “government assistance” to those unable to help themselves.<sup>39</sup> Instead, “the popular image of welfare is of a program that pays young, unmarried black women in decrepit, violent, drug-infested neighborhoods to have many children by different men, none of whom they marry. Despite being mostly false....The inner cities feeds the barricade mentality of white suburbanites, who resent their supposed subsidy of lives they deem pathological.”<sup>40</sup>

In a word, Lieberman is giving depiction to the white conception of “underclass” a notion popularized by black sociologist William Julius Wilson and demolished by political scientist Adolph Reed, Jr.<sup>41</sup> The “underclass” was thought to be a segment of the poor that remained impoverished because of “values” that put it outside the mainstream—laziness, promiscuity, etc.—and not because of structural inequalities inherent to capitalism. The extent to which these stereotypes are effectively exploited for electoral gain is the focus of Chapter 4.

Martin Gilens’ title *Why Americans Hate Welfare* captures the focus of his research question.<sup>42</sup> Gilens shows through quantitative and qualitative methods that “that stereotypes of black welfare recipients are almost twice as strong in predicting opposition to welfare as are the stereotypes of white welfare recipients . . . Despite the fact that blacks constitute only 36 percent of all welfare recipients, they clearly dominate the American public’s thinking about welfare.”<sup>43</sup>

Further, according to Gilens whites hate “welfare” because they associate it with the worst stereotypes of African-Americans: “There exists now a widespread perception that welfare has become a ‘code word’ for race. Although this is too simple a formulation, I will show that white American’s attitudes toward welfare can only be

understood in connection with their beliefs about blacks—especially their judgments about the causes of racial inequality and the extent to which blacks’ problems stem from their own lack of effort.”<sup>44</sup>

Gilens explains that these perspectives are not new: “Negative stereotypes of blacks were used in arguing that slavery was necessary to keep blacks in check, or even that slavery was in blacks’ own best interest. Because blacks lacked the intelligence, maturity, or industriousness needed to survive in society, some argued, slavery was a benefit to both blacks and whites.”<sup>45</sup>

In sum, the scholarship on racial stereotype and criminal justice policy shows 1) that stereotypical notions about nonwhites (especially blacks) as criminal and undeserving poor led to over-representation of blacks in prison and hostility to public subsidy itself in the form of radical public assistance funding cuts; and 2) These public policy results, in turn, helps reinforce those stereotypical beliefs. These insights are relevant to this study, as the focus of chapter 4 looks at the use of the “Race Card” in statewide elections for the governorship in Massachusetts.

### Race and City Politics

This study draws on key insights from scholarship on the history of Boston politics, and the study of race and urban politics more broadly. Historical studies show that Boston politics reflected the class and racial/ethnic cleavages that many major cities experienced. The urban politics literature shows a clear relationship between shifting racial demographics and partisan voting.

Boston’s remote location makes it, perhaps even more so than New York, the quintessentially Northeastern city, as its population draws heavily from that region and is



not at the crossroads of culture and commerce to the extent that New York is. As such, Boston has a reputation and a history of being sequestered, isolated, and in most respects self-sufficient in its *raison d'état*, that is, education and cultural innovation. The buttoned-down, conservative quality of Boston, however, is still very much part of the story of the city.<sup>46</sup>

In some ways it might seem surprising that racial politics would figure prominently in a city like Boston. There was no vast slavery industry to overcome, and for much of its history there was not a substantial black population in New England, and Boston was no different. It was only after the first wave of black migration that the city became home to a large community of African Americans. Then the policies around the Federal Housing Administration codified practices of residential segregation that shaped city demographics for decades thereafter. According to the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, regarding the period of 1934-1968, the generation preceding the one under study:

The FHA . . . explicitly practiced a policy of “redlining” when determining which neighborhoods to approve mortgages in. Redlining is the practice of denying or limiting financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial or ethnic composition without regard to the residents’ qualifications or creditworthiness . . . The FHA allowed personal and agency bias in favor of all white suburban subdivisions to affect the kinds of loans it guaranteed, as applicants in these subdivisions were generally considered better credit risks.

In fact, according to James Loewen in his 2006 book *Sundown Towns*, FHA publications implied that different races should not share neighborhoods and repeatedly listed neighborhood characteristics like “inharmonious racial or nationality groups” alongside such noxious disseminates as “smoke, odors, and fog.”<sup>47</sup>

It was, however, a combination of the suburbanization of the overall (white) population and migration of black residents to the region in the 1950s and 1960s that

solidified the social and thus political boundaries that defined the Boston metropolitan area:

Between 1960-1965, a significant migration of African Americans to Boston occurred. This influx was happening at a time when urban renewal was focused on the rebuilding of Boston's commercial center, not increasing the supply of housing. Housing renewal for the urban work force was accomplished by relocation to the suburbs. Industry followed its managerial and technical staff into the suburbs, resulting in the white work force fleeing the city, and leaving the city of Boston to rely upon commuters rather than a resident work force[...]Such shifts in the locations of employment and housing met neither the needs nor the skills of the new black residents. By 1970, all of the suburban towns, with the exception of Cambridge, were 98% white.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, it is at least relatively well-established in the literature as well as the political discussion of that racial segregation is the *modus vivendi* of social and political life in residential Boston.

When the long-term effects are considered, it is apparent that federal and financial redlining in communities of color concentrates white and black populations in key areas of the city for long periods of time. This form of institutional bias creates a path dependency that carries long-term effects, such as the perpetuation of this segregation.<sup>49</sup> The consequences of prior policies that crafted residential segregation extend to other policy domains, such as employment. As Stephen P. Erie demonstrates in his work *Rainbow's End*, ethnic divisions and their exploitation by politicians explained Boston politics *before* the central division involved blacks and whites, when it was between the ethnic Irish and everyone else.<sup>50</sup> As late as the 1950s, "the state Democratic party continued to be bitterly divided between a western Yankee and a Boston Irish wing."<sup>51</sup> Soon, this prior division within the city changed from Yankee and Irish to white and nonwhite:

Southern blacks came to the northern cities in the largest domestic migration in history. They were soon joined by Hispanics migrating from Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Latin America. The new migrants demanded the machine's traditional benefits--patronage and welfare services. Without the services of the welfare state, the Irish machines lacked the resources to co-opt blacks and Hispanics and forestall demands for a greater sharing of the organization's lifeblood--power.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, Erie discusses the migration of "4 million whites" leaving cities and "5 million blacks" migrating north.<sup>53</sup> This virtually redrew the racial and ethnic maps of cities within a generation, between 1940 and 1980. It is in this time period that Boston political elites attempt to build a political "machine" and inadvertently ended up with a higher cost for the urban welfare state per capita than any other city in the country.<sup>54</sup>

If the racial inequalities between whites and nonwhites were *ever* latent, the numerous social policies of the 1960s and early 1970s made them manifest. Ronald Formisano in *Boston Against Busing* (2004) demonstrates the enormous impact the federal decision to mandate school integration had on Boston. Indeed, the history of school busing in the 1970s is a chilling reminder of the city's drastic residential and social segregation.

Formisano's narrative is an attempt to weave together the history of a socio-political phenomenon that saw perhaps the largest-scale attempt to socially integrate black and white America into one community in American history. Boston seemed to be the most likely to achieve peaceful success as the home of the Kennedys and the long history of immigration. Instead, however, South Boston gained a reputation as the epitome of an antiblack working-class enclave, that employed the tactics of the southern segregationists when defending its "turf." It then came as no surprise when George Wallace and Scoop Jackson, two antibusing candidates for the Democratic presidential

nomination, won a combined 80 percent of the vote in South Boston during the 1976 Massachusetts Democratic primary.

The city was at the time home to the largest black population in all of the New England region, in a city that is the engine, the heart, and the epitome of majority-white, blue-collar and white-collar America. Busing represented a symbolic and tangible example of federal intervention that upturned the cart of white privilege. This is precisely why the reaction was so fierce. Formisano explains the entire phenomenon in his conclusion:

Many white northerners, especially blue-collar workers, urban ethnics, Catholics, and union members, who had been Democratic stalwarts, felt threatened in the 1960s by a broad array of social and cultural changes. Many came to see gains for blacks and other minorities as somehow a diminution of their status and rights. The white backlash thrived on a sense of politics as a zero-sum game in which the redressing of wrongs for blacks came to be perceived as a loss for those whites most socially and geographically proximate to blacks. These fearful whites began to respond to the appeals of conservative politicians who argued that the civil rights revolution had gone far enough and who presented themselves as champions of stability and traditional values.<sup>55</sup>

The aforementioned works give accounts of the relevant history of Boston that precedes the period of this study. A different subset of scholarly works in urban studies, more quantitative in methodology, has also produced relevant insight.

For example, in a work that bridges the gaps between urban studies and conventional quantitative political science, Richard M. Sauerzopf and Todd Swanstrom published an article in *Urban Affairs Review* in 1999 entitled, “The Urban Electorate in Presidential Elections, 1928-1996.”<sup>56</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom have studied what were the twelve largest cities in the United States back to 1928, and tracked their electoral developments. They have found that cities have diverged from the national pattern in this way: they are both more important to Democrats “and more volatile than the

conventional wisdom suggests.” They suggests costs to the Democrats’ suburban strategy, in the form of “declining turnout among potential Democratic voters in the cities.”<sup>57</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom note, “As cities have increasingly deviated from national voting trends, however, their turnout rates have increasingly fallen behind the national rates.” They issued a call for researchers to break down the suburban vote and to examine contextual effects on voting behavior.<sup>58</sup>

This division of urban and suburban votes is of political significance because, as Sauerzopf and Swanstrom mention as a marker of the consensus in the field, “The Democratic Party relied heavily on urban votes to build the New Deal coalition that dominated national elections from the 1930s to the 1960s. Similarly, the migration outward from cities to suburbs, which accelerated in the 1950s, fueled the rise to power of the Republican Party in national elections beginning in 1968 and signaled the progressive marginalization of urban electorates in national elections.”<sup>59</sup>

Citywide vote totals and voter registration are both necessary, but not sufficient to capture this effect. Thanks to a thorough study of city election voting returns, such data is now readily available for Boston, and so are the neighborhood returns for Boston. A close study of the city of Boston itself is valuable, as Sauerzopf and Swanstrom can attest: “Even though the conventional account, described earlier, of the rise and decline of the urban electorate is widely accepted, there is relatively little published analysis of city voting trends overtime to back it up. The main reason is that voting statistics in the United States are reported by county, not by city. Unless the city boundaries correspond to county boundaries, city election returns are not widely available. Before 1950, county

voting returns corresponded closely to city returns, but with massive suburbanization over time, county returns have increasingly deviated from city returns.”<sup>60</sup>

There are few areas in cities that are truly and in a stable way diverse. A neighborhood is either moving toward being a black neighborhood, toward becoming a white neighborhood, toward becoming a Latino neighborhood, or remaining as one of the former. This segregation can be institutional, but whatever the cause, the effect becomes political and indeed shapes the politics of the day. Just what shape that politics takes is the focus of this work and is the focus of much of the urban voting literature as of late.

Zoltan Hajnal and Jessica Trounstine have, for example, in “What Underlies Urban Politics? Race, Class, Ideology, Partisanship, and the Urban Vote” found that race is the “dominant factor” in urban elections.<sup>61</sup> Through a study of the mayoral elections of the twenty most populous cities in the United States over the past several decades and accompanying survey data, Hajnal and Trounstine constructed a pattern of support for major candidates in these powerful and visible urban elections. Race, perhaps unsurprisingly, played the major role, even above class and gender, even in nonpartisan urban elections.

This is even true of “liberal” cities: “More liberal cities were just as racially divided as less liberal cities. Furthermore, in alternate tests, when we substituted in a proxy for racial tolerance--the percentage of residents with a college degree—we found no additional link to the vote.”<sup>62</sup> Their findings, thoroughly grounded in empirical data, are nothing short of stunning in their simplicity and in their implications for the wider American electorate:

Latinos, whites, and African-Americans are all more apt to vote as a bloc. This within-group cohesion persists when the candidates in the election are all from the

same race . . . Cohesion in these single race elections is 69.4% for blacks, 67.5% for whites, 61.5% for Latinos, and 63.1% for Asian-Americans. Overall, these results suggest that race is fairly ubiquitous in the urban arena. America's four main racial and ethnic groups do represent somewhat cohesive communities. Mayoral voting is at least in part the story of four different racial and ethnic groups sorting out their differences.<sup>63</sup>

By focusing on the urban electorate, Hajnal and Trounstine are making a statement about American politics in general. The overwhelming majority of each particular ethnic group gravitates toward the candidate who represents their collective interest. The division is even starker, by the way, in campaigns wherein the actual candidates came from two different races or ethnic groups. The contrast is smaller with white candidates. If, however, a black candidate were to face a white candidate, the polarization becomes more pronounced. How then can American politics ever be anything but a sophisticated negotiation between racial and ethnic groups? Their conclusion is challenging to students of politics of the United States:

Most accounts of politics at the local or national level point to party identification or ideology as the main driving forces in American politics (Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002, Miller and Shanks 1996). But the results presented here suggest otherwise. Party identification certainly matters. And the ideology greatly helps to predict vote choice. But in local democracy, it is race more than anything else that tends to dominate voter decision making.<sup>64</sup>

Jereon van der Waal, Willem de Koster, and Peter Achterberg, have written an extremely interesting piece that has potentially wide-ranging significance in analyzing the racial politics of cities. In "Ethnic Segregation and Radical Right-Wing Voting in Dutch Cities" the abstract reads:

Our analyses on 50 Dutch cities demonstrate that ethnic segregation leads to PVV [right-wing] voting, and that this positive effect is stronger in cities with a more tolerant cultural atmosphere and lower levels of unemployment. This positive effect is at odds with ethnic threat theory, and our contextualization informed by the cultural and economic conditions of cities enables distinguishing between

contact theory and concentration theory. Whereas both predict a positive effect, only contact theory is corroborated by our results.<sup>65</sup>

Van der Waal et al. have here made a serious attempt to contribute to the widely held, historically important view in political science that the “ethnic threat” theory is one that holds the most explanatory power. Van der Waal et al. cite both the work of V.O. Key, Mendelberg and Kinder, and other who hold an implied version of the ethnic threat theory as central to their working models: whites who face blacks in a large-scale confrontation are those most likely to vote against the best interests of blacks.<sup>66</sup>

Van der Waal et al. test this theory by using the PVV, a right-wing, anti-immigrant party, as the dependent variable, and in searching for the independent variable, sees those sectors most likely to vote for the PVV in highly segregated native (Dutch) neighborhoods in more cosmopolitan, liberal cities.

### Conclusion

The aforementioned studies from a range of subfields in political science and political sociology offer important insights for the present study. Here again are some of the key points:

1. Race is central to American political development. A large body of scholarship traces the evolution of political institutions and social policy. Race, class and other forms of ascriptive status have shaped elite conceptions of citizenship status. It should not be surprising that appeals to racial stereotypes would be effective in electoral campaigns.
2. A significant body of survey and experimental research has demonstrated this centrality. Implicit appeals to anti-black and anti-brown sentiment win white votes and support.



3. Racist stereotypes have created disparities in poverty and incarceration, and these facts inter reinforce popular perceptions. Support for more prisons and tougher sentencing on one hand, and more restrictive welfare subsidies on the other, are the direct result of these racial biases.
4. Urban political history and contemporary studies underscore the importance of residential segregation over time and the continuing salience of race in city elections. Moreover, as turnout has declined in cities, candidates for office have looked for ways to secure suburban (more white and affluent) voters and to distance urban ones.

These four general insights are relevant to the study. Boston prides itself on its cosmopolitanism, but it has been and remains a segregated city, which its politics reflect. White reaction to policy and protest of the 1960s shaped voting patterns in subsequent decades.

This study looks principally at neighborhoods in Boston, but also gives attention to the Greater Boston area. In many respects, it heeds Sauerzopf and Swanstrom's call. Chapter 3 examines population shifts and corresponding enrollment and voting change over time. Like Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, the data is limited insofar as it will show how the electorate voted at the level of the neighborhood. Thus voting patterns "could be the result of the characteristics of individual voters who live in cities (e.g., their race or class), or voting behavior could be due to a 'contextual effect' of living within central-city municipal boundaries."<sup>67</sup>

Unlike Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, this study will look at the sorts of campaign rhetoric that appealed to a sort of "siege" mentality for neighborhoods that were the center of racial division in the 1970s (and indeed in those suburbs to which those whites

fled). As will be shown in chapter 4, “resistance” can take the form of opposition not just to formal and explicit racial integration, but to governmental policies that benefit the out-group. Nowhere is this resistance more in evidence than in South Boston during the busing crisis or in (popular) exhortations by Massachusetts politicians to get people “off the welfare rolls” or “in prison where they belong” during a period of economic hardship. Finally, it will also become apparent that coded political appeals are the rhetorical weapon of choice rather than explicitly racial calls to arms, and those codes have served the political actors well who have employed them.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals*. New Haven: Yale University Press (1999).

<sup>2</sup> Desmond S. King and Rogers M. Smith, *Still a House Divided* (2012) and the earlier articles: “Racial orders in American Political Development,” in *Race and American Political Development*, New York: Routledge (2008). See also the original article, Desmond S. King and Rogers M. Smith, “Racial Orders in American Political Development,” in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 1 (Feb., 2005), pp. 75-92. “Racial orders” was the earlier term of art, although Jennifer Hochschild and Vesla Weaver also developed a parallel concept of “racial orders” which Rogers Smith has graciously allowed them to appropriate in a review of their book utilizing the concept.

<sup>3</sup> Philip S. Klinkner and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1999).

<sup>4</sup> Klinkner and Smith, pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Klinkner and Smith, pp. 328.

<sup>6</sup> Ira Katznelson, “Conclusion: On Diversity and the Accommodation of Injustice: A Coda on Cities, Liberalism, and American Political Development” in *The City in American Political Development* (Richardson Dilworth, editor) 2009, pp. 246-257.

<sup>7</sup> See Robert C. Smith’s *Racism and Conservatism: And Why in America, They are the Same* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010) and Joe Feagin’s *White Party, White Government* (Routledge, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> It should also be noted that two scholars of race and politics, Edward Carmines and James Stimson, opened their 1992 pathbreaking work in political science, *Issue Evolution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) by explaining that his future vice president, George H.W. Bush, had begun his first congressional campaign by making clear his opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<sup>9</sup> Smith Chapter 8.

<sup>10</sup> Smith Chapter 8.

<sup>11</sup> Feagin, Feagin, Joseph R. 2010. *White Party, White Government*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>12</sup> Feagin, Chapter 5.

<sup>13</sup> Feagin, Chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> There is a relatively long tradition of scholarship in political science and sociology that has addressed so-called “color-blind” racism, particularly in the behavioral tradition. The canon of this tradition includes David Kinder and Lynn Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1996); Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013; a modern example of Bobo’s deep reservoir of research is Bobo, Lawrence D. 2011. “Somewhere between Jim Crow

& Post-Racialism: Reflections on the Racial Divide in America Today." *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences*, Spring 2011, Volume 140, Number 2: 11-36; Michael Tesler's recent article, "The Return of Old-Fashioned Racism to White Americans' Partisan Preferences in the Early Obama Era" in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 75, No. 1, January 2013, Pp. 110–123, argues that the presence of Barack Obama in national politics has at least partially led to a resurgence in what Tesler calls "OFR" ("old-fashioned racism") and his findings are very convincing. David Kinder and Allison Dale-Riddle have also contributed a volume to this tradition, *The End of Race? Obama, 2008, and Racial Politics in America*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (2012) in which they argue that Obama suffered a "penalty" of roughly ten percentage points in the 2008 general election against what a generic Democratic white candidate would have received, and also that racial prejudice can essentially be activated in any given election given the proper circumstances.

<sup>15</sup> David O. Sears and P.J. Henry, "Race and Politics: The Theory of Symbolic Racism," in Yoshinobu Araki (ed.), *Handbook for Political Psychology*, Japan: Matsusaka University (2002).

<sup>16</sup> Sears and Henry 2002.

<sup>17</sup> See Tali D. Mendelberg, "Democracy, Incivility, and Race in Electoral Campaigns" in King, Lieberman, Ritter & Whitehead (eds.), *Democratization in America: A Comparative-Historical Analysis*, 2009, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press; "Racial Priming Revived" pp. 109-123 and "Racial Priming: Issues in Research Design and Interpretation" pp. 135-140 in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 6 No. 1, March 2008; and the book Mendelberg is revisiting and updating in both the context of the *Perspectives* article and the *Democratization* book chapter is *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001. Her 2001 book has generated much controversy and is considered a touchstone in the field for literacy in racial priming and implicit campaign messaging.

<sup>18</sup> Mendelberg 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Mendelberg 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Mendelberg 2001, pp. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Mendelberg 2001, pp. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Charlton D. McIlwain and Stephen M. Caliendo, *Race Appeal: How Candidates Invoke Race in U.S. Political Campaigns*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 2011. McIlwain and Caliendo's primary resource is the University of Oklahoma's Julian P. Kanter Commercial Archive, which this author also frequented to obtain commercials from Northeastern Republican gubernatorial candidates during the 1994 election in an earlier iteration of this project. The archive is a treasure trove of candidate ads that will undoubtedly become more useful to researchers as time marches.

<sup>23</sup> McIlwain & Caliendo (2012).

<sup>24</sup> See Mann, Coramae Richey, *Unequal Justice*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993.

<sup>25</sup> Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, New York: The New Press (2012). See also Bruce Western's work, *Punishment and Inequality in America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), 2006, also essential reading from a recognized authority on the subject of racial disparities in criminal justice.

<sup>26</sup> From their book, *Arresting Citizenship* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014): "These data provide compelling evidence that, despite prohibitions on race-based policing, police continue to disproportionately stop and search racial minorities. As we describe in Chapter 7, though, locating the role of race and racism in the modern criminal justice [*sic*] is a complex task. Nor can we fully consider the wide array of new tactics that police have at their disposal, which has contributed to racial and economic disproportionality in the custodial class; space does not permit. (Lerman and Weaver 2014, Chapter 2).

<sup>27</sup> "In addition to creating political frameworks and thought in the citizenry, we find that contact with criminal justice helps to organize racial knowledge. That is to say, American institutions, beyond merely reflecting social understandings, actively cultivate and structure racial membership, identity, and perceptions. Not surprisingly, blacks who undergo contact with law enforcement and greater discontent with governmental treatment of blacks." (Lerman and Weaver 2014, Chapter 1).

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<sup>29</sup> Marie Gottschalk, “Democracy and the Carceral State in America” in *The ANNALS of American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2014) 651: 288-295, specifically pages 289 and 290. Gottschalk’s article is a forerunner to her forthcoming book, *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> Bobo, Lawrence D. and Victor Thompson. 2006. “Unfair by Design: The War on Drugs, Race, and the Legitimacy of the Criminal Justice System.” *Social Research* 73(2): 445-472.

<sup>31</sup> Bobo and Thompson 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Bobo and Thompson 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press (1994).

<sup>34</sup> See also Charles Noble, *Welfare As We Knew It: A Political History of the American Welfare State*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press (1997).

<sup>35</sup> Robert C. Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1998).

<sup>36</sup> Lieberman, pp. 157.

<sup>37</sup> Lieberman, pp. 157.

<sup>38</sup> Lieberman 2001, pp. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Lieberman 2001, pp. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Lieberman 2001, pp. 4.

<sup>41</sup> See Adolph Reed, Jr., “The ‘Underclass’ as Myth and Symbol: The Poverty of Discourse about Poverty ” originally published in *Radical America* 24, no. 1 (winter 1992): 21-40. In subsequent years, Reed took the argument head-on by repeatedly citing Wilson as an example of most egregious type of racially discriminatory scholarship. In 1999, he published a book chapter with Larry Bennett that undertook a case study of an impoverished Chicago public housing project (Cabrini-Green) in order to test whether community bonds are weaker and social “pathology” is stronger in such neighborhoods, as Wilson repeatedly alleges as the foundation of his theory of an urban underclass. (Reed, Adolph, Jr. and Larry Bennett. 1999. “The New Face of Urban Renewal: The Near North Redevelopment Initiative and the Cabrini-Green Neighborhood.” In Adolph Reed, Jr., ed., *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*. Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, U.K.: Westview Press.)

Reed and Bennett found in this real-world case that the opposite is true, that the bonds of community were just as strong, if not stronger, in this poor community, evidenced by the saturating presence of community groups, churches, public-private partnerships, and government service agencies. Reed and Bennett point to the fact that these community groups are simply frozen out of the governing process by the city and the federal government, who have more contact with private developers than these community groups. Reed, in later works, is never loathe to point out the dearth of evidence that Wilson has when making claims about social pathology that supposedly differentiate the largely black and brown impoverished population from the rest of America, when in fact behaviors such as drug use and “out-of-wedlock” pregnancy transcend race and class. In 2009, Reed also made clear the fundamentally racialized discourse in “The Limits of Anti-racism”: “And there is no shortage of black people in the public eye—Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey are two prime examples, as is Barack Obama—who embrace and recycle those narratives of poor black Americans’ wayward behavior and self-destructive habits.”

<sup>42</sup> Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2000).

<sup>43</sup> Gilens 2000, pp. 99.

<sup>44</sup> Gilens 2000, pp. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Gilens 2000, pp. 155.

<sup>46</sup> For a midcentury portrait as well of a history of Massachusetts’ political culture, see the classic study by Edgar Litt, *The Political Cultures of Massachusetts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965).

<sup>47</sup> “Historic Shift from Explicit to Implicit Policies Affecting Housing Segregation in Eastern Massachusetts” by the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, <http://www.bostonfairhousing.org/timeline/> accessed June 12, 2014.

- <sup>48</sup> “Historic Shift from Explicit to Implicit Policies Affecting Housing Segregation in Eastern Massachusetts: 1950-1975: Impact of Rte 28 & Rte 495” by the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.bostonfairhousing.org/timeline/1950s-1975-Suburbs.html>.
- <sup>49</sup> Haydu is essential to understanding this concept in several publications, such as Jeffrey S. Haydu, "Reversals of Fortune: Path Dependency, Problem Solving, and Temporal Cases." *Theory and Society*, vol. 39 (2010), 25-48.
- <sup>50</sup> Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- <sup>51</sup> Erie, pp. 138.
- <sup>52</sup> Erie, pp. 142.
- <sup>53</sup> Erie, pp. 145-6.
- <sup>54</sup> Erie, pp. 177.
- <sup>55</sup> Formisiano, pp. 236. Also see John H. Mollenkopf, “The Postwar Politics of Urban Development” in *The Urban Politics Reader* (New York and London: Routledge), 2006, pp. 166. As Mollenkopf notes about Boston, “conservative, white ethnic, small property-owning candidates won office on the basis of a revolt against rising taxes, neighborhood disruption, and growing black influence. These ‘law and order’ and ‘anti busing’ candidates made an important but probably not lasting imprint on urban politics.” Perhaps with regard to this last assessment, short-term effects in the form of periodic election cycles should pay attention to campaign effects that emphasize racial conflict or difference.
- <sup>56</sup> Richard M. Sauerzopf and Todd Swanstrom, “The Urban Electorate in Presidential Elections, 1920-1996” in *Urban Affairs Review*, September 1999 35:72-91.
- <sup>57</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, pp. 291.
- <sup>58</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, pp. 284.
- <sup>59</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, pp. 284.
- <sup>60</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, pp. 285.
- <sup>61</sup> Hajnal, Zoltan L. and Jessica L. Trounstine 2013. What Underlies Urban Politics? Race, Class, Ideology, Partisanship, and the Urban Vote. *Urban Affairs Review* 49 (4), pp. 63.
- <sup>62</sup> Hajnal and Trounstine, pp. 84.
- <sup>63</sup> Hajnal and Trounstine, pp. 80.
- <sup>64</sup> Hajnal and Trounstine, pp. 86.
- <sup>65</sup> van der Waal, Jeroen, William de Koster and Peter Achtenberg. 2013. “Ethnic Segregation and Radical Right-Wing Voting in Dutch Cities.” *Urban Affairs Review* 49: 748-777.
- <sup>66</sup> See V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1948 and Tali Mendelberg (with Donald Kinder), “Cracks in American Apartheid: The Political Impact of Prejudice among Desegregated Whites” Source: *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (May, 1995), pp. 402-424.
- <sup>67</sup> Sauerzopf and Swanstrom, pp. 285.

## CHAPTER 3

### RACIAL AND PARTISAN CHANGE IN BOSTON'S NEIGHBORHOODS

#### Introduction

At midcentury, Boston faced similar challenges that urban municipalities across the country confronted: a declining industrial base, inadequate housing and social services, segregated schools: and city and state officials responded in ways common to that era. Federal programs like “urban renewal,” the War on Poverty, and an ambitious desegregation policy transformed the social, economic and political landscape.<sup>1</sup> The contested terrain of city politics was the context in which neighborhoods changed in terms of demographics and ultimately politics. White opposition took the form of “flight” and change in partisan affiliation from Democratic to Republican in many urban neighborhoods and suburban municipalities. Central cities, like Boston, became more Democratic.

These social trends coincided with partisan trends, which manifest in partisan identification, as well as statewide elections. Local elections in Boston are nonpartisan affairs, and thus do not lend themselves to unbiased inquiry. However, insight from urban areas is of particular interest because it sees a much more diverse racial makeup than the rest of the state, and the racial makeups of the respective neighborhoods tend to gravitate heavily toward the dominance of either white, black, Hispanic, or Asian majorities.

This chapter examines the demographic and partisan changes in Boston's neighborhoods for the period of this study. It first lays out the historical context that shaped city politics in the postwar era. It then gives an overview of the sixteen planning

districts that will be referred to as “neighborhoods” in these pages. Examination of the demographic, enrollment and voting data is clear: the Republican Party relies on votes from predominantly white and suburban areas of the city and in specific neighborhoods of the city. Combined, these sections of Greater Boston formed part of the winning strategy the Republican party used to successfully elect William Weld in 1990 and 1994, Paul Cellucci in 1998, and Mitt Romney in 2002. Chapter 4 will subsequently show that these trends coincided with the strategies and efforts of the Republican party at the state level and to employ racially implicit messaging, or “racial conservatism” as a way to appeal to white urban (and suburban) constituencies.

### Historical Overview

Boston underwent major political, social, and economic changes over the last half century. Mollenkopf gave an account of these in his *The Contested City* (1983). After World War II, the city experienced a period of economic expansion coupled with suburban resettlement. As Judd explains in *City Politics* (2009), highway development coupled with government incentives for homebuilding and mortgage loans made the suburbs a newly attractive area for postwar life. It was not simply that urban life had changed; it was that a new alternative existed. Simultaneously, black migration from the southern states was perhaps the greatest movement of labor within national boundaries within world history. Black workers were met with redlining, subpar housing, and welfare programs, all of which reinforced the idea of a less than desirable urban investment environment.

Government soon attempted to intervene to revitalize urban centers, still the location of most workplaces and (declining, but still significant and substantial) votes.

Initiated under Mayor John Hynes, urban renewal was a federally-subsidized government policy that sought to increase property values in poor neighborhoods by granting financial incentives to commercial developers in those neighborhoods. Boston was one of a number of cities affected by this initiative.<sup>2</sup> City politics were also impacted by President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty and Great Society Programs. The expansion of public housing, government-financed health care, food stamps, and temporary assistance in the form of welfare benefits were all launched within the same brief political era when urban flight had been the reality for over twenty years.<sup>3</sup>

Key to this study from the perspective of race and partisanship was a desegregation plan launched in Boston public schools in 1974. In that year federal Judge Arthur Garrity sought to fully implement *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* by way of a federal takeover of Boston's school system. Students were bused from black neighborhoods (Roxbury, Mattapan) to white neighborhoods (South Boston, Charlestown), and vice versa, in order to achieve this goal. Chaos ensued. Riots were provoked by the rhetoric and posture of militant white opponents who stood in front of high schools. These militant white opponents to desegregation via busing directed violence against students and the buses in which they came. National media attention became fixed on the problem as a signal of "white backlash" against the black-white integration that was the hallmark dream of the Civil Rights Movement. The opposition to busing and desegregation, rooted in the white, Irish, and working class section of South Boston cannot be overemphasized. This conflict was symbolic of the political tensions, protest movements, federal policies and court decisions unleashed at the time. Moreover, protest movements (organized and more inchoate riots and disruptions) and federal intervention



for civil and economic rights can be seen as a “critical juncture” in the language of APD—white resentment could thereafter be mobilized in new and different ways.

How this occurred in Boston is clear from an exploration of the sixteen “planning districts” in the city of Boston over the period of this study. These planning districts, categorized by the Boston Redevelopment Authority,<sup>4</sup> are roughly equivalent to the idea of “neighborhoods” in other major cities. The Republican Party’s success in gubernatorial election owes itself to its ability to secure the votes of key neighborhoods within the city. An examination of Boston’s neighborhoods, their historical makeup, and political affiliations over time, show how and why this is so.

#### The Neighborhoods: A Study in Transition, Evolution, and Politics

##### Yankee Boston: The Back Bay/Beacon Hill and Fenway Neighborhoods

Officially, the Boston Redevelopment Authority designates the Back Bay/Beacon Hill neighborhood as one planning district, but they consider themselves distinct neighborhoods. The Back Bay is the larger neighborhood, but Beacon Hill is the most prominent. It is home to some of the priciest real estate in the city. Notable American politician John Kerry makes his home on Beacon Hill, in a multimillion dollar townhouse. Beacon Hill is also home to the Massachusetts State House and its golden dome, one of the few statehouses in the United States with such notoriety. It is the hill to which John Winthrop originally referred when making his “Shining City Upon a Hill” speech with biblical overtones. It is also home to much of the “Freedom Trail” in the city, a tourist attraction led by expert historians in period attire.

Businesspeople and professionals also call Beacon Hill home, though there is affordable housing for middle-income residents, as well. As of 2000, nearly 90% of the

residents of the neighborhood were white, and high in the Fenway, as well. The Fenway is the location of legendary Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox and symbolically the epicenter of Bostonian urban life. Interestingly, this is a neighborhood that has undergone perhaps the least significant demographic change, and yet it is decidedly experiencing a partisan shift. Yankee Boston used to provide a base for statewide Republicans, from Governor Francis Sargent and Senator Edward Brooke in the 1970s to Governor William Weld in the 1990s. Since 2000, however, not one precinct in these neighborhoods has voted for a Republican in a statewide election. This does not, of course, foreclose the possibility in the future, but it is notable that Republicans are no longer drawing their primary urban votes from the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city, but rather those neighborhoods which have undergone severe conflict and strife which has racial implications. Republican enrollment in the Back Bay has slightly declined, notably in the 1970s and early 2000s, while Democratic enrollment increased slightly only in the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> The Fenway saw some white decrease in its population in both the 70s and 80s, and with it, some decline in Republican enrollment. Asian and Latino movement into both neighborhoods increased over the entire era, but especially in the early 2000s.

**Table 3.1 Back Bay/Beacon Hill**

<b>Back Bay/Beacon Hill</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	2719	2081	2794	3931
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	3764	4859	5665	6020
<b>White %</b>	0.95	0.9	0.9	0.89

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

**Table 3.2 Fenway/Kenmore**

<b>Fenway/Kenmore</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1429	816	891	1173
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	2530	2015	3014	3858
<b>White %</b>	.87	.80	.72	.69

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

### The South End

The South End has long been an area that is supposed to be Boston's case study in urban renewal and "gentrification." And, as Thomas H. O'Connor explains, that gentrification has had an impact on the larger Boston sphere, making what was once a majority-minority neighborhood in 1970 majority white by 2000. The process began in 1954:

When the Hynes administration demolished the New York Streets section of the South End back . . . displaced tenants were forced to look for other places to live. Most white families went into housing projects in South Boston, Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain; African-American and Puerto Rican families moved to Washington Park and North Dorchester. A number of these black families moved across into northern Mattapan, a neighborhood considered to be the largest Jewish community in New England.<sup>6</sup>

Mollenkopf also emphasized the South End as a case study in urban renewal.

Mollenkopf writes:

Boston's South End redevelopment area, rated at \$37 million in public money, ranks among the top three residential projects and has also displaced thousands of people....In Boston, renewal in the South End was designed to produce "maximum upgrading," to use Edward Logue's words, in a housing stock adjacent to the [Central Business District], a hospital complex, and the newer office developments in the Back Bay. Other large Boston renewal projects cleared land near Massachusetts General Hospital, for a new Government Center office complex, and for the Prudential Life Insurance Company.<sup>7</sup>

From the beginning, the South End was a concentrated effort to expand the central business district that had the consequence of transforming the demographic makeup of the neighborhood. This took massive institutional intervention, however; and again these development efforts seem to explain the counter-trend of white influx as opposed to flight since the South End saw an overall 50% increase in the white population from 1970 to 2000.<sup>8</sup> During this time Republican enrollment increased a total of over 60%.<sup>9</sup> The black population, meanwhile, declined by over 33% and Democratic enrollments fell. The South End is now a choice neighborhood marked by high real estate prices. It is geographically closest to both the Back Bay and Beacon Hill areas, where the capital buildings sit and the wealthy historically and presently reside. As early as the 1980s, residents of surrounding areas began accusing South End and Back Bay residents of wish to create a "silk-stocking district" similar to the Upper East Side of Manhattan.<sup>10</sup> The

South End is an example of the counter-trend that is thought to be occurring now in cities across the United State whereby the white middle class is returning to central cities and providing support for the Democratic party.

**Table 3.3 South End**

<b>South End</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	957	742	1168	1692
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	3692	4065	5625	6781
<b>White %</b>	.40	.35	.40	.45

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Central Boston: North End, the West End, and Chinatown

The West End saga is, like that of the South End, a story best told comprehensively in Mollenkopf’s work, *The Contested City*. The upshot, however, is that the formerly sprawling neighborhood known as the West End in Boston is today no more than an afterthought of a few hundred residences in metropolitan Boston. It covers one precinct in Central Boston.<sup>11</sup>

The North End, however, is the oldest continuous settlement in North America. It was for a time “Boston proper”, and is adjacent to Beacon Hill and Fanuil Hall, the much-vaunted and tourist-ridden Quincy Market. It is home to the Old North Church, a site of heritage from the American Revolution, where the Bicentennial with President Gerald Ford and Queen Elizabeth II was celebrated in 1976. It is also Boston’s Little

Italy. According to Steven Puleo in his recent work, *The Boston Italians*: “Even as late as 1980, the North End’s population was about 60 percent Italian American (the figure is under 40 percent today), and it retained its character, reputation, and heritage as one of the nation’s best-known Italian neighborhoods.”<sup>12</sup>

Italian-Americans in New England, from Saugus to Pittsfield, Massachusetts see the North End as the Old Neighborhood. Whites, including a plurality of Italian-American whites, make up the majority in the North End, and it has experienced revitalization thanks to an even more involved urban development project, the Central Artery or Big Dig project. The Big Dig was essentially supposed to bury a stretch of elevated highway under the North End underground instead. The major component was to remove the highway in order to encourage pedestrian traffic and ease auto traffic, and it seems to have been largely successful in those goals. The North End is also one of the friendliest enclaves in the city to Republican candidates for governor in the last four decades. It is worth noting that the Italian population, until the 1970s, had been historically a largely Democratic constituency, but that began to change in the post-1960s era. This neighborhood threw its support overwhelmingly to Republican candidate, and Italian-American, Paul Cellucci.

The change of the percentage of Asian residents in the various neighborhoods is associated with most neighborhoods in Boston. In no neighborhood do they constitute a majority. However, in Chinatown, which is no more than a few precincts within Central Boston, Asian residents comprise roughly 60% of the population (which itself is roughly 5,000 whereas most neighborhoods average 30,000), which is not a major change over the past several decades.

Overall Central Boston has seen a 60% population increase over the last four decades, owing to a large influx of minority residents, while its white population has also slightly increased. Its Democratic enrollment has fallen slightly, as well, notably in the 1990s, the same time of Republican resurgence, possibly indicating a permanent shift of allegiance in the rightward direction.

**Table 3.4 Central Boston**

<b>Central</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	708	1088	1718	2989
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	6154	6928	7021	7614
<b>White %</b>	.89	.79	.74	.70

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

### The Second Ward: Charlestown

Historical site of the revolutionary battle site of Bunker Hill, Charlestown is now and has been the home to a working-class mix of residents of Irish and Italian ancestry that has seen some Latino settlement in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Home to the Charlestown Navy Yard, a historical place of employment but now a testament to the endless experimentation in the spirit of urban renewal, Charlestown is geographically isolated from the rest of the city, not the least of which because it is bounded by the Charles and Mystic Rivers, making it one of the more notable peninsulas in the region. It has also been the site of continuous efforts at renewal by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which remains a large landowner within the neighborhood. Perhaps no one

description of the neighborhood is more apt than Ronald Formisiano's in *Boston Against*

*Busing*:

Treated partly as a dumping-ground for institutions unwanted elsewhere, Charlestown had been closed in by ugly steel and concrete bridges and highways built mainly for the convenience of others, and a noisy, elevated railway had been thrust through its heart. In the 1930s bulldozers made way for a large housing project, over the screams of many of those displaced, and by the 1960s the project had deteriorated into a cauldron of social disorganization. In the 1970s it would provide militant antibusing leaders and many young street warriors....Charlestown qualified perhaps even more as an urban village, with fifteen to seventeen thousand persons packed into one square mile of a hilly peninsula. Over the years Italians and others had moved in and intermarried with the predominant Irish Catholics, so that everybody was related to everybody else. Thus loyalty to "Our Town" transcended anything necessarily Irish or Catholic....<sup>13</sup>

In Charlestown itself, which is slightly smaller than the others (about 15,000 residents), an interesting phenomenon can be observed. The white population dropped by roughly 2,000, and the combined black, Latino, and Asian populations increased by roughly 3,000, but the Republican enrollment increased from 100 to 1,400. This does not appear to be superficial enrollment, either. There is a definite uptick in Republican strength in voting support for mayor, governor, and president from 1964 to 2008 in Charlestown.



**Table 3.5 Charlestown**

<b>Charlestown</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	177	286	752	1625
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	6279	5673	5788	5416
<b>White %</b>	.98	.98	.95	.79

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

### East Boston: A New Latino-Majority Community

East Boston is formerly home to the working-class district of Italian-Americanism and has evolved into the only majority-Latino neighborhood in the city, at 53% of its residents as of 2010. Like every neighborhood with majority-white students experiencing integrated school busing, East Boston was the site of political and social conflict. East Boston, for most of the twentieth century, was an outpost of Italian-American culture that rivaled the North End, but was home certainly to more working-class residents. It too was the site of antibusing riots simply because it was at the center of the controversy; and, at roughly the same time, the new Logan International Airport expansion was undertaken over residents' objections.

East Boston subsequently became home to thousands of Latino immigrants, beginning in the 1980s, when over 5,000 new Latino residents found new homes in the

neighborhood. In the 1990s and 2000s, 10,000 and 7,000 new residents moved in, respectively, to the point now where East Boston is majority Latino, a majority with Mexican ancestry. There are some Salvadoran and Puerto Rican communities, as well, but East Boston is socially and politically a Latino-majority community, and that community is predominantly Mexican or Mexican-American. Before and during the transition, East Boston was a reliably or at least reasonably Republican stronghold, but now that status is relegated to some of the outer precincts, which still hold a large non-Hispanic white majority (and perhaps Italian ancestry, although that precise data is unavailable). East Boston saw its Latino population rise from 600 to 21,000, but again, its Republican enrollment shifted by only 400. Formerly friendly to Republican candidates for governor, it has experienced low turnout in recent years and usually provided proof that the Latino electorate in Massachusetts is solidly in the Democratic column.

**Table 3.6 East Boston**

<b>East Boston</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	694	601	736	1089
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	17834	15295	13872	15111
<b>White %</b>	.97	.97	.76	.51

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

## South Boston

“Southie” is perhaps the epitome of the popular perception of Boston as the working-class Irish urban ghetto and is still home to some Irish settlement. It was at the epicenter of the Boston Busing controversy. Irish Catholics form at least the plurality, if not the majority, of South Boston residents, and the neighborhood has the smallest nonwhite population in Boston. It was, not unfairly, the neighborhood that symbolizes one of the most visible racial conflicts in the post-civil rights era. The culture and the politics have informed each other in familiar and unfortunate ways—giving it a unique political and socioeconomic profile.

Indeed, while South Boston has undergone some wealthy investment and hence gentrification, it is surprisingly still home to a largely white, working-class population, so much so that less than 5% of the population is black<sup>14</sup>. Politically, South Boston has formed the cornerstone or base for one of the two major candidates for mayor in virtually every election since 1967, as much as it has for Republican candidates for governor or president during that era. It is the largest, most reliable Republican bastion, even voting for Reagan in the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections and providing precinct victories for Republican candidates through 2002, the only exception being the vote for conservative Silber in 1990. Along with Charlestown, the white population has remained stable, but a combination of high Democratic disenrollment and significant Republican enrollment increase has made for a more fertile environment for Republican competition.

**Table 3.7 South Boston**

<b>South Boston</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	654	1295	1274	1893
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	18419	13780	13028	12687
<b>White %</b>	.97	.98	.95	.85

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

West Roxbury: Suburb of Dedham

As a “streetcar suburb” West Roxbury has long had a conflicting identity both within and outside the city of Boston. It has a Protestant past, but is now home largely to the white ethnic (Irish) as well as Jewish community, and over the past twenty years, has also seen a significant Latino and Asian residential movement.<sup>15</sup>

West Roxbury is and has been for over half a century, a largely white, Catholic community adjacent to the wealthy suburb of Dedham, and in many respects it is visually and architecturally indistinguishable. Administratively, however, both Dedham and West Roxbury are served by the Dedham and Boston City school districts, respectively, and are accountable to different municipal governments.

West Roxbury has historically been a majority-non-Hispanic white neighborhood

that has often acted as part of the base of any successful Republican candidate in Boston. It is nearly as reliable in both respects as South Boston. Residents of West Roxbury could be counted on to provide majorities for Reagan, Weld, and Cellucci, and when the neighborhood began to experience some demographic change, there were still precincts within the neighborhood that turned out for Romney in 2002. West Roxbury, perhaps more than any neighborhood, is still culturally and even politically suburban in character<sup>16</sup>. West Roxbury saw the greatest degree of Democratic decline as a proportion of the neighborhood's electorate. Its Republican base is still relatively stable, despite the movement of new minority residents.

**Table 3.8 West Roxbury**

<b>West Roxbury</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1985	1712	1597	3359
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	14434	13871	11830	10729
<b>White %</b>	0.99	0.97	0.94	0.84

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Ward 18 Neighbors: Hyde Park and Mattapan

Like West Roxbury, Hyde Park has a largely Yankee Protestant past, but like many neighborhoods bordering Roxbury, it has seen a transformation from white majority to black plurality over the past four decades.

In the adjoining neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Mattapan, the process has been

a slow but steady one, in which black residents have begun to form a majority, first in Mattapan, and now certainly in Hyde Park. White residents have moved out in droves, as many as ten thousand per decade in these neighborhoods, each with roughly thirty thousand residents.

As O'Connor notes about Mattapan:

Between 1968 and 1970, some three thousand African-American families entered Mattapan, moving along Blue Hill Avenue from Grove Hall toward Mattapan Square. By 1972, the number of Jewish residents in the area had dropped to fewer than twenty-five hundred, and the subsequent flare-up of racial fears, panic selling, and blockbusting accelerated the exodus of Jewish families to the point where a once predominantly Jewish community was transformed into an almost all-black neighborhood. (O'Connor, 241)

For Hyde Park, the neighborhood is perhaps one of the best test cases for the linkage between political and demographic change, as it was on the "frontier" of the busing crisis. Many wealthy parents sent their children to private school to avoid the desegregation effort<sup>17</sup>:

Hyde Park saw its black population increase from 100 to 15,000 (again, out of a population of 30,000) and a concomitant white decrease, and thus did Hyde Park begin to undergo a racial transformation. Hyde Park saw its proportion of black residents steadily increase from 7 percent in 1980 to 41 percent in 2000, with over 12,000 black residents in the 30,000 resident neighborhood. Meanwhile, white residents constituted over 95 percent of the neighborhood in 1970, when the population numbered almost 40,000, while in 2000 the white population was 13,000<sup>18</sup>.

Mattapan more quickly became a black-majority neighborhood although by 1970 there was already a substantial black population that was still in the minority. During the

ensuing decade, 20,000 white residents moved out of the neighborhood, and 10,000 black residents moved in. Since that time, the neighborhood has maintained roughly an 80% black population, while the non-Hispanic white population has shrunk to below 5% as of 2000. Hyde Park and Mattapan, adjacent to one another, now together occupy most of Ward 18 in Boston, which is fully now a black majority ward, but was majority white in 1970<sup>19</sup>.

Despite the large number of new black residents, Hyde Park had seen three decades of declining Democratic enrollment in the 1970s through the 1990s. It was not until the 2000s that Hyde Park began to see an uptick in Democratic enrollment. Mattapan, has actually seen its Democratic enrollment decline overall, particularly in the 1990s.

**Table 3.9 Hyde Park**

<b>Hyde Park</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1205	1080	1015	1192
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	13518	10746	9039	9310
<b>White %</b>	.99	.85	.72	.43

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, City of Boston and U.S. Census Reports from the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

**Table 3.10 Mattapan**

<b>Mattapan</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	890	759	277	490
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	10675	4707	6013	8159
<b>White %</b>	.55	.15	.08	.04

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

## Roxbury

Roxbury has always been the heart of Boston’s black population. It grew simply because of redlining in the early part of the 20th Century (see chapter 2), and by 1970, it was home to a majority of the black population in Boston, which in absolute terms is the largest concentration of black people in Massachusetts.

Roxbury in the 1970s was at the heart of what the Boston Globe in the 1970s called “the black wards” as an indicator, perhaps, but decidedly an unfortunate choice of words. The proportion of black residents has declined significantly in the last forty years, from three-quarters of the nearly 70,000 residents in 1970 to just a bare majority of 56,000 residents in 2000, a net decline of nearly 20,000 black residents— a drop of over forty percent, in thirty years. The movement of the black population is not unlike the



movement of other ethnic populations, but is perhaps more visible and more thoroughly catalogued. William E. Nelson also notes in his case study of Boston and Liverpool<sup>20</sup> that while Roxbury has been the site of numerous radical protests over the years—such as the 1967 welfare mothers sit-in that ultimately gained them positive attention from a Republican governor—it is not a neighborhood where organized political activity has been consistent, say, for example, in terms of voter mobilization.<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, the racial composition began to markedly shift:

In Boston, the continued movement southward of the Black population has resulted in the concentration of Black residents in Roxbury and Mattapan. Blacks constituted the overwhelming majority of residents in bot of these communities in 1990, 72 percent in Roxbury, and 82 percent in Mattapan...Boston's racial composition is changing at a rapid clip. The predominant trend is the decline of the White population and the remarkable growth of Black and immigrant populations. Between 1950 and 1980, Boston's White population declined from 95 percent to 70 percent; across these same years, the Black and minority population climed from 5 percent to 30 percent.<sup>22</sup>

Roxbury is the only neighborhood that saw a significant increase in Democratic enrollment as a proportion of registered voters. The Latino movement into Roxbury almost directly supplements the black exodus, with nearly 15,000 new Latino residents since 1970.

**Table 3.11 Roxbury**

<b>Roxbury</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1190	1142	327	402
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	13820	9401	13634	17240
<b>White %</b>	.18	.08	.06	.05

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Massachusetts Election Statistics*, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

## Dorchester: North and South

The neighborhood of Dorchester, comprising the planning districts of North Dorchester and South Dorchester, reflects perhaps the greatest degree of diversity in the city. This is partly due to its size, as together it is certainly the largest neighborhood in the city of Boston in terms of population, at roughly 100,000 residents out of 600,000 in the city. It has been thus since its absorption by the city of Boston over a century ago.

Dorchester was a working-class outskirts of the city of Boston until the Great Migration, and the turn-of-the century saw a decidedly Irish white majority in the neighborhood, both north and south. Students were bused into Dorchester as well, and, at the start of the 1970s, it was decidedly a white-majority neighborhood. There has been no particular growth or seismic political change in Dorchester during this time, only that it was the site of much of Roxbury's black out-migration and the settling point for much of what has become Boston's increasingly foreign-born population. North Dorchester has gone from just over 80% non-Hispanic white to about 45% non-Hispanic white in the 1970-2000 era, and South Dorchester has seen its black population increase from only one-tenth to a plurality of the neighborhood, at just over 40%, in 2010. Yet South Dorchester has retained its 1500 (give or take a few) enrolled Republicans during that entire period, fluctuating a bit but remaining at that level.

North Dorchester has actually increased its number of enrolled Republicans from 700 to about 900. Yet, to note actual Republican political strength in North Dorchester in

regular elections is perhaps more accurate of a picture, rather than just depicting random Republican presence that constitutes 1% of the population. As the white population is now just over one-third what it once was (under 10,000 rather than over 27,000), so is the average Republican vote roughly one-third of what it was in the early 1970s (1500 rather than 5,000).

South Dorchester, similarly, has seen its Republican strength in gubernatorial elections decline from over 10,000 in the late 1960s and early 1970s to an average of perhaps 4,000 in the last two decades, while its white population has seen a drop of nearly half, as well. It would appear that in this neighborhood, if both are counted together as one neighborhood, that there is a relationship between the waning of Republican strength and white flight.

**Table 3.12 North Dorchester**

<b>North Dorchester</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	669	590	547	879
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	13428	7453	6559	7494
<b>White %</b>	.83	.67	.53	.36

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Massachusetts Election Statistics*, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

**Table 3.13 South Dorchester**

<b>South Dorchester</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1567	1292	1124	1600
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	22900	16486	15556	13863
<b>White %</b>	.88	.65	.48	.30

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Massachusetts Election Statistics*, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

### Allston-Brighton

Allston-Brighton, home to Boston University, is home to the largest student population in the city of Boston. It is also convenient (across the Charles River) to Cambridge, home of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, so the student and faculty population is quite high relative to other areas of the city. The historic neighborhoods of Allston and Brighton now share the planning district of Allston-Brighton, and the boundaries between the two are just as subjective as any of the other boundaries of the city. Allston-Brighton does lie at the outskirts of the city, and yet

is more accessible from the central districts than any of the outer neighborhoods such as Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, or West Roxbury.

The neighborhood of Allston/Brighton saw an ethnically Asian population increase from just over 1,000 to 10,000 from 1970 to 2000, and saw its Republican enrollment rise slightly, from 2700 to 4200. Its white population had dropped by about 5,000. Allston-Brighton, which occupies Wards 21 and 22 in the city, has seen the greatest degree of Asian population increase. However, it has been a very slow progression, and Asians still comprise only 10% of the neighborhood. Marked increases occurred in the 1980s, when the Asian population doubled from 3,000 to 6,000, and it has only increased marginally ever since in the neighborhood of 70,000 residents. Most of the new immigrants in the 1980s were of Chinese descent. It has served as a bedrock of support for candidates like former mayoral candidate Sam Yoon, an Asian-American who saw many of his votes come from Allston-Brighton. It now has more residents of Asian descent than Chinatown in Boston, but in no precinct in Allston-Brighton is there a majority of Asian residents. It has always had a white majority, and supplied the margin for many victories of Republicans throughout the 1960s and 1970s, even constituting the base of support in some elections.

An interesting phenomenon is the low voter turnout relative to the rest of the city and especially the lower turnout in state and local elections, that is, those elections not directly having bearing on a presidential election. This is partly why Republicans can win in this neighborhood. Allston-Brighton has seen an 18% overall decline in Democratic enrollment from 1970 to 2010, and a 2% overall Republican drop, remaining relatively stable. The total white population has declined slightly, by about 5%, but the newer

Asian population has more than compensated for that migration difference in this prosperous, bustling neighborhood.

**Table 3.14 Allston-Brighton**

<b>Allston-Brighton</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	2795	2069	2336	4229
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	19036	15575	14206	16779
<b>White %</b>	0.82	0.8	0.73	0.69

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Massachusetts Election Statistics*, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

### Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill

The Boston Redevelopment Authority has struggled to set the boundaries of study and neighborhood designation for both the Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill neighborhoods. Jamaica Plain, in neighborhood boundaries set by the BRA from 1970 to 2000, is roughly coterminous with what many residents now call “Mission Hill.” For the purposes of this study, Jamaica Plain is defined demographically by the BRA (1970-2000), and, in fact, many in the city familiar with the BRA’s boundaries believe most of what BRA has drawn as Jamaica Plain actually belongs in Mission Hill. For the purposes

of consistency and to leave this particular matter to future, more specific research, the two have been combined in the election results that have been tallied and referred to jointly as “Jamaica Plain.”

Both areas, have undergone waves of demographic change through the years. What was once a parochial Irish neighborhood for a time became home to many Latino immigrants and is now seeing an increase in the white population. Indeed in the 2000s, however, Jamaica Plain, was subject to rapid “gentrification.” The white share of the population increased as a percentage of the total by 17 points. Because it is within the city limits and reasonably close to the Back Bay, with many freestanding homes as well as apartment buildings along its main streets, college-age students have contributed to a relatively bohemian culture in both Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill. A significant Democratic enrollment increase also occurred during this decade. Over the course of the entire era, both Democratic and Republican enrollment declined by over 10 percent, while the white population declined by nearly half.

These cases bring into stark relief the idea that, contrary to merely looking at the progression of a neighborhood over the entire era, some neighborhoods, such as Jamaica Plain, saw racial changes of different character over different decades. For instance, black residents increased as a share of the population in the 1970s, and Latino residents in both the 1970s and the 1980s, but in neither of these cases was there any significant party identification change associated with the racial change.

**Table 3.15 Jamaica Plain**

<b>Jamaica Plain</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1698	1330	1134	1389
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	14784	10146	11263	12885
<b>White %</b>	.78	.59	.49	.36

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, Massachusetts Election Statistics, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

### Roslindale

Like South Boston, East Boston, and West Roxbury, Roslindale counted itself a “defended neighborhood” during the Boston busing crisis of the 1970s. It was a neighborhood on the outskirts of Boston with an ethnic white majority but soon saw that population decline. A significant white exodus occurred throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In fact, the absolute number of the white population is down 58% from its height in 1970 in Roslindale. Later, in the 1990s and 2000s, Latino in-migration began to repopulate the neighborhood. Surprisingly, there was relatively little Democratic decline,



in any of those eras of white exodus, and Republican enrollment stayed virtually the same.

**Table 3.16 Roslindale**

<b>Roslindale</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Republican Enrollment</b>	1411	995	1017	1288
<b>Democratic Enrollment</b>	12074	10642	8529	9129
<b>White %</b>	.96	.91	.77	.56

Sources: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, City of Boston and U.S. Census Reports from the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Reflections on the Neighborhoods of Boston

After the Civil Rights era, no decade saw a neighborhood with a significant decrease in either the Latino or Asian populations, but not so with the white and black populations. White population decrease is associated with virtually every racial change in Boston during this era, but concerning declines in the black population, only in one neighborhood was there significant racial change in multiple decades: Roxbury in the 1980s, which saw a concurrent significant racial increase for Latino residents.

Several interesting trends that are worth noting. Findings of association between Boston neighborhoods in terms of party identification change and racial change, coupled with the larger national and regional trends regarding racial attitudes among political party identifiers, seems to point to a certain consistency. Namely, a consistency exists within party ideology that would suggest identification and even voter registration with a political party is heavily associated with attitudes regarding race. Thus, the formation of governmental policy exists alongside a local experience of changing neighborhood demographics.

By breaking the city of Boston into its constituent neighborhoods, certain trends quickly become evident in those micro-polities. The starkest demographic change is captured in Map 3 and Map 4, found in the Appendices. The first (“Map 3”) shows 1970s data on neighborhoods and the degree to which they are majority white or plurality or majority nonwhite. In the 1970s only Roxbury and South End were mostly nonwhite, whereas in by 2000 there was a significant racial change that seems to have occurred. By 2000, racial and ethnic demographics in the city of Boston was transformed. By then, the South End was majority white, and Jamaica Plain, North Dorchester, South Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park were nonwhite.<sup>23</sup> Party identification trends and the racial trends within the city can and should be studied in conjunction. The entire data set of Republican share of the two-party gubernatorial vote by neighborhood in the post-Civil Rights Era is posted below. The largest and most consistent difference is between South Boston and Roxbury. This is true especially when the Republican and Democratic sides of a campaign mark a stark departure from articulating the interests of the neighborhood from one election to the next. In no other neighborhoods are there as many joint

fluctuations of partisan support there are in these two. Southie and Roxbury are perhaps bounded by race more than any other neighborhoods in Boston. Roxbury is the historic home, as noted above, of Boston's black population. Southie was the site of racial violence and national attention in the 1970s. It is those neighborhoods which became the focal point of racial politics statewide during the ensuing decades. The identification of the interests of either neighborhood became central, rhetorically and strategically, to the campaigns of both major parties. It may even be said, in the language of American Political Development, that the explicit racial identification of both neighborhoods in the early 1970s could be classified as a critical juncture in the political development of Massachusetts, ensuring a path dependence of continuous racialized political development for the remainder of the era.

In Table 3.17, the entire Republican share of the major-party vote, by neighborhood, is listed throughout the post-Civil Rights era. Roxbury, the Back Bay/Beacon Hill neighborhood, and South Boston are themselves worthy of attention. They are the pillars of consistency as well as the surrogates for the black, wealthy, and working-class white votes, respectively. For instance, there often is a stark shift especially in these places toward one candidate or another, but also note the patterns that emerge: after 1990, South Boston became a consistent Republican stronghold, which it never had been before.

**Table 3.17 Republican Share of Two-Party Massachusetts Gubernatorial Vote, By Neighborhood, 1970-2002<sup>24</sup>**

	<b>70</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Back Bay</b>	<b>.66</b>	<b>.56</b>	<b>.82</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.25</b>	<b>.62</b>	<b>.68</b>	<b>.47</b>	<b>.53</b>
Fenway	.61	.62	.64	.27	.18	.55	.57	.29	.32
Central	.50	.59	.47	.36	.27	.56	.68	.51	.45
W.Roxbury	.68	.50	.29	.44	.39	.42	.65	.50	.50
South End	.46	.56	.74	.21	.17	.52	.58	.31	.32
<b>S.Boston</b>	<b>.52</b>	<b>.41</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.48</b>	<b>.36</b>	<b>.29</b>	<b>.65</b>	<b>.57</b>	<b>.45</b>
Allston	.55	.45	.51	.23	.19	.46	.60	.35	.37
East Boston	.45	.37	.32	.33	.29	.44	.68	.58	.45
Hyde Park	.64	.44	.25	.37	.34	.42	.64	.43	.35
Charlestown	.42	.41	.20	.34	.27	.39	.56	.50	.50
Roslindale	.62	.42	.28	.36	.29	.41	.60	.41	.34

Jamaica P.	.57	.47	.39	.29	.22	.47	.48	.26	.22
N.Dorchester	.53	.42	.27	.30	.24	.37	.53	.35	.28
Mattapan	.50	.55	.59	.09	.12	.33	.45	.17	.12
S.Dorchester	.59	.44	.26	.33	.26	.34	.57	.39	.30
<b>Roxbury</b>	<b>.29</b>	<b>.70</b>	<b>.73</b>	<b>.07</b>	<b>.07</b>	<b>.37</b>	<b>.48</b>	<b>.19</b>	<b>.17</b>

Several phenomena emerge during this era: Many neighborhoods have seen a severe percentage (proportional) decline in Democratic enrollment, and all but a few have seen an absolute decline in that enrollment. A few have seen significant increases in Republican enrollment. Only a very few have seen a very significant decrease in Republican party identification enrollment during that time period, and those neighborhoods have some interesting commonalities which would seem to indicate an uptick in Republican identification in the city with a new type of voter who had been traditionally Democratic. The rest seem to fit into the pattern of increasing nonpartisan enrollment, suggesting many causes that currently are hotly debated in political science, but which will only be studied here within the context of the Boston case. Below, the table demonstrates the consistency of Republican support for virtually all offices, juxtaposed with the inconsistent participation and support of Democratic voters for their candidates. This appears to be less of a trend toward independent voting than simply a case of two very different standards of participation among supporters of the two major parties.

**Table 3.18**

**Average partisan turnout (among selected competitive elections) in overall  
citywide election, 1970-2010 (in thousands)<sup>25</sup>**

	President	Governor	Mayor*
Republican	54	55	50
Democratic	136	86	71

\*Republican-leaning candidates coded by author, Boston mayoral elections non-partisan.

As is plain in the above table, the vote did not vary more than 5-10% among Republican candidates<sup>26</sup> in competitive elections. Democrats, however, had a more difficult time retaining a victorious coalition. In presidential elections, the average Democratic turnout was as high as 136,000 votes, but could garner as many as 200,000 votes or as little as 95,000. Democrats were good for roughly 70,000 votes on average in the Governor's race, but could range from 50,000 to 110,000. In mayoral elections, when often the city Democratic party would back a candidate and interests more aligned with the Republican party may back another candidate, the split was more even.

Conclusion

Many of these neighborhoods hosted similar patterns and can reasonably be grouped into several main categories: South Boston, West Roxbury, and Charlestown were and remain white ethnic majority, working-class neighborhoods, which in the past were Democratic-leaning and have grown to form the new base of the Republican party. The Back Bay/Beacon Hill, the Fenway, the North End, and Allston-Brighton are all still majority white, center-city neighborhoods of some affluence that did constitute the Republican base in the city, but now operate more as swing vote districts that may tilt Republican in some elections. Roxbury and the South End are historically majority-black neighborhoods which have seen a migration of their black population out in favor of Latino, Asian, and white movement. East Boston, Jamaica Plain, and Roslindale are all historically working-class white neighborhoods at the outskirts of the city that now are home to large Latino populations, in one case a majority, but still with a relatively large white plurality in the other two. Hyde Park, Dorchester and Mattapan have all shifted from majority white to majority or plurality black neighborhoods gradually over the course of this era. This typology reveals several phenomena: the shifting character of racial makeup of many of the neighborhoods in the city, the accompanying shift in partisan dynamics in the city from a relatively competitive Republican-Democratic two-party system to a strong Democratic party presence, while seeing the suburban-focused Republican party compete only seriously in working-class white areas with a history of racial conflict. Residual Republican support may still come from the wealthier, white majority neighborhoods.

Many of the same patterns still persist in Boston politics, as we can see from the enrollment data: white residents leaving or entering a neighborhood has a determinative

effect on Republican enrollment, minority participation has not historically been as high as white voter participation, and Democratic enrollment has been declining everywhere. Because of the abundance of focus on the “new Boston” in demographic data in the past several decades, these truths remain. The four main demographic groups of the city may fluctuate in number and may indeed trade numerical dominance of neighborhoods, but one fact seems to remain: residential segregation of these neighborhoods is not a relic of the past, but an ongoing concern of the present that will necessitate political coalition-building and consensus rather than conflict.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Klinkner, Philip A. and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press (1999), Chapter Eight, “There Comes a Time: The Civil Rights Revolution.”

<sup>2</sup> Mollenkopf, John H., *The Contested City*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press (1983).

<sup>3</sup> Clarence N. Stone and Robert K. Whelan, in their work about the literature on urban politics, the work of Herbert Gans (*The Urban Villagers*), Mollenkopf (*The Contested City*), and Jane Jacobs (*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*) on urban renewal contemporaneous with its implementation, is noted in the book chapter “Through a Glass, Darkly: The Once and Future Study of Urban Politics” in Richardson Dilworth (ed.), *The City in American Political Development*, New York: Routledge (2009); Sidney M. Milkis, *The President and the Parties* (1993) discusses Johnson’s War on Poverty and its connection to the Democratic Party’s symbiotic relationship with federal programs and the constituencies they create.

<sup>4</sup> This excludes the “Harbor Islands” which have less than 1000 residents, mostly institutionalized. Some neighborhoods are synonymous with planning districts, but other neighborhoods are subsumed both within the planning districts, and within the twenty-two wards. It must be noted that the methods of the Boston Redevelopment Authority have come under criticism because its borders do not precisely correspond to the borders of the districts in the popular imagination or Boston city government. Nevertheless, the BRA maintained the boundaries throughout the period of study, and the maintenance of the existence of precincts in Boston electoral data make any boundaries malleable to the researcher. The author has attempted to compensate for this by using wards and precincts in electoral data in a consistent basis and used the same consistency for the demographic data.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners*, City of Boston.

<sup>6</sup> Mollenkopf, pp. 241.

<sup>7</sup> Mollenkopf, pp. 164.

<sup>8</sup> The South End is the only planning district that has seen a proportional and absolute increase in the white population in the 1970 to 2010 era. All other areas have seen proportional/percentage increases in the nonwhite population. (Chart: from the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, and Boston.gov.)

<sup>9</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority.

<sup>10</sup> Radin, Charles A. with Globe Staff. “Boston district debate begins with sparring over South End.” *Boston Globe*, December 9, 1981.

<sup>11</sup> From Mollenkopf, pp. 161 and 164: Boston Mayor John “Hynes initiated the now-infamous West End Project, one of the first massive slum clearance projects in the country. It displaced over 2,600 families. He also put together the Prudential Center project, comparing it to rolling away of the stone in front of Jesus’ tomb, with support from one of Boston’s leading real estate firms, Cardinal Cushing, and Charles



Coolidge, partner in Boston's most prestigious law firm[....]Though Boston's West End residents failed to mobilize against that city's first massive clearance, they banded together in the many neighborhoods to which they were displaced, warning that renewal portended destruction for working class neighborhoods." (pp. 164).

<sup>12</sup> Puleo (2009), pp. 228. Puleo goes further in his emphasis in his introduction, writing: "With due acknowledgment to the descendants of Boston Italian immigrants who settled in East Boston, Roxbury, Hyde Park, Roslindale, Dorchester, and the West End, this book's main focus is on the North End, the neighborhood that has been the heartbeat of Italian life in Boston for more than a century. The other Boston Italian neighborhoods are important and are dealt with here, but when the Boston Italian experience is examined and dissected, all roads lead to the North End, the city's oldest and most enduring Italian neighborhood."

<sup>13</sup> Ronald P. Formisiano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s*, Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press (2004) pp. 120-121.

<sup>14</sup> Mayor Tom Menino's signature urban renewal project was the South Boston Waterfront, which is now accorded the distinction of its own planning district alongside traditional Southie on the website of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

<sup>15</sup> Formisiano, pp. 174.

<sup>16</sup> Even this suburb character has its limits: A former colleague of the author planted a garden in his front yard in West Roxbury in 2011, though he had to take note of and account for the chemicals in the soil before he grew tomatoes for his wife and daughter.

<sup>17</sup> Formisiano, pp. 197.

<sup>18</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority.

<sup>19</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority.

<sup>20</sup> William E. Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics: Dilemmas of Political Empowerment in Boston and Liverpool*, Albany: State University of New York Press (2000).

<sup>21</sup> Indeed, when asked in 1990 why he did not address voters in Roxbury in person, Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Silber responded by saying that he would not simply because they were "a group of drug addicts" perhaps explaining why Roxbury voted for a Republican for the first time in almost thirty years.

<sup>22</sup> Nelson pp. 41-42.

<sup>23</sup> See Appendices C and D.

<sup>24</sup> Source: City of Boston.

<sup>25</sup> Source: *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Massachusetts Election Statistics*.

<sup>26</sup> And conservative-leaning candidates in city mayoral elections.

## CHAPTER 4

### MASSACHUSETTS ELECTIONS: CRIME, WELFARE, AND RACE

Republican candidates for state once offered a moderate brand of conservatism, and in the immediate post-civil rights era they were able to garner a substantial number of votes within the city. By the 1990s that was no longer the case. This chapter will chart the development of racial conservatism in the campaign rhetoric of a number of key elected officials from the 1970s through 2002. The relatively moderate conservatism of Senator Edward Brooke and Governor Francis W. Sargent is replaced, by the early 1990s, with racial conservatism. The role of national figures, especially Reagan, is considered. The campaign speeches and administration speeches are from all Republican governors elected in Massachusetts after 1970, including William Weld in (1990 and 1994), Paul Cellucci (1998), and Mitt Romney (2002) all of which illustrate the importance of racial conservatism to state politics.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Decline of Moderate Racial Liberalism

Francis W. Sargent was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1966 on the same ticket with incumbent Governor John Volpe. This was, incidentally, the first election for a full four-year term as governor of Massachusetts. For almost two centuries, governors in the Bay State had been elected to two-year terms. Now, all elections for Massachusetts governor would coincide with presidential “midterm” elections. Sargent was on the Republican ticket for the first three of these elections, and in the latter two he was the official standard-bearer of the Republican party. Volpe had previously held the office in 1961, and, presumably as a reward for helping Nixon win the state in the 1968 presidential election, Volpe was appointed and confirmed as the president’s Secretary of

Transportation, putting Sargent in the driver's seat as acting governor. Sargent would soon run for election and win in his own right in 1970.

Also in 1966, Edward W. Brooke, the first African-American elected statewide official in Massachusetts political history as Attorney General, was elected to a full term in the United States Senate from the Bay State to replace retiring Republican Leverett Saltonstall. Brooke won a bruising primary but assembled a coalition that relied on the traditional white Yankee Republican base in the city of Boston and the suburbs and rural areas across the state but which was also inclusive of virtually every majority-black neighborhood in the city of Boston. He kept this coalition throughout his tenure in office though it weakened enough for his marginal defeat in 1978.

Brooke and Sargent had a remarkable degree of agreement, and as a team, it seemed their only areas of significant disagreement were rooted in the primacy of their respective levels of government (federal and state), which can fairly be chalked up to perspectivism. On major issues, their rhetoric was extremely similar on issues of crime, welfare, education, and urban plight. In some ways, their views anticipate what would be central to Republican rhetoric on matters of poverty, welfare and crime by the 1980s. For example, Edward Brooke employed language that drew on the view that poverty was an artifact of a culture, as opposed to economic forces. Brooke spoke at length in his 1966 campaign book *The Challenge of Change* of the “disadvantaged Negro” and the need to practice a brand of “bootstrap” philosophical conservatism in government. Brooke can even be read as perpetuating black stereotypes:

There have always been **poor people**—but now they seem more **listless and hopeless**, and seem to personify the decline of the city itself. There have always been frustrated minorities—but now, as Newsweek has deftly put “the melting pot no longer melts, it only boils.”<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added]

His assessment of government's ability to address poverty was pessimistic:

No subsidy, service, or study that is not specifically planned to replace **incompetence** and **fatalism** with talents and aspirations can succeed.<sup>3</sup> [emphasis added]

However, Brooke did believe in the importance of subsidy to the poor, and he acknowledged that sometime provision was inadequate:

Relief payments too must be increased where relief is needed. For in most states the level of relief is appallingly low...They do not allow the **families** involved to make the investment in **education and training** for themselves and their children necessary to break free from poverty.<sup>4</sup> [emphasis added]

Sargent's view of welfare is also decidedly negative in tone and indeed implied that there is significant welfare fraud despite the noble mission of the program:

In Massachusetts, the word 'welfare' has come to mean the Public Welfare system. It is past due time to tighten, to scrutinize, to ride herd on programs designed to **help the helpless** but too often **abused by the unscrupulous**<sup>5</sup> ...[we should] "support welfare programs aimed at moving **people** from **welfare** rolls to **payrolls**."<sup>6</sup> [emphasis added]

Once elected to office in his own right in 1970, Sargent even attempted to "wipe out hunger" through "a proper mixture of the food stamp and commodity distribution programs, combined with implementation of the newly revised federal school lunch program to ensure that every child have a healthful lunch at school each day." (1969) At the same time, however, he attempted to maintain "fiscal responsibility," scoring political points for disparaging those who allegedly abuse the systems of welfare and Medicaid:

Welfare and Medicaid represent almost half of the state's budget, and their costs soar not because recipients get more but because the system wastes more. Let's get rid of it. **Let's abolish the Department of Public Welfare.** Let's create two smaller and separate agencies. One to handle payments and eligibility, and the other to deliver social services. Social workers will serve recipients, financial experts will protect the taxpayer against fraud and we will have better service for

less money. ...Both savings and service ...that is what I propose.<sup>7</sup> [emphasis added]

These aforementioned policy statements reflect Sargent's interpretive lens: he combined a view of a more administratively lean public service provision, which would be a more generous provision *and* the view that social policy could improve social programs. On the matter of support to mothers and families on welfare, Sargent supported expanding services when necessary:

I will rush the opening of **day-care centers** so **welfare mothers** can go back to work knowing their children are cared for.<sup>8</sup> [emphasis added]

Sargent also had what would today be called "liberal" views on crime and crime prevention:

We will file legislation and take administrative action to deal with the problems of mental health, **drug abuse**, and alcoholism, treating the alcoholic as a **patient not a criminal**, for the sick are healed by hospitals, not jails.<sup>9</sup> [emphasis added]

Governor Sargent also vetoed a renewal of the death penalty in 1974, during his re-election year.

Finally, on the issue of public education, Sargent and Brooke both saw the need for racial integration in public schools, particularly in Boston, where an extremely high-profile federal case was playing out before the eyes of the nation. Before any of this occurred, Brooke let his feelings on the subject of integration be known:

The Negro wants to live in an integrated society with all that that implies. He no longer is willing to live on the outside looking in. He wants his children to attend good schools. But he also wants them to attend integrated schools. He wants school busing as necessary but temporary relief in the establishment of integrated schools. But he also wants the destruction of the Negro ghetto which, among other benefits, will establish permanent school integration. He wants equal job opportunities and equal pay for equal skills and equal services.<sup>10</sup>[emphasis added]

Sargent did not have the luxury to pontificate on the issue in a hypothetical sense. His political future rested largely on his ability to capitalize on the crisis which had emerged leading to mass demonstrations, protests, and a general uproar in South Boston, West Roxbury, the North End, and other majority-white working class neighborhoods in the city. As a member of the party of Nixon, who opposed busing for integration, Sargent could have opposed the policy as well and challenged it in the courts. He did not. Instead, he took to the airwaves on May 11, 1974, and painstakingly justified his position:

You must understand what is at stake in the decision I confront—and what underlies the highly-charged emotions that have led to so intense an opposition to this law, that has caused one of the most progressive legislatures in America vote to repeal one of the nation’s most historic efforts to further social justice . . . In both Boston and Springfield we have plans that put the total burden for change on black and white working people in the inner city—and no burden on the richer, mainly white suburbs . . . My answer to the demand that we turn back the clock nine years, that we wipe out the commitment we have made is simple, firm and deeply felt. No . . . Integration is the responsibility of our whole society not one geographic area, not a handful of neighborhoods, not a tiny segment of the population of two of our major cities—Boston and Springfield.<sup>11</sup>

Six months later, Sargent was unable to win election a second term in 1974. He had taken unpopular positions both on taxes (raising revenue) and school busing.

Similarly, Boston Mayor Kevin White, whom Sargent had defeated in his first bid for governor in 1970, was a charismatic leader usually thought of as a governor-in-waiting, but White had acquired the derisive nickname “Mayor Black” as a result of his support for the federally-mandated public school integration policy.<sup>12</sup> He never did win the governorship, but held on to the mayor’s office until 1979.

Sargent’s plan on school busing was in and of itself an interesting case study: he had attempted as best he could to both capitalize on and mediate between the divisions

caused by the federal school busing mandate from federal Judge Arthur Garrity<sup>13</sup>. Sargent had taken to the airwaves and announced his own plan for how to implement school busing and integration in a new way that would both honor the principles of racial integration and allow school boards to have more control over their policies. This did not work, and his vote in Boston declined from 96,000 to 60,000 in the intervening four years.<sup>14</sup>

Sargent was defeated by a young Michael Dukakis in 1974, who had little to say, however, about school busing and even won votes in places like South Boston arguably because voters were dissatisfied with the incumbent Sargent's handling of the issue.

Two points about Sargent are worth underscoring. One is the margin of support for the Volpe and Sargent ticket was similar in most suburban counties (in, indeed in most counties statewide) to the neighborhood margins. The neighborhoods that saw increased support for Sargent, even in his loss, were Mattapan and Roxbury, and the South End, as well as the traditional Republican base in the Back Bay/Beacon Hill neighborhood.

The counties that saw the most similar margin to the Back Bay and Beacon Hill district, and the Central Boston district (including the Italian-dominated and relatively ancient North End neighborhood) was Barnstable on the so-called South Shore (and Dukes County, mostly synonymous with Martha's Vineyard, a quintessential vacation island for the wealthy and well-to-do, and Nantucket) . These neighborhoods and the South Shore represent the base of the Republican party in 1970. The North Shore county of Essex County is also relatively high in support for Sargent in this period.

The second point concerns his policy positions. Like Brooke, Sargent believed in limited government, law enforcement and related policies. However, like Massachusetts Republicans of that era, Sargent saw a *positive* role for government. While he certainly harbored stereotypical views about blacks and the poor, he discussed policies about social welfare provision and crime in a much more nuanced way than his counterparts in the 1990s would. Moreover, he stood by the enforcement of the most divisive social policy in post-civil rights Boston city politics.

Republicans failed in consecutive bids for governor after Sargent's term. Micheal Dukakis won in 1974 and, again, in 1982, 1984, and 1988. His loss to Edward J. King, however, might be instructive as evidence of the evolution of racial conservatism as a campaign ploy. A recession in late 1974 and 1975 had seen an exponential increase in the demand for social welfare benefits, which in turn squeezed the taxpayer base, and Dukakis was vulnerable. According to the *Globe*:

Unemployment rose by more than 50 percent in a single year—1974-75. Welfare, Medicaid, for the working poor, and unemployment compensation leapt skyward. By the time Michael S. Dukakis came to his senses in the spring of 1975, he was forced not only to enact the largest general tax increase in state history, but also to take an unheard-of step: requesting a separate major tax program to support \$450 million of state borrowing to meet current expenses.<sup>15</sup>

Such policy programs did not prove popular. Dukakis was defeated in the 1978 Democratic gubernatorial primary by the much more conservative Democrat Ed King, who also won the general election against moderate Republican Frank Hatch. King won, at least in part, by employing racial conservatism:

Having been caricatured by East Boston neighbors as a human bulldozer when he was executive director of Massport, King ran a similar campaign against incumbent Governor Michael Dukakis in 1978. In their TV debate, an instant classic, King managed to answer, nearly every question, regardless of subject matter, with some portion of a reminder that he favored capital punishment and



opposed taxes, welfare, and abortion. To many it seemed a boorish performance, but it succeeded in distinguishing King with crystal clarity. On primary day, King took the nomination by a comfortable 75,000 votes.<sup>16</sup>

King's crude, racially conservative manner clearly appealed to white South Boston voters, and not black Roxbury voters in the primary. King found it useful, in light of an apparent backlash against welfare, to capitalize on the success and even the program of Ronald Reagan, the losing candidate in the 1976 Republican presidential nomination campaign and former California governor, a seemingly odd strategy for a Boston-area Democrat, but one that proved successful. He retained the services of Robert B. Carleson, Reagan's former California welfare commissioner who seemingly popularized the idea of "waste, fraud, and abuse" being the most cost-effective and policy-neutral way of saving taxpayer money in the welfare system.<sup>17</sup> King boasted of being able to save as much as \$300 million annually at the time, while the official plan from Carleson, who appeared at press conferences with King of roughly \$140 million. In office King emphasized the same issue.<sup>18</sup>

His opposition to welfare remained central to his re-election strategy in 1982, which he ultimately lost. His brash manner was clear in the primary's final televised debate closing statement: "I ask that you put personalities aside and ask yourself four simple questions. Who has cut taxes? Who has taken the tough stance against crime? Who has cut welfare fraud? Who has created new jobs? I have."<sup>19</sup>

Only in majority-black Roxbury, the gentrifying South End, and the Yankee Back Bay during the 1978 election did Republicans (who had a liberal standard-bearer in Francis Hatch) see a margin of victory in any of the neighborhoods in either 1978 or 1982. But after that, Republican candidates for governor in Massachusetts followed a

simple campaign strategy: they pressed traditional calls for lower taxes and limited government coupled with an emphasis racial conservatism that played upon anti-black sentiment among whites in and out of Boston—this translated to a heavy emphasis on punitive criminal justice approaches, and restricted access to social welfare provisions. Using this type of campaign rhetoric and advertisement strategy, William Weld won the governor's race in 1990 and 1994, defeating Democrats John Silber and Mark Roosevelt, respectively. Republican Paul Cellucci defeated Democrat Scott Harshbarger in 1998. After Republican Jane Swift's brief tenure, Mitt Romney ran on the Republican ticket and defeated Democratic nominee Shannon O'Brien in 2002.

As will be discussed further, the string of success of Republican candidates is noteworthy for at least two reasons. 1) During this time the Democratic Party dominated at the mayoral, state and Congressional levels; 2) Republican candidates depended upon white public's grossly uninformed views of poverty and crime.

#### Welfare Queens, Underclass Ideology, and the Contract for America

In one sense, Republican success in Massachusetts in the 1990s reflected the strategy of racial conservatism made popular by Reagan in California as governor, and subsequently during his races for the White House.

The first exposure Massachusetts voters had to Ronald Reagan was media coverage of the 1976 New Hampshire Republican primary, which only preceded the Bay State primary by a few weeks. Reagan was nothing if not consistent: he campaigned on dismantling the welfare state and any and all programs that advantaged poor, black and brown people, including at one point a commitment to repealing the Civil Rights Act.

The start of the 1976 presidential campaign offered a chance to Reagan and his

supporters to dethrone President Ford as head of the Republican party. Partly on a plan to reduce government, Reagan secured forty-six percent of the primary vote, giving Ford the closest incumbent margin of victory in the history of the New Hampshire primary. As reported by 1976 Reagan campaign beat reporter Benjamin Taylor, Reagan's overall proposal set the tone for Republican attacks through the twenty-first century:

Under the plan as originally constructed, a Reagan administration would kill enough federal programs to not only balance the budget, but to also cut personal Federal income taxes by \$25 billion or 23 percent, and even to pay off \$5 billion of the national debt which has swelled to \$566 billion...The programs to be cut would include all Federal aid to education (excluding research); manpower training; community and regional development, including housing and urban development programs; many of the government's transportation programs; and social welfare programs such as food stamps, unemployment compensation, public assistance, aid to families with dependent children, and the Medicaid program.<sup>20</sup>

These proposals targeted the Great Society and War on Poverty programs of the 1960s, which were arguably some of the crowning achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, aimed at improving the lives of millions, disproportionately African-American. Reagan made his racial conservatism plain during a clandestine meeting with ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights, the main South Boston anti-busing parents and citizens group). Reagan stood to gain from obliquely leaking the meeting with the small group of activists. The story, and Reagan's views on busing, made it to page one of the Boston Globe:

The meeting was held in Manchester on Jan. 7 and was attended by about 10 opponents of court-ordered busing in Boston. The Boston group had requested the meeting and asked that it not be publicized...In a New York Times interview last week, Reagan was asked about court-ordered busing in Boston and said, "I think the judge's orders were wrong." [Reagan spokesman James] Lake said Reagan told the Boston group that he is opposed to mandatory busing and bringing it to a halt will be "one of his highest priorities."<sup>21</sup>

To be sure, Reagan was not running for mayor of South Boston or senator from New

Hampshire. It is simply useful to acknowledge that Boston busing was the racialized and polarizing controversy of the day, and Manchester was part of the Boston media market and had seen and read all about it, and Manchester voters likely had some personal ties to the controversy as well.

A few days after this story was leaked, at a candidate Q&A session in Dublin, New Hampshire, Reagan demonstrated his disregard for the concerns of people served by programs he was attempting to eliminate:

During the question-and-answer period, John Colony of Harrisville asked the former governor how minorities would be able to sustain their gains of the past 20 years without protection of the Federal government . . . Noting that he had lived in Louisiana while in the Coast Guard, the 30-year-old Colony said: “I’m concerned about what would happen to minorities as far as education is concerned if you turn control over to conservative state legislatures...” Reagan’s answer was twofold. First, he said that even with the transfer of power over social programs to state and local governments, the Federal government would retain the responsibility of upholding the Constitution...Secondly, Reagan pointed to the “great migration of Negroes from the South” in this country and said people have the right of “voting with their feet” by moving from one state to another.<sup>22</sup>

This statement couldn’t be more clear, as it signals Reagan’s commitment to policies that resonated among certain white constituents, not black or other minority voters. People had every right to leave the state, but not a right to equal treatment while living in it.

When Reagan returned to New England in 1980 for another run at the presidency during King’s tenure on Beacon Hill, he sat down several times with *Boston Globe* reporters to help clarify and amplify his views, improve his accessibility, thus improving upon his messaging. The political stances he expounds upon are not noticeably different from his former stances, and his lack of patience for arguments in favor of explicit racial liberalism could not be clearer, especially with the reporter’s apparent sympathy to Reagan’s stereotypically driven views of “social breakdown”:

Q. But, obviously, there is some social breakdown, particularly in poorer communities. You have kids who have not had parental supervision . . . and if you're against abortion, it would seem to me you'd be in favor of their being able to obtain contraceptives.

A. Well, and the government also steps in there. In some of our **inner cities**, there are actual cases, many more of them than you would believe, where **young girls, under-age, deliberately go out to have a baby so that they can get what they call "a pad of their own" because by getting the baby, unmarried, they can then become put on the Aid to Dependent Children program, and she'll get on that program, and it's because of the pregnancy - the pregnancy makes her eligible for the welfare program. Being on the welfare program makes her eligible for Medicaid. So she then goes and gets rid of the baby, and the government pays for it with tax dollars, and the government is bound by law to protect her privacy and not to let her own parents know that they are okaying her right to go and have this operation. Now there seems to be a pretty big inconsistency in this....**

....Q. In 66, you were quoted as saying you were **opposed to the 1964 Civil Rights Act**, as an example of federal intrusion.

A. I was opposed at the time - I can't remember the exact details - not for the idea of doing something against prejudice, certainly. **I was opposed to certain features of that law which went beyond and infringed on the individual rights of citizens** which are supposedly guaranteed by the Constitution.

Q. Which features?

A. Well, they had to do with the, let's say, the **person who owns property, his right to do with his property what he wants to do.**

A. You mean discriminate in renting it or discriminate in selling it?

A. At that time, this was what I thought was interfering with the right, particularly, with the idea of selling. I recognize that that could lend itself to the same prejudice that we're talking about, and I'm opposed to that prejudice.....**I played on a college football team alongside a black who's today my best friend**, when this was not commonplace. [all emphasis added in these interview excerpts]

Reagan's policy positions, once again, are both implicitly racially conservative (campaigning actively against welfare with familiar anti-poor people tropes) and explicitly conservative—he rehashes familiar arguments against the Civil Rights Act, the cornerstone of the Civil Rights movement.

Another interview is also illuminating in terms of Reagan's view of "people on welfare" and Medicaid:

Q. Speaking of federal programs, you criticized Kennedy's proposed health insurance proposal, calling it "Teddy care," but what alternative do you offer?

A. Well, I've asked our people to look into the idea of private health insurance field - 179 million Americans have hospital insurance. Nine out of 10 of those have surgical insurance along with it. Eight of ten have general medical insurance along with it. Now, that's a pretty good chunk of our people. Now you have Medicare for the elderly and you have **Medicaid for the medically indigent - the people on welfare and the people of such low earnings that they can't provide for themselves.** The programs for both of those groups - Medicaid-**Medicaid has been exposed as filled with fraud. It has been exposed as terrifically extravagant.**<sup>23</sup> [emphasis added]

President-elect Reagan, after winning New Hampshire in both the primary and the general election this time, felt it necessary, in late November 1980, to continue his rhetorical promise from 1976, if not fulfill it. He was always careful to make any implication of racism explicitly denied, as Rachelle Patterson reported in a *Globe* story:

"Well now," Reagan said, "let me make this answer very carefully, because I want everyone to understand that **I am heart-and-soul in favor of the things that have been done under the name of civil rights, desegregation and so forth....**I happen to believe, however, and have felt for a long time and I think a great many of the **black leaders agree also, that busing has been a failure** and is not accomplishing the purpose, a worthwhile purpose that gave it birth. So, therefore, I think there are better ways to achieve the ends than by continuing this program." . . . Reagan said **he would sign anti-busing legislation** as President. But the issue may be academic next year since he is expected to choose an Attorney General and officials of the Justice Department who reflect his views. It is unlikely that the Justice Department next year will pursue busing as a tool.<sup>24</sup> [emphasis added]

Reagan's political persona as the champion of implicit racial conservatism is thus intertwined with his early candidacy appearances in the crucial primary state of New Hampshire.

Back in Massachusetts, Governor Sargent was defeated by a young Michael Dukakis in 1974. Dukakis had little to say about school busing and even won votes in

places like South Boston arguably because voters were dissatisfied with the incumbent Sargent's handling of the issue. South Boston was also hostile to Senator Brooke, giving a majority of votes to the opposing Democrat in each of this three elections, in 1966, 1972 and 1978.

However, 1976 saw a Republican primary in Massachusetts for the presidency (a few weeks after New Hampshire), and former California Governor Ronald Reagan won the most votes in South Boston among GOP voters.<sup>25</sup> The same disparity existed in reverse when it comes to Roxbury, Brooke as the winner and Reagan the loser. Brooke seemed to acknowledge openly that he and Reagan appealed to different constituencies, and that they were not necessarily on the same electoral side.<sup>26</sup>

Asked whether he would accept a vice presidential nomination if Reagan would be the eventual Republican nominee, Brooke said: "I doubt it. I don't think we could reach an accommodation. We disagree on various issues." Brooke doubts that either Reagan or his cause will succeed in 1976, saying: "I don't think there are enough conservatives in the primaries to nominate Ronald Reagan over an incumbent President or incumbent Vice President. He has emotional appeal, sure, on issues like **busing or welfare**. But we need a more centrist candidate. Look what happened to the Democrats with George McGovern in '72. The same thing would happen to us."<sup>27</sup> [emphasis added]

Just as Republicans Brooke and Reagan were not apparently ideological allies, the same could be said of Democrats Ed King and Michael Dukakis, who faced each other in the 1978 Democratic gubernatorial primary. In a very interesting irony, the very insult Dukakis used to defeat King in a Democratic primary, that King was "Reagan's favorite Democratic governor" was first used in a Dukakis television ad. Dukakis' exaggeration became accepted truth, as King never held another elective office, and changed his registration to Republican three years after leaving office. No retrospective article on King's life and career would be complete again without that supposed (erroneous) quote

from Reagan.<sup>28</sup>

So it was that in the mid-1970s, the Republican party of Massachusetts began to suffer a dry spell in gubernatorial elections that lasted throughout the 1980s, even though Reagan won the state's electoral votes in both 1980 and 1984. This comes at a time when there is a large degree of increases in white population in the suburbs and exurbs, and continued decrease in the white population in most neighborhoods in Boston. Massachusetts as a whole remained overwhelmingly white, and Boston as a whole did, as well. However, Democratic Governor Michael Dukakis managed to keep Republicans out of the corner office for sixteen years in part by remaining popular in the city of Boston and maintaining an electoral base there.<sup>29</sup>

John W. Sears, a party functionary, picked up some of the more conservative voters in the 1982 election. He was also defeated by Dukakis in this contest, however, and so in 1983 Dukakis began his second gubernatorial administration, after the third straight Democratic victory and Republican loss. Dukakis became the focus of conservative Republican antipathy during the 1980s, and most of what occurred in conservative growth in Massachusetts was indeed over his objection. Massachusetts and the city of Boston have a history, like many states, of citizen initiatives and referenda. Several of those referenda are policy-based, conservative-fueled referenda that would indicate support for the Reagan Republican agenda. While Republicans could not seem to get elected to statewide elected office in 1980s Massachusetts (including 1986 nominee George Kariotis<sup>30</sup>), the germ of support for the later Republican base of Weld, Cellucci and Romney is foreshadowed in the voting percentages seen in the following neighborhoods that voted in favor of the death penalty, the tax revolt measure, and the



abortion ban (See Table 4.1). Whether they become law is irrelevant to their utility in measuring neighborhood opinion breakdowns, but only Proposition 2 ½ ever saw the light of day beyond these votes.<sup>31</sup>

### 1980s and the Beginnings of a White Republican Resurgence

From 1970 until 2002, a small subset of public policy issues dominated the majority of the political discourse in Massachusetts: taxes, education, crime, and social welfare/health care, and perhaps rightly so. School quality, integration, and funding are a legitimate matter of public concern, as is the strength of the safety net in a capitalistic economy.

Despite substantial support in many sections of the city in the 1970s and 1980s, the Republican party was not competitive in gubernatorial campaigns, evidenced by voting data in Boston neighborhoods during that period. This changed in the 1990s, and, as noted in previous chapters, Republican appeal was stronger in certain sections of the city. By the 1990s the nature of the electorate in the city has changed and so had the campaign strategy.

The germs of support for the later Republican base of Weld, Cellucci, and Romney are foreshadowed in the voting percentages of the following Boston neighborhoods that voted for referenda in favor of the death penalty, the tax revolt measure, and the abortion ban. There is a strong correlation between percentage white and support for lower taxes, death penalty reinstatement, and an abortion ban.

**Table 4.1**

**Percentage Support for Referenda in Boston during the 1980s,  
by selected neighborhoods**

	% White (1980-90)	Anti-Tax Proposition 2 ½ (1980)	Death Penalty Reinstatement (1982)	Abortion Ban (1986)
East Boston	96-76	69	65	52
West Roxbury	97-95	69	63	52
Hyde Park & Mattapan	47-38	64	60	48
South Boston	99-96	61	69	64
Central (North End)	80-74	61	49	32
Charlestown	98-95	60	60	49
South Dorchester	66-50	58	58	55
Back Bay	91-89	53	39	15
North Dorchester	70-59	52	51	46
Allston-Brighton	87-74	51	45	34

*Sources: Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Boston Redevelopment Authority*

The data capture the sorts of policies understood to represent the “blend” of ideas about limited government with ideas about social control and “morality.” Over this same period of time, the “black wards” in the City of Boston where a majority black population resided, show a different pattern. The table below shows opposition to the death penalty and support for Dukakis, and there is a clear association between those two data points and the percentage of white residents of a particular ward.

**Table 4.2****Percentage Opposed to Death Penalty Referendum in Boston during the 1980s, and support for Dukakis in Same Election (1982), by Ward<sup>32</sup>**

	Nonwhite	Oppose Death Penalty	Dukakis
Ward 12 (Roxbury)	98	83	93
Ward 14 (Dorchester)	97	83	94
Ward 9 (Roxbury)	90	80	93
Ward 8 (South End, Roxbury)	78	59	86
Ward 11 (Mission Hill)	59	64	82
Ward 17 (South Dorchester)	58	52	74
Ward 10 (Mission Hill)	57	60	78
Ward 15 (Dorchester)	48	50	76
Ward 13 (Dorchester)	39	48	69
Ward 18 (Hyde Park, Mattapan)	31	40	67
Ward 21 (Allston-Brighton)	29	60	81
Ward 4 (Back Bay, Fenway)	29	66	74
Ward 3 (Central)	20	51	64
Ward 5 (Back Bay, Fenway)	16	61	69
Ward 19 (Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill)	15	52	65
Ward 22 (Allston-Brighton)	13	50	74
Ward 6 (South Boston)	8	30	48
Ward 1 (East Boston)	4	35	67
Ward 16 (South Dorchester)	3	36	62
Ward 2 (Charlestown)	2	40	66
Ward 20 (West Roxbury)	1	37	57
Ward 7 (South Boston)	1	32	55

*Sources: Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, Boston Redevelopment Authority*

## Racial Conservatism in the 1990s

Before returning to the analysis of Massachusetts gubernatorial politics, it is worth discussing how ubiquitous racial conservatism was in national politics leading up to, and including, the 1990s:

- Nixon implicitly bemoaned civil rights demonstrations as a disruption of “law and order” and campaigned against this disruption.<sup>33</sup>
- Segregationist George Wallace won an overwhelming majority of votes in South Boston during the 1976 Democratic presidential primary.<sup>34</sup>
- Ronald Reagan launched his national campaign in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the location of the 1964 murder of civil rights activists Goodwin, Chaney and Schwerner. He pledged his allegiance to “states’ rights,” a coded nod and wink to racial segregationist sentiment among whites in that state. As mentioned before, he argued for curtailed social welfare provision and coined the term “welfare queen” in 1976 in a symbolic gesture meant to appeal to racially stereotypical views of welfare mothers as black and undeserving.<sup>35</sup>
- Massachusetts inmate Willie Horton, who was furloughed in 1987 during the administration of Michael Dukakis, and raped and tortured a Maryland couple, a fact exploited by the 1988 George Bush for President campaign manager Lee Atwater.<sup>36</sup>
- Omi and Winant point out that President George H.W. Bush, in 1992, took a helicopter to a photographic opportunity in Los Angeles during the riots, in which

he deplored the chaos and violence that erupted as a result of failed social programs.<sup>37</sup>

- In 1992, then-Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton flew home to personally witness the execution of condemned and mentally challenged prisoner, African-American Ricky Ray Rector. Clinton also condemned rap star Sister Souljah and her violent lyrics. In 1996, Clinton signed a bill that repealed welfare, flanked by black women who had formerly been enrolled in welfare.<sup>38</sup>
- Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) ran a commercial in 1996 implying that his opponent, Democratic (and African-American) Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt, was a champion of affirmative action hiring practices, and that he was not “one of us.”<sup>39</sup>

This is far from a comprehensive list or discussion of racial conservatism in national politics. It is meant to provide further emphasis about the salience of racial conservatism and to underscore the fact that to much of the white public, black dependency and criminality were the key social problems.

The decade of the 1990s began with a still overwhelmingly white statewide population, but Suffolk County and its main constituent part, the city of Boston, were more of an outlier in state population than ever before. With nearly forty percent of the population *not* counted as white, there was perhaps never before a *starker* racial divide between “the Hub” and its surrounding counties. Barnstable and Plymouth Counties continued to see an influx of residents, primarily white, and both had over 94% white populations to start. Boston saw a decline of over 40,000 white residents in the 1990s, while the suburbs surrounding saw an increase of roughly 100,000.

It was in this political environment that William Weld, an ambitious prosecutor with an eye toward making a name for himself, emerged.<sup>40</sup> Weld served in the Reagan Justice Department as Assistant Attorney General before leaving to run for office statewide in his home of Massachusetts. He was never elected to office before<sup>41</sup>, but his media exposure as US Attorney for Eastern Massachusetts seemed to sufficiently prepare him for a statewide run for governor. During his bid for the Republican nomination, Weld emphasized his career as a prosecutor in which he actively put criminals behind bars. Yet he also employed racial conservatism.

Weld's 1990 opponent, Democratic nominee John Silber, was also not innocent of employing racial conservatism. In 1990, Silber ran an anti-welfare, anti-crime campaign, and in the spring 1989 he said publicly: "The fact is, **young girls are having babies in order to drop out of school and get on welfare.**"<sup>42</sup> [emphasis added]

What raised Silber to the level of nearly an explicit racism was his behavior over the course of the primary campaign. For example, responding to a debate question later printed in the Boston Globe about why he had not addressed the residents of police-designated "Area B" (including the neighborhoods of Roxbury, and parts of Dorchester and Mattapan), Silber responded: "I will tell you something about that area. There is no point in my making a speech on **crime control to a group of drug addicts.**"<sup>43</sup> [emphasis added] One pundit remarked on what seemed to be the conventional wisdom in the wake of the controversy, that it ended the Democratic campaign.<sup>44</sup>

In Weld's debate with Silber, the racially conservative rhetoric of both campaigns was on full display. Drawing on assumptions about the alleged underclass, Weld stressed that welfare recipients should work in order to receive any benefits:

We need tough work requirements. If you don't give **people on welfare** a deadline to go to work, on the whole, they don't. I would suggest history has proven that over time.<sup>45</sup> [emphasis added]

Weld is, of course, playing to stereotypes. He is insinuating to his audience that people on welfare (black and Latino women) are the problem, and not, say, unemployment, lack-of-child care and other social services or poverty rates.

By linking the epidemic of violent crime to gangs and drug dealers, Weld also played the "race card" in the debate. He asserted that there "is almost nowhere that is safe from the epidemic of violent crime." And in an allusion to an issue that so damaged Dukakis's presidential campaign he theorized "[p]eople get mad as hell when they see somebody released from jail just a couple years after a vicious rape or a violent crime is committed."

But it was gangs that drew the greatest attention:

"I think we've gotta focus on **gang violence**, on these **gang members, dope dealers** who are bringing weapons into Massachusetts. And in order to do that, we need to increase the sentencing for the career criminals who are threatening us. The average career criminal commits 244 felonies a year. I say **take him off the street** for 10 years with a **mandatory minimum** if he commits a crime with a firearm. I say let's get a state statute penalizing felons who possess firearms....That would do more to combat urban violence than any ban on .22 rifles which you yourself possess." [emphasis added]

After his election, as an incumbent Republican governor, he began to sound even more themes of law-and-order, about drugs, about crime, about the death penalty and about ending parole for violent offenders. This has to be understood from the standpoint of racial conservatism.

In Boston, Republican support was at its highest for William Weld in 1990 and especially in his reelection in 1994. Weld ran on themes of corruption on Beacon Hill and absenteeism by his opponent Mark Roosevelt, a member of a distinguished family. Weld clearly had an advantage in the 1994 election, riding a wave of Republican discontent

around the country with the Clintons' health care plan failure, tax increase (aka economic stimulus package), and numerous unpopular foreign military interventions (Haiti, Somalia, and even the failure to intervene in Rwanda). Newt Gingrich and Rush Limbaugh helped foment voter discontent around the United States in 1994 on the issues that they classified as "big government" and "welfare" and "crime." Weld did his best to highlight his identification with all of those issues, while amassing a campaign war chest as an incumbent, as well as running early ads demonizing his opponent and associating him as much as possible with a terrible professional image.

Mark Roosevelt, for his part, seemed on paper to be a strong campaigner. However, he was hammered over the death penalty despite his campaign theme of education having been neglected by Governor Weld.<sup>46</sup>

In an October 1994 rally with Republican Senate nominee Mitt Romney, who was opposing Edward Kennedy that November, Weld proclaimed his accomplishments during his first four years:

The people wanted the welfare system reformed. Well, we got in there, we kicked **convicted criminals and drug abusers** off the rolls! And we will continue fighting until every able-bodied person is **working for a paycheck**, not just collecting a welfare check. [emphasis added]

The people of this state were fearful of crime. Well, we abolished early release on parole, we toughened up and we lengthened criminal sentences, and we built more prison cells so we could **lock up the bad guys longer**. And we will continue to fight to bring the **death penalty back** to Massachusetts. [emphasis added]<sup>47</sup>

Here again the themes of racial conservatism are plain. He is appealing to the fallacious view that 1) welfare is a problem, 2) that it is the source of much fraud and graft and 3) and that the solution was work requirements, rather than ending poverty for families and children.



The results of this election show that the Back Bay once again formed a core of support along with the Fenway, but a new phenomenon occurred as well: high majority support in the communities of Roslindale and Hyde Park, as well as South Boston.

In his 1996 State of the State address as a Weld returned to the matter of welfare.<sup>48</sup> He shared the contents of a letter from a young (white) mother, whom he had invited to his address. In quoting and enthusiastically endorsing the letter, Weld read:

I understand, **if I was on welfare**, I could go to a training school free. I could get a daycare voucher. I could get food stamps and a check every two weeks, Mr. Weld. That **sounds to me, Mr. Weld, like luxury!** Can you explain to me why I should not quit my job and go on welfare? [emphasis added]

Governor Weld went on to discuss at length the evils of “illegitimacy” in which his use of teen pregnancy statistics was dubious in its characterization at best, disingenuous at worst. He used once again, in the same speech, the rhetorical device of a young girl’s testimony (though this girl was not present at the address, but had spoken to a reporter): “A **16 year old** recently told the Boston Globe that the main reason some of her teenage friends were **having babies** out of wedlock was **to get welfare benefits.**” It is important to note that the apparent race-neutral statement is anything but—whites opposed welfare because black women received benefits.

Weld did read from a section on education policy, which had little to do with education per se:

**This year we are filing a bill to double the mandatory minimum for anyone who brings an illegal gun on school property**, and if a kid brings a gun inside your child’s classroom, he should not be allowed in that classroom again. We also want to double the mandatory minimum penalties for anyone who deals drugs to kids. Along with guns and drugs, gang violence is one of the biggest threats to the safety of our kids and neighborhoods. Violent gang members belong in prison, and we’re gonna keep on fighting for tough mandatory minimum penalties to keep them there. [emphasis added]

Weld's insistence on emphasizing the issue of "gang violence" shows again the use of racial conservatism. He emphasizes "urban" schools and "drugs"—code words that convey the central point about black and brown deviance and criminality.

On the subject of criminal justice and sentencing reform, Mr. Weld had a decidedly different view of judicial discretion in sentencing than former Governor Frank Sargent (who apparently believed in "flexibility" for judges and for a "parole board" that was "empowered"):

You do hear the argument these days that mandatory minimums interfere with judge's discretion. **And I say, that's right, that's exactly what they're supposed to do. When the courts return dangerous criminals to the street corners as fast as police can haul them in, the public has a right to demand justice.** The public has a right to say that people who prey on our neighborhoods and our children deserve to be in prison, and it shouldn't be maybe. It should be mandatory. [emphasis added]

Finally, Weld made sure his position was clear on restoring the death penalty: "Finally, for **cop-killers**, and for other **cold-blooded murderers**, there is only one penalty, the maximum penalty, the death penalty." [emphasis added]

The Senate seat he would vie for was held by the admired but not exceedingly loved junior Senator from the state, John F. Kerry. The Weld-Kerry contest proved to be one of the most competitive races in memory, but President Clinton's popularity in the state and the reflexive inclination to vote Democratic during national election years proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for Weld.<sup>49</sup>

Before considering the career of Paul Cellucci, it is important to underscore a basic point: racial conservatism is correlated to support among white Bostonians. It functions more as an ideology than a coherent agenda which changes legitimate "public"

concerns about poverty, employment, welfare provision, drug use, etc., into ostensibly “private” concerns about bad behavior, delinquency, and immorality.<sup>50</sup>

Weld’s successor, Paul Cellucci, had been his lieutenant governor for six years, and his running mate for a year before that. When assuming the post of “acting governor” upon the resignation of Weld in 1997, Cellucci soon announced he would be running for governor in his own right, and proposed several tax cuts that Weld had never enacted. Cellucci faced opposition to his election from the Attorney General, Scott Harshbarger. Harshbarger ran on a platform that included expanded and affordable health care, and his record as a consumer watchdog as Attorney General.<sup>51</sup>

By contrast, Cellucci mixed traditional conservative positions, particularly pledges for lower taxes, with racial conservatism. During one debate with Attorney General Scott Harshbarger in the 1998 campaign for governor, Cellucci gave an extended answer about his philosophy of criminal justice. The crime that concerned him was street crime, happening in certain neighborhoods, certainly not suburban ones:

We have very dangerous criminals, we have murderers, we have violent offenders and they need to be kept in a maximum security prison. There was a headline in the newspaper not too long ago, it said if crime is down, why are the prisons overcrowded? Well, because the prisons are overcrowded, crime is down, because we passed truth in sentencing and mandatory sentencing for **drug pushers**, we’ve got these people behind bars, **they’re not out in the streets, and they’re not out in the neighborhoods, committing crime**. So my answer to those who say we should weaken these laws, that we should repeal the minimum mandatory sentences, that we should weaken the truth in sentencing law, I say no way! If I get a bill like that to my desk, I’m gonna veto it. **I say let’s build more prisons, let’s put public safety first.**<sup>52</sup> [emphasis added]

One of the *Boston Globe*’s writers ridiculed Cellucci’s opponent, Attorney General Scott Harshbarger (despite the fact that the paper eventually endorsed him) by labeling him a “preachy activist” a nickname that seemed to stick throughout their coverage.<sup>53</sup>

After winning election in his own right, Cellucci focused in his State of the State addresses almost exclusively on education, in contrast to Weld.<sup>54</sup> He promised maintenance of the Weld-Cellucci policy on welfare reform, but welfare went nearly unmentioned during his State of the State addresses save for some mentions of “putting people to work” but without a thorough defense of the program known as “workfare.” He had also sponsored a health care expansion for the poor using federal funds and funds from a large tobacco settlement that proved available in 1997 and 1998. During one of his campaign’s television commercials, a testimonial from a white, working man explained that he was able to provide health care for his family because of Governor Cellucci. His signoff line in the ad was, “Hopefully I’ll be off of [Medicaid] soon and I’ll pass it on to **someone who needs it more than I do.**”<sup>55</sup> [emphasis added] Such a sentiment would only seem to make sense in a statewide campaign wherein the candidate and his predecessor had spent a great degree of time vilifying those who accept public assistance.

Cellucci also pledged support for the death penalty, but not frequently and not as prominently as when he campaigned. Cellucci proved to have an uneventful term save for the Big Dig. Begun during the Dukakis administration, the Big Dig was the most expensive road construction project in American history. It involved placing the high-rise interstate highway that ran through Boston’s Little Italy, the North End, from which Cellucci drew majority support during his 1998 election, underground in a new tunnel. It promised a new revitalization of Boston’s downtown, with hopes that it would lead to a duplication of New York City’s Central Park. It saw massive cost overruns, false starts, and, at the tail end, during the Romney administration, the collapse of the newly erected tunnels on a woman driving through it while her husband sat next to her, helpless.

Scandal, cost overruns, and even corruption were a large part of this urban redevelopment story, but Cellucci weathered it well.<sup>56</sup> Cellucci stepped down in 2001, leaving the governor's chair to his young lieutenant governor, Jane Swift, a former state senator from the rural Berkshire mountain region, 150 miles from Boston. Swift, 36, was one of the youngest governors in the state's history, and was clearly a newcomer to the rough-and-tumble of Boston politics.

In her lone State of the State message, Swift devoted the entirety of the speech to emphasizing new educational standardized testing, charter schools, and English immersion, all of which are fundamentally conservative Republican initiatives.<sup>57</sup> Education is normally the province of Democrats, however, and her emphasis on the issue (including her invitation to a young black student who had failed her first standardized test but was now receiving tutoring to re-take it) made her appear liberal. In actuality, standardized testing is a relatively conservative reform initiative as it involves little in the way of reallocating key education and financial resources.

Swift had a very rocky tenure as acting governor, and a scandal damaged her career. Swift at the time had three young children, and lived on their family ranch in the Berkshires, over 150 miles from Boston. Thus, she received helicopter and limousine rides from the state capitol back to her home on a regular basis, paid for with governmental funds. She also gave birth to twins while in office, and conducted cabinet meetings from her hospital bed soon thereafter, which was controversial, though popular. Boston was also the embarkation point for nineteen Saudi Arabian members of al-Qaeda who successfully crashed their plane into the New York World Trade Center. The head of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which runs the Boston's Logan

Airport, was forced to resign shortly after September 11, and the head of security at Logan Airport was under as much pressure as the MBTA chief and Swift herself.<sup>58</sup>

Acting Governor Swift's popularity plummeted. When the prospect of Mitt Romney heading the 2002 Republican gubernatorial ticket emerged as a possibility, he outpolled her among Republican primary voters by 75-12 in the last poll before she bowed out of the race. Romney had impressive credentials when he arrived, seemingly out of nowhere in 2002—a joint law and business degree from Harvard University, a history as one of the top venture capitalists ever to do business in Boston, and even as a religious leader to the small Mormon community in the larger Boston region. He also had just seemingly rescued the Salt Lake City Olympics in 2002 in the face of a scandal-plagued and financially insolvent Olympic organization before his entry.

His movie-star good looks and middle age, along with his vast personal fortune and professional pedigree, made him an ideal candidate. The support for Romney was so enthusiastic that many began to speak about him as a potential future presidential candidate, before he had even officially received the Republican nomination for governor of Massachusetts.

Romney's strategy was not that different from that which he ran against the iconic Democratic Senator Edward M. "Ted" Kennedy in 1994. Romney garnered an impressive 45% of the vote in a state where the Kennedy name, reputation, and ideology is often regarded as synonymous with the political culture of the state.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, Romney earned those votes in a year when William Weld, the incumbent Republican governor, managed to win 70% of the votes statewide, and Republicans nationally captured a net 73 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. So in a Republican watershed year, Romney

had almost won, but did not win. He lost despite the fact that he was a textbook Republican candidate, raising money on his own and taking stances (i.e. on abortion) that allowed him to compete in the state, while emphasizing racial conservatism. Romney's chief campaign themes are captured during a 1994 campaign rally with Weld:

Neither the **people who are on welfare** nor the people who are **paying for welfare** think that that's the answer for getting people back to work. In the real world, people recognize who are senior citizens that you don't want to have **recovering drug addicts** moving into housing centers that were placed for **senior citizens**....being tough on crime, tough on welfare [*sic*].<sup>60</sup> [emphasis added]

In defining "recovering drug addicts" as unworthy of public housing and championing the victimhood of needy senior citizens, Romney sets himself up as the defender of middle-class, white Massachusetts voters. What is noteworthy is that, in 1994, these statements were not credible positions in an era of occupational downsizing and outsourcing, relatively flat household income, rising consumer credit and trade agreements that were arguably tied to all those aforementioned trends. Property crime in Massachusetts was down in 1994, and in 2002, property crime was lower than it had been since 1978<sup>61</sup>; and welfare never was more than roughly \$25 billion per year (in constant 1993 dollars) from its creation in 1970 until its end in 1994, representing only a small fraction of the overall federal budget. Nevertheless, Romney did better against Ted Kennedy for that Senate seat than any other Republican ever had (despite ultimately losing to Kennedy) by stressing these campaign themes first championed by Reagan and further carried to victory in Massachusetts by Weld.

Eight years later, Romney relied on similar rhetoric. Romney's campaign rhetoric largely ignored Swift, and called the Beacon Hill leadership and his opponent, State Treasurer Shannon O'Brien, the "Gang of Three." Running against a "Beacon Hill"

triumvirate that could easily have been replaced with “Capitol Hill” in his rhetoric, Romney also capitalized on the Republican wave that resulted from the popularity of President George W. Bush in the wake of 9/11. He emphasized the need for a fresh start for the state, and characterized Democrats as “bureaucrats” who did too much “bickering.” Of O’Brien, he told her to her face during a one-on-one debate that her conduct was “unbecoming” eliciting widespread charges of condescension and sexism from his critics.

On crime, he was not as silent as Swift had been. In his opening remarks in front of his posh Belmont estate, he asserted, without elaboration: “Our **streets** are not as safe as they should be.”<sup>62</sup> [emphasis added] During a response to a reporter’s question in which the death penalty was now being called into question in many states due to the widespread use of DNA evidence to clear longtime death row inmates, Romney responded that he was still an enthusiastic backer of capital punishment:

Science is our friend! We now have the ability through DNA testing. And other scientific forensic capabilities, to determine whether there is incontrovertible evidence associated with a particular conviction. And what I would like to do is in the case of certain heinous crimes: terrorism, murder of witnesses to trials, crimes of terrible abuse towards children, the likes of which we’re reading about in our papers, I’d like to make sure that in those cases, the death penalty is an option. **I’d have a trial where there is a conviction based on surpassing the standard of without a reasonable doubt.** But then I’d also have a separate procedure, which would be based upon assuring there is incontrovertible evidence that the person is guilty. And in that circumstance, where there’s a heinous crime, and such clear evidence, I believe the death penalty is necessary. It deters such crimes. It is the right thing to do. And I’m convinced it will make a difference for the safety of the people of Massachusetts, and that’s why I support it.<sup>63</sup> [emphasis added]

So again in an era when the rates of violent crime were down, Romney continued to make political use of concerns about “street crime,” and ostensibly weak sentencing for defendants sentenced for murder.



Needless to say, none of those suggestions were ever implemented, though the condescension in the room was palpable, even on videotape. In fact, the death penalty as an issue was never formally addressed again during Romney's term of office. The verbal and rhetorical gymnastics he did in that moment did speak to a cornerstone of the Weld-Romney strategy that Romney would ditch: harsh punishments for criminal offenders, a stance that was not neutral, but pregnant with racial connotations. He had done what was necessary to achieve his goals: he made substantive policy suggestions in the conservative direction of both crime and welfare, as well as education. He had also run commercials substantively mimicking Swift's idea on English immersion in schools for non-native English speakers. In large letters, next to his smiling face, one commercial showed : "End Bilingual Education" which has much more of a harsh tinge than a slogan that might have read instead "Promote English Immersion." Still, Romney won the election with a decisive, if not comfortable margin. Romney became the third consecutive Republican to win the governor's race. This owed itself, partly, to demographic trends among relevant constituencies, and the ongoing appeal of racial conservatism in gubernatorial elections.

In these elections, which truly represent the zenith of Republican strength with Paul Cellucci and Mitt Romney guiding the way respectively in 1998 and 2002, the south counties of Barnstable and Plymouth continue to provide the base of support they always did, along with the North Shore county of Essex, and the exurb county of Worcester. The coalition of this era is unlike the Republican coalition of the Sargent-Brooke era, having achieved margins of victory statewide without even approaching a majority in the capital of Boston. Map 1 and Map 2, found in the Appendix, illustrate the average Republican

coalition in the Sargent-Brooke 1970s (the 1974 election being the most representative) and the Republican coalition in the 1990s (the 1998 election being the most representative).<sup>64</sup>

The ward-based returns already show that Romney allowed support to decline even in white-majority districts, but South Boston and Charlestown voted as they did for Cellucci. Precinct-based returns show that Romney won several precincts in Irish South Boston and the Italian North End. He won a majority in none of the neighborhoods in the City of Boston, marking a decidedly grand shift from the Weld-Cellucci coalition, which relied on Italian and Irish neighborhoods in the Hub to provide their margins of victory statewide. Romney was unconcerned, and spent the next four years acting as a fairly conservative governor on economic and social issues. He even underwent a conversion for which he would later be criticized, that of “pro-choice” on abortion during the 2002 campaign to “pro-life” before the end of his term as governor in 2007.<sup>65</sup>

Even then his strategy seemed to be aimed at the White House, and his decisions and his rhetoric reflected national, rather than Massachusetts-specific, concerns. He spoke of lower taxes and regulations, and told union members he disagreed with back pay for union negotiated collective bargaining agreements, saying it was against his “philosophy” (attempting to essentially take away any bargaining power from public sector unions at all). He continued the Weld assault on “illegitimacy” when discussing welfare: “I will propose that we put meaningful work requirements in welfare and that we insist that **absentee fathers**—not taxpayers—are held financially responsible for their own children.”<sup>66</sup> He even stressed an anti-welfare policy position that was fundamentally out of date, a vestigial relic of the Reagan-Weld rhetoric, and now with the existence of

a new social welfare program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), was a fait accompli: “I’m putting money into **childcare** programs so that every able-bodied person can have the **dignity of working for their benefits.**”<sup>67</sup>

He went on:

While the rest of the country fully implemented workfare, Massachusetts did not...It’s past time to bring real welfare reform to Massachusetts. People from both political parties have long recognized that welfare without work creates negative incentives that lead to permanent poverty. It robs people of self-esteem. **But today, only 20 percent of welfare recipients in Massachusetts are working.** [emphasis added]

This year, we will take a close look at all our welfare programs to make sure they are serving as a safety net and not a poverty trap. **And work requirements must be provided wherever possible.** Let’s make sure we are giving people the opportunity to achieve independent and fulfilling lives. [emphasis added]

His signature achievement, of course, was RomneyCare, and this was his justification of it during his State of the State message in 2006:

First, the stage is set for something truly historic. We are poised to provide private, market-based health insurance to all our uninsured citizens. **This isn’t government taking over healthcare and dictating who gets treated for what and by whom.** No, it’s government helping people take over healthcare, to get healthcare working for them. Think about it: 500,000 people, all without health insurance today, will have quality preventative care, prescription benefits, and hospitalization coverage. [emphasis added]

Romney’s health program was much friendlier to insurance interests in the state than “government taking over health care and dictating who gets treated for what and by whom,” and was created by the same consultants that later developed the federal “ObamaCare” plan in 2010, and was largely similar—a health care exchange that subsidized some low-income buyers, and mandated that everyone in the state purchase some kind of insurance if they did not already have it.<sup>68</sup>

Romney's calculus did not take into consideration the health of the Massachusetts Republican party whatsoever, though. He did not direct resources toward Republican legislative candidates during the state "midterms" of 2004 (a presidential election year), nor did he signal until late 2005 that he would not be a candidate for re-election in 2006. He immediately began fundraising and campaigning for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination, for which he fell short, losing to John McCain.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps what is most noteworthy, however, is not Romney's implicit racialized language in the form of crime, welfare, and health care policy, but his explicit language in regards to education policy. Knowing that racialized, segregated education has been an issue in Massachusetts since the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and well into the modern era, Romney did not hesitate to discuss and perpetuate the racial stereotypes that already exist in the mind of white voters when he gave his State of the State message in 2005:

But there are troubling gaps. There is still much to do. Kids in our urban schools, *most of them minorities*, are not succeeding at anywhere near the rate of their counterparts in the suburbs. And let me be clear: the failure of our urban schools to prepare our children today for the challenges of tomorrow is the **civil rights issue of our generation**. . . . Ten years ago, it was felt that if we provided equal funding for urban schools, the disparity would just disappear. It has not. Yet there will be some who will **simply cry for even more money**. But we know money alone is not the answer . . . . Many of the features I will offer will apply only to failing districts. Here are a few: 1) A longer school day, with provision for special help, study hall and sports. Learning should last well into the afternoon, not end at 2 o'clock. 2) Our best teachers are underpaid. They deserve more and I want to pay them more. Finally, I will propose, again, **mandatory parental preparation courses** in failing school districts. Parental involvement in a child's education is more important than any step we can take. Not all teachers can be parents, but all parents must be teachers."<sup>70</sup> [emphasis added]

Romney is capitalizing on the traditional white racial stereotype of black culture that absentee fathers (a term, incidentally, he regularly also used in State of the State

addresses) are the root cause of the lower socioeconomic status endured by African-Americans. Parental involvement was thought to be the answer. By drawing on racial stereotype, policy prescriptions flatten and simplify a very complicated problem, that starts with high rates of child poverty. It is difficult to imagine a more explicit and official governmental proclamation that faults racial minority populations for their own disadvantage.

### Conclusion

Racial conservatism, thus, is an apt frame of analysis for Massachusetts elections. Whether or not it is determinative or not of electoral outcomes, it is clearly present in Massachusetts' (and national) politics in the post-Civil Rights era. Whether the themes of racial conservatism are emphasized are no longer in dispute. Whether those racial conservatism themes make an electoral impact on neighborhoods that are particularly focused on racial politics such as Southie and Roxbury may still be argued, but a preponderance of evidence of its use and its impact certainly exists, as is seen in both Chapters 3 and 4. Racial alliances that incorporate political networks and institutions within them are clearly working when racial conservatism is invoked. Racial conservatism is a clear manifestation of racial orders perpetuating themselves. Thus, the presence of racial conservatism in Boston elections demonstrates that American racial alliances are as present in Massachusetts as they are in any American state, and as present in Boston as in any American city. The next question actually becomes not whether racial conservatism and racial alliances exist, but whether both will operate in the same way by political actors in the succeeding eras.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Weld and Cellucci campaign and annual official addresses (called variously "State of the State" and "State of the Commonwealth" addresses) from 1990, 1994, 1996 (Weld) and 1998, as well as 2000

(Cellucci) and Mitt Romney (1994 and 2002) all transcribed from the C-Span Video Archive, available at [www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org). Romney State of the State addresses taken from official transcript (2003-2006) available at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

<sup>2</sup> Brooke 1966, pp. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Brooke 1966, pp. 174.

<sup>4</sup> Brooke 1966, pp. 187.

<sup>5</sup> Sargent 1974.

<sup>6</sup> Sargent 1969.

<sup>7</sup> Sargent, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> Sargent State of the Commonwealth Address, 1969

<sup>9</sup> Sargent State of the Commonwealth Address, 1969

<sup>10</sup> Brooke, 155.

<sup>11</sup> *Boston Globe* May 12, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> O'Connor, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: A Political History* (1995) Boston: Northeastern University Press.

<sup>13</sup> See Ronald Formisiano's historical opus *Boston Against Busing* for a full accounting of the narrative of Boston's struggle with Judge Garrity's handling of the school integration question. Formisiano's book is a must-read for anyone who wants to see a neighborhood accounting of the school-related conflict and violence that occurred during this struggle. He also touches somewhat upon the political implications, both short-term and long-term, of the federal court orders that attempted to overhaul the administration of Boston City Schools from the 1970s through the entire decade of the 1980s.

<sup>14</sup> *Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, 1975, 1979.*

<sup>15</sup> Turner, Robert L., "Massachusetts in '80: A state of industry, learning, and tourism," *Boston Globe*, February 10, 1980.

<sup>16</sup> *Boston Globe*. "Edward J. King, 1925-2006." September 19, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Robinson, Walter, "King vows welfare savings by cutting fraud, eligibles," *Boston Globe*, October 21, 1978.

<sup>18</sup> In 1980, the *Globe* reported that King had had "success" in "catching welfare cheats" by saving \$15.4 million in tax and welfare benefits by requiring welfare recipients to get Social Security numbers.

<sup>19</sup> *Boston Globe*. "The three closing statements." April 21, 1982. It is also worth noting that Dukakis won the primary but also beat Republican John W. Sears in the general election, despite Sears' seeming adoption of King's Reaganite plank. See Charles Kenney, *Globe* Staff. "How John Sears hopes to win; he'll rely on integrity, tough stances on taxes and crime." *Boston Globe* Oct 07, 1982.

<sup>20</sup> "Reagan's \$90-billion cut in housing, education, welfare" by Benjamin Taylor, *Boston Globe*, December 15, 1975, pp. 2.

<sup>21</sup> "Busing foes meet secretly with Reagan" by Robert L. Turner, *Boston Globe*, January 21, 1976, pg. 1.

<sup>22</sup> "Reagan says poor can move if a state cuts aid" by Benjamin Taylor, *Boston Globe*, January 18, 1976, pp. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Patterson, Rachele, "Q&A With Republican Ronald Reagan: January 13, 1980.

<sup>24</sup> Patterson, Rachele, and *Globe* Staff, "Reagan Calls Busing Failure," November 19, 1980.

<sup>25</sup> Alabama Governor George C. Wallace won a majority of votes for the Democratic primary in South Boston.

<sup>26</sup> This changed in 1980 when Brooke finally endorsed Reagan for the presidency.

<sup>27</sup> Nolan, Martin, "Brooke says he'll ignore national race in '76, focus on state," *Boston Globe*, March 16, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> Evans, Rowland and Robert Novak, "Economy may be key issue," *Boston Globe*, September 11, 1982.

<sup>29</sup> Dukakis was not popular enough to even win re-nomination to the party's top spot in the 1978 election, losing to Ed King. King found himself challenged on the left yet again by Michael Dukakis, who handily beat King for the nomination in 1982.

<sup>30</sup> Also despite the Republican party's apparent willful strategy to emphasize crime, welfare, and taxes at a 1986 meeting toward the end of the campaign. This would seem to have the effect of mobilizing the party for the next campaign, in 1990: Cooper, Kenneth J. "GOP Plots its campaign strategy: leaders vote to stress taxes, crime." *Boston Globe*, Sep 21, 1986.

<sup>31</sup> "Proposition 2 ½" was the form the tax revolt took in Massachusetts, which limited annual local property tax increases to 2 ½ percent increases from the previous year's tax rates.

<sup>32</sup> Annual Report of the Election Commissioners (1982-3).

<sup>33</sup> Klinkner and Smith (1999), Chapter Eight.

<sup>34</sup> Formisiano, pp. 194.

<sup>35</sup> Klinkner and Smith 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Mendelberg 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Though only 36 percent of arrests during those riots were of African-Americans, it was commonly referred to as a "race riot that occurred immediately after the verdict of not guilty was reached by the trial of the police officers who were videotaped beating Rodney King in 1992." Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard, "The Los Angeles 'Race Riot' and Contemporary U.S. Politics" in Gooding-Williams, Robert (ed.), *Reading Rodney King: Reading Urban Uprising*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993.

<sup>38</sup> Klinkner and Smith.

<sup>39</sup> Wells, Robert Marshall. "Election Preview: Gantt's Challenge to Helms Lacks Spark of 1990 Race." *CNN/Time: All Politics*, 1996, <http://www-cgi.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/states/NC/CQ.news.shtml>.

<sup>40</sup> "Budget woes, fiscal waste and corruption" (*Boston Globe*, May 1, 1989).

<sup>41</sup> Weld had run for statewide office before, however: he had been the Massachusetts Republican Party's nominee for Attorney General in 1978, losing soundly to the incumbent Democratic candidate, by a margin of four to one.

<sup>42</sup> Silber, John. *Straight Shooting: What's wrong with America, and how to fix it*. 1989. New York: HarperCollins.

<sup>43</sup> Lehigh, Scott, "Silber is met with anger in Roxbury, drug remark hits a nerve," *Boston Globe*, September 13, 1990.

<sup>44</sup> "It seems to me that this debate and its 'Silber shocker' and its angry aftermath ends the Democratic campaign," said Ralph Whitehead Jr., a journalism professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. "Lt. Gov. Murphy has taken herself out wittingly; Silber perhaps unwittingly." Mooney, Brian C., "Analysts Write Political Epitaph For Silber in Wake of Debate Gaffe," *Boston Globe*, September 13, 1990.

<sup>45</sup> "Massachusetts Gubernatorial Debate" October 30, 1990, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?14753-1/massachusetts-gubernatorial-debate>.

<sup>46</sup> Howe, Peter J. "'New Democrat' Roosevelt Steps Up, Swings at Weld." *Boston Globe*, Sep 21, 1994.

<sup>47</sup> "Massachusetts Senatorial Campaign Rally" October 20, 1994, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?61015-1/massachusetts-senatorial-campaign-rally>.

<sup>48</sup> "Massachusetts State of the Commonwealth", January 9, 1996, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?69386-1/massachusetts-state-commonwealth>.

<sup>49</sup> After Weld conceded the 1996 election, Kerry and Weld famously went out for a beer in Faneuil Hall, the popular tourist attraction in the center of Boston. It may have been at this meeting that Kerry agreed to support Weld for his next ambition, that of an ambassadorship in the Clinton administration. The president soon nominated Weld for an ambassadorship to Mexico. Weld would not succeed in obtaining the envoy post, however. Despite the support of the President, Senator Kerry, and senior Senator Ted Kennedy, Weld was denied a hearing by the Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms. Helms pointed to Weld's support of medical marijuana as the reason he believed such a person could not be charged as Washington's spokesman in Mexico City, a "front" in the ongoing Drug War. Weld's nomination was held up indefinitely, and despite Weld's resigning the governorship to pursue the post, it was ultimately denied to him. He later went on to practice law in his native New York City, eventually attempting to win, unsuccessfully, the Republican nomination for governor of New York.

- <sup>50</sup> See Adolph Reed, Jr.'s "The 'Color Line' Then and Now: *The Souls of Black Folk* and the Changing Context of Black American Politics." In *Renewing Black Intellectual History: The Ideological and Material Foundations of African American Thought*, 252-303 for the most recent exposition of "underclass" rhetoric and ideology.
- <sup>51</sup> Latour, Francie. "Harshbarger Rails Against 'distortion' by Cellucci." *Boston Globe*, Oct 19, 1998. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/405252867?accountid=14572>.
- <sup>52</sup> "Massachusetts Gubernatorial Debate" October 14, 1998, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?113462-1/massachusetts-gubernatorial-debate>.
- <sup>53</sup> Lehigh, Scot. "Harshbarger -- Preachy Activist." *Boston Globe*, Aug 9, 1998.
- <sup>54</sup> Cellucci State of the State, 1998.
- <sup>55</sup> "Massachusetts Gubernatorial Campaign Ads" October 29, 1998, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?114493-1/massachusetts-gubernatorial-campaign-ads>.
- <sup>56</sup> Cellucci was rewarded for his service in the Hub with an ambassadorship, the second time it was offered in four years to an incumbent Massachusetts governor, only this time from the new Bush administration and to the American neighbor to the north, Canada, rather than to Mexico. Cellucci served uneventfully there, as well, and settled into retirement in 2005, eventually revealing his chronic Parkinson's Disease condition before succumbing in 2013.
- <sup>57</sup> Massachusetts State of the Commonwealth Address, January 15, 2002, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?168206-1/massachusetts-state-commonwealth-address>.
- <sup>58</sup> Frank Phillips, and Raphael Lewis. "BUCKINGHAM RESIGNS AT MASSPORT." *Boston Globe*, Oct 26, 2001. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/405420859?accountid=14572>.
- <sup>59</sup> *Massachusetts Election Statistics* (1994).
- <sup>60</sup> "Massachusetts Senatorial Campaign Rally" October 20, 1994, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?61015-1/massachusetts-senatorial-campaign-rally>.
- <sup>61</sup> "Massachusetts Law Enforcement Agency Uniform Crime Reports 1980 to 2005: Massachusetts Crime Rates 1960 - 2012" <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/macrime.htm>, accessed June 18, 2014.
- <sup>62</sup> C-Span Video Archive.
- <sup>63</sup> "Massachusetts Gubernatorial Debate" October 9, 2002, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?173128-1/massachusetts-gubernatorial-debate>.
- <sup>64</sup> See Appendices A and B.
- <sup>65</sup> Mishra, Raja. "Romney calls self 'convert' to antiabortion cause - Activists honor former governor amid protests," *Boston Globe*, May 11, 2007.
- <sup>66</sup> *Governor Mitt Romney State of the State Address*. 2003, <http://archive.org/details/stateofstateaddres00mass>.
- <sup>67</sup> Romney State of the State, 2003, <http://archive.org/details/stateofstateaddres00mass>.
- <sup>68</sup> Ironically, Romney's signature achievement as governor was the most difficult to explain to the national Republican electorate and donor base. He later rather lamely justified his action as governor by saying that he would "repeal and replace ObamaCare" because RomneyCare was only best for Massachusetts.
- <sup>69</sup> Again, his predecessor Swift was a prominent McCain backer despite Romney's residence in her home state, for reasons that seem politically apparent.
- <sup>70</sup> "Massachusetts State of the Commonwealth Address" January 13, 2005, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?183464-1/massachusetts-state-commonwealth-address>.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

It is clear in this analysis that, in the era since the end of the Civil Rights movement, Massachusetts Republicans have responded to increasing white flight from urban centers and the suburbanization of Massachusetts by adopting a strategy of promoting the most racialized form of conservatism, which involves heavily invoking white fears of black crime and white stereotypes of black laziness in partisan mobilization. The effects of this strategy are in evidence by analyzing electoral maps of the city of Boston, which reveal that the only competitive areas for Republicans in the city are those with overwhelming white majorities and that areas are those which have particular histories around civil rights issues like busing.

By eliminating the rural or suburban variable, one sees a clearer picture of which voters make up the Republican party in Boston, one of the chief bastions of liberalism in America. What emerges in those elections in which Republicans were successful is an emphasis on the aspects of urban life such as street crime and government anti-poverty programs, that play upon stereotypical views about poor blacks and Latinos. This dissertation follows the changing demographics of neighborhoods with close attention to racial conservatism with respect to candidates for state office (especially governor).

A brief review of the findings shows the evolution of racial conservatism. Governor Sargent proposed that the state eliminate the department of Public Welfare, but also promised to integrate the schools. Senator Brooke told welfare mothers and under-educated black residents that they should want to work. Ed King proposed saving money for the people of the state by depriving some people of benefits, in other words, by

“tightening restrictions” on welfare in a similar way that Reagan did, even bringing in Reagan’s old welfare commissioner for advice. Reagan’s political operatives helped craft the Willie Horton message for the 1988 Bush campaign, and then proceeded to take over the Massachusetts Republican party and elect one of their own, William Weld, to the Beacon Hill corner office with a message of ending welfare and bringing back the death penalty. Weld won despite the fact that the Democratic candidate, John Silber, used the same racial tropes to win the Democratic nomination in 1990. Indeed, in the 1990s and early 2000s the Republicans won four straight elections with this strategy.

Why? From what can be observed about white response to racial messaging, implicit appeals work better than explicit ones. Voters accepted the messages about criminality, dependency and so forth, and endorsed it, because the appeals drew on more latent racial and ethnic stereotypes. Terms like “people on welfare” or “welfare mothers” conjured the image of the stereotypical poor black woman. The trope of the “criminal” is imagined to black man. Willie Horton was an exemplar of this trope because he was also a rapist of a woman who was white. So it is thus that the invocations of “crime” and “welfare” were classic redressing of the old racial tropes of criminal black men and poor black women.

On one hand, candidates almost cannot be blamed for adopting such a strategy, because it won votes. However, such an analytical absolution excuses all manner of ruthless electioneering, and discounts the damage racial conservatism does to authentic and credible policy debate on a range of public policy issues that have little to do with law enforcement or cash assistance to the poor.

A second major point concerns the city of Boston as the case that carries implications for the study of American politics more broadly. The neighborhoods of Boston are fundamentally meant as a surrogate for the neighborhoods of the American city, and indeed, as a surrogate for America as a whole, and should not be viewed as a highly particular, racially conservative outlier in American cities. In fact, Boston, according to a recent paper published in the *American Political Science Review*, is one of the six most politically liberal cities in the United States.<sup>1</sup> There is everywhere in America a Little Italy, a Chinatown, a black neighborhood, a new Latino neighborhood, a wealthy neighborhood, and a working-class white neighborhood. Before the Civil Rights era, there were no doubt elections won and lost in the city of Boston and the state of Massachusetts by pitting ethnic groups against one another. There is also no doubt that Boston is not alone among major cities in such a distinction. What is striking is how penetrative the language has been in the post-Civil Rights era, and the extent to which the majority backlash against has been making and breaking gubernatorial elections in Massachusetts for over four decades.

As discussed in chapter 4, and as detailed by Tali Mendelberg in her analysis 1994, the “race card” was ubiquitous in gubernatorial politics in Massachusetts and elsewhere. She cites the gubernatorial elections, primarily, as fertile ground for racial priming:

Republican governors who have risen to prominence in recent years, such as [Ridge, Jeb Bush, Pataki] all ran election campaigns that featured ads attacking their opponents for being lax on violent crime. These messages, by design or by circumstances, whether on their own or as conveyed by the news media, tended implicitly to refer to violent black criminals. Other prominent Republican governors were elected in part by highlighting their tough anti-welfare stance, a message that the media often conveys with visual references to African Americans.<sup>2</sup>

While perhaps playing the race card has not been as successful a strategy since the mid-1990s, it is a strategy which Massachusetts Republicans stuck to for a long time. Indeed racial conservatism is a recognizable factor in each of the major Republican statewide runs after 2002.

### Post-Racial Conservatism?

Another point is more speculative, but it may be that racial conservatism has outlived its utility. After four straight Republican victories, the 2006 race for governor seemed primed for a Democratic win. Deval Patrick, a former assistant U.S. attorney for Civil Rights in the Clinton administration, had practiced law in the private sector since 2001. A native of Chicago, Patrick entered the elite secondary boarding school Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts on a scholarship, and went on to earn a law degree from Harvard University. Patrick mounted an insurgent campaign that was garnering significant support.

Racial conservatism did not work in 2006. Running against the Republican nominee and incumbent Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey, Deval Patrick was able to successfully name and accuse the Healey campaign of race-baiting. It would have been a difficult case to make against Healey, the Ph.D. in Criminology, except that Healey had made a reference to Patrick's sister being a victim of marital rape in 1993, more than a decade in the past.<sup>3</sup> A television ad also made reference to Patrick's history as a defense attorney who represented other alleged rapists.<sup>4</sup> This was merely the last desperate tactic of her campaign, and it backfired. Patrick won every neighborhood in Boston and every county in Massachusetts. His support was strongest, however, in Dorchester and

Roxbury, where he received more than 90% of the vote, in much the same style as former Democratic Governor Michael Dukakis and former Republican Senator Edward Brooke.<sup>5</sup>

As governor, Patrick continued to slash budgets, even more so than Romney had done. Romney had not raised taxes, and Patrick, seeking to assuage moderates, pledged not to raise taxes, either. Despite his progressive campaign themes, Patrick aggressively asked his new department heads to submit budget requests with a five to ten percent expenditure reduction in order to compensate for the state's rising Medicaid contribution.<sup>6</sup> He proved a popular governor, however, and saw the implementation of the new health care exchanges under his administration. When the major insurance carriers sought to raise the rates significantly after the first year of the new program, Patrick attempted to negotiate with them to lower the cost of their premiums.<sup>7</sup>

One of those executives, Charlie Baker, formerly policy architect of Weld's welfare reform law CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, a large insurance carrier based only in Massachusetts, successfully sought the Republican nomination to run for governor against Patrick in 2010.<sup>8</sup> Patrick won re-election handily, again winning every ward in the city of Boston.<sup>9</sup> He largely saw similar margins in each neighborhood to his old classmate Barack Obama, who had won the 2008 presidential election with help from his victorious Boston and Massachusetts showing, despite running against a former Massachusetts governor, Romney.

If racial conservatism does not work, even against an African American candidate, why would that be? Perhaps racial conservatism is historically bounded—that it would be effective while the policy legacies of the 1960s were still resonant in city, state and national politics. But by the beginning of the 21st century that cannot be said.

Racial conservatism as policy has replaced racial liberalism: welfare was “reformed,” the prison population expanded, affirmative action policies were scaled back if not eliminated, and busing has disappeared as a remedy to racial segregation in schools.

Or perhaps racial resentment becomes manifest in a different way. In 2009, soon after assuming office, President Obama began negotiating to draft and pass new legislation that would overhaul the nation’s health care system. There were several options to choose from, but those experts tasked with designing the plan were the same experts who had designed the Massachusetts legislation that Mitt Romney had signed and Governor Deval Patrick had overseen. So, it was perhaps a foregone conclusion that the bill would look similar in character. However, President Obama failed to recognize how unpopular this bill might be to those who already have insurance, and that included residents of the Bay State who now had a nation-leading 97% of residents covered under some type of health care plan since RomneyCare was implemented by Governor Patrick. In a sad twist of irony, the leading advocate for a system of nationally-run and subsidized health care, Senator Ted Kennedy, died soon after the inauguration of President Obama, who was intent on passing the bill Kennedy was sponsoring. The “Kennedy Seat” would now be up for election.<sup>10</sup>

Capitalizing on voter confusion and racial resentment that Tesler has documented, Scott Brown, a plainspoken Republican state senator with a thick Boston accent and a signature pickup truck he drove while campaigning (to symbolize his working class sympathies), defeated Democratic Attorney General Martha Coakley on January 19, 2010. This marked the fourth time in twelve years that a state constitutional officer lost an election for governor or senator (after Harshbarger, O’Brien, and Reilly all went down

to defeat in primaries or general elections), so it is not surprising in hindsight. At the time, however, the shock was felt due to the exponential rise in the polls of the previously unknown Brown. Coakley was castigated by the press (and the Obama administration press office) for her comment that Brown was seemingly campaigning too vigorously.<sup>11</sup> Despite a personal visit from President Obama, the special election was lost to Brown, who, for the first time since 1998, cracked the Democratic stronghold in the city of Boston by winning a majority of votes in both of the two South Boston wards.

### 2010 and Beyond

In several neighborhoods within Suffolk County, there is barely a white population, such as in the planning districts of Roxbury and Mattapan. Barnstable still has the highest percentage of whites in their population, and that proportion is the only one above 90% in metropolitan Boston. The neighborhoods with the highest proportion of white residents in Boston are the Back Bay (81%) South Boston (79%) and Charlestown (76%). These majorities can thus no longer guarantee support for conservative candidates. South Boston was where Republicans once garnered some support, but even the Back Bay is no longer a bastion for the party. Republicans are winning, it is the contention of this thesis, similar levels of support among whites in these neighborhoods as they are achieving outside of these communities, but their support does not register because it is of course more than simply whites who vote in elections. In 2006 and 2010 the Republicans performed well in their bases—90% white South Shore Barnstable and Plymouth counties—but did not come close to cracking the 30% margin in Boston in either election.

As a result of the massive demographic change in Boston, it is safe to say that Republicans have largely abandoned the city to compete almost exclusively in the suburbs. Republicans are not reaching out to minorities in these communities and indeed, in some cases, are achieving higher margins among whites in these communities which will not help them in the long run. What is abundantly clear is that even if the Republicans are doing well in their traditional bases, they are losing elections partially because they have not done enough minority outreach, and there must be an underlying reason for this. Either the Massachusetts Republican Party is ignorant about how to achieve such outreach, or their program is inherently hostile to most minority residents of Boston. It is worth discussion.

Boston as a whole is representative of the party identification change taking place in Massachusetts in terms of the decrease in voters registered as Democratic and the increase in un-enrolled voters. The Republican percentage in Massachusetts has decreased by roughly half overall, but stays relatively constant in Boston. A possible conclusion from this analysis is that the same demographic trend is occurring in both the city and the state, but that it's simply more pronounced in Boston. These trends partly reflect changes in racial and ethnic demographics.

While Democrats have accepted the black majorities of Roxbury and now Mattapan and Dorchester into their coalition, it is not until recently that African Americans represent the cornerstone of the Democratic electoral coalition in the city. They certainly are still not that cornerstone in the state. Despite the election of the first black governor in the state's history, racial disparities continue to shape Massachusetts politics and public policy. Welfare has been reformed, "crime" of certain types is down



across many measures, but health care for the poor has never been popular in Massachusetts overall. Scott Brown proved that while campaigning against the health care law in his special election in 2010. It is perhaps on new fronts—e.g. funding for Medicaid or immigration—where implicit appeals to race might matter in coming years. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that racial conservatism is past its heyday. Whatever the future of Massachusetts politics, racial conservatism was clearly the dominant electoral strategy and ideology of candidates for governor of the Republican and sometimes Democratic party in the post-Civil Rights era.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Tausanovitch, Chris, and Christopher Warshaw. 2014 (forthcoming). "Representation in Municipal Government." *American Political Science Review* 108 (2).

<sup>2</sup> Mendelberg 2001, pp. 6

<sup>3</sup> Estes, Andrea. "Patrick, Healey Spar Over Report on Kin." *Boston Globe*, Oct 14, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Estes, Andrea and Frank Phillips. "New Healey Ad again Links Patrick, LaGuer; Message Seeks Women's Votes." *Boston Globe*, Oct 19, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> "Election Results" at CityofBoston.gov. Accessed August 26, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Wangsness, Lisa and Frank Phillips. "Local Aid Wins in Patrick's Budget; Belt-Tightening seen for Agencies." *Boston Globe*, Feb 25, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Bombardieri, Marcella. "Patrick Intensifies State's Push to Curb Soaring Health Premiums." *Boston Globe*, Jan 6, 2009.

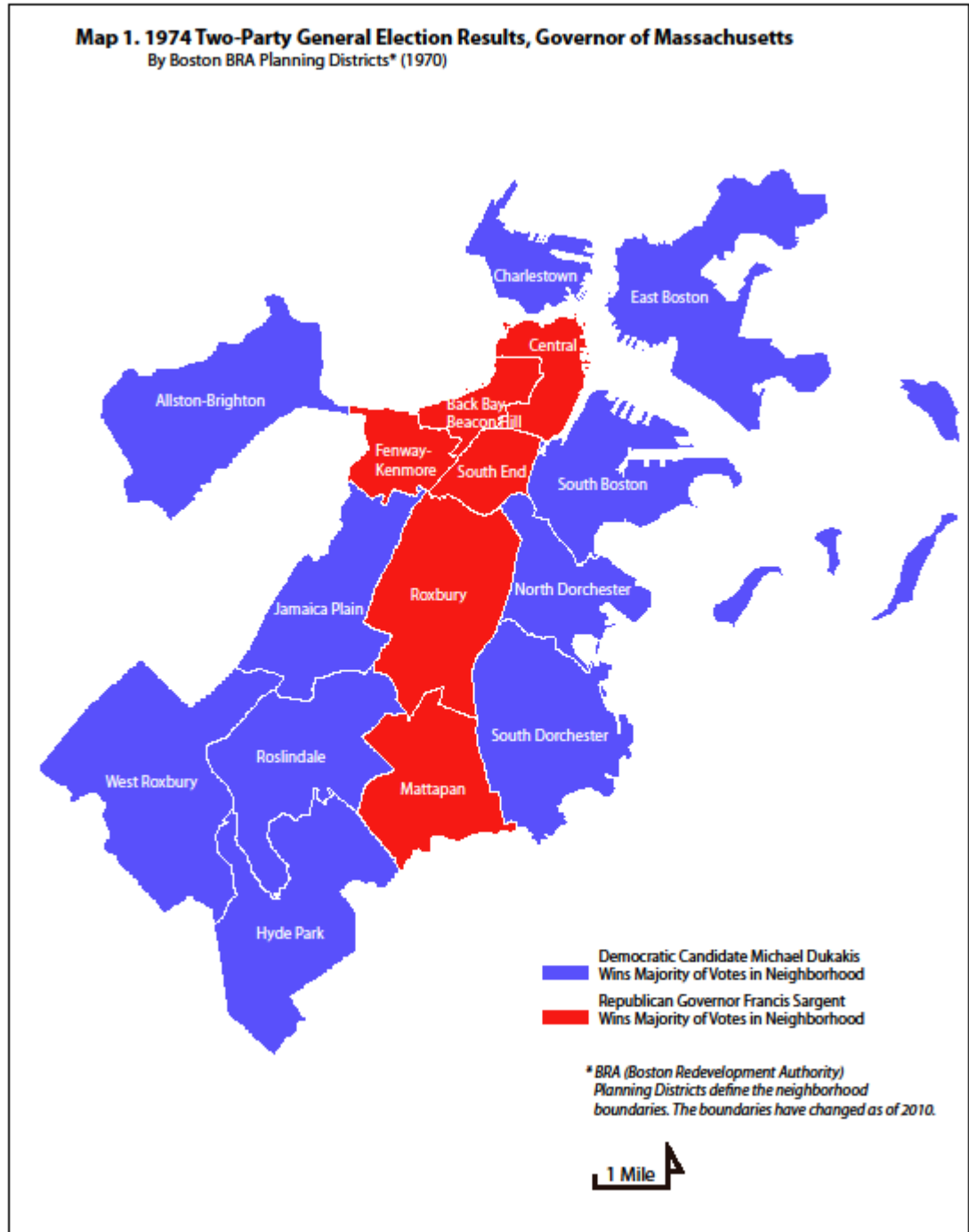
<sup>8</sup> Mooney, Brian C. "Baker Finds Campaign Trove in Health Field." *Boston Globe*, Feb 07, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report of the Election Commissioners, 2011.

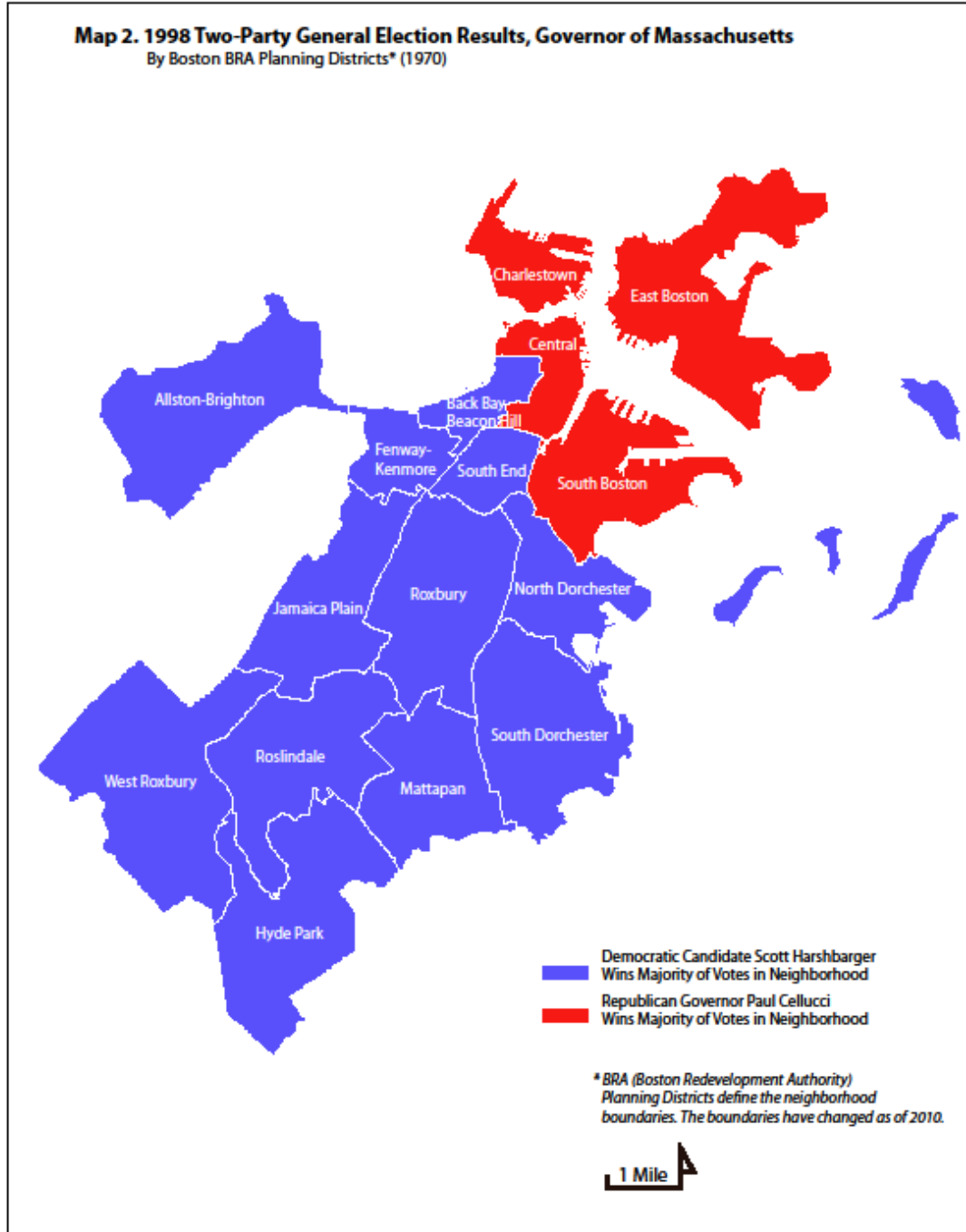
<sup>10</sup> Mooney, Brian C. "Brown Hopes Issues Give Him an Opening." *Boston Globe*, Dec 17, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> "Blame Obama." *Boston Globe*, Jan 17, 2010.

APPENDIX A  
Map 1

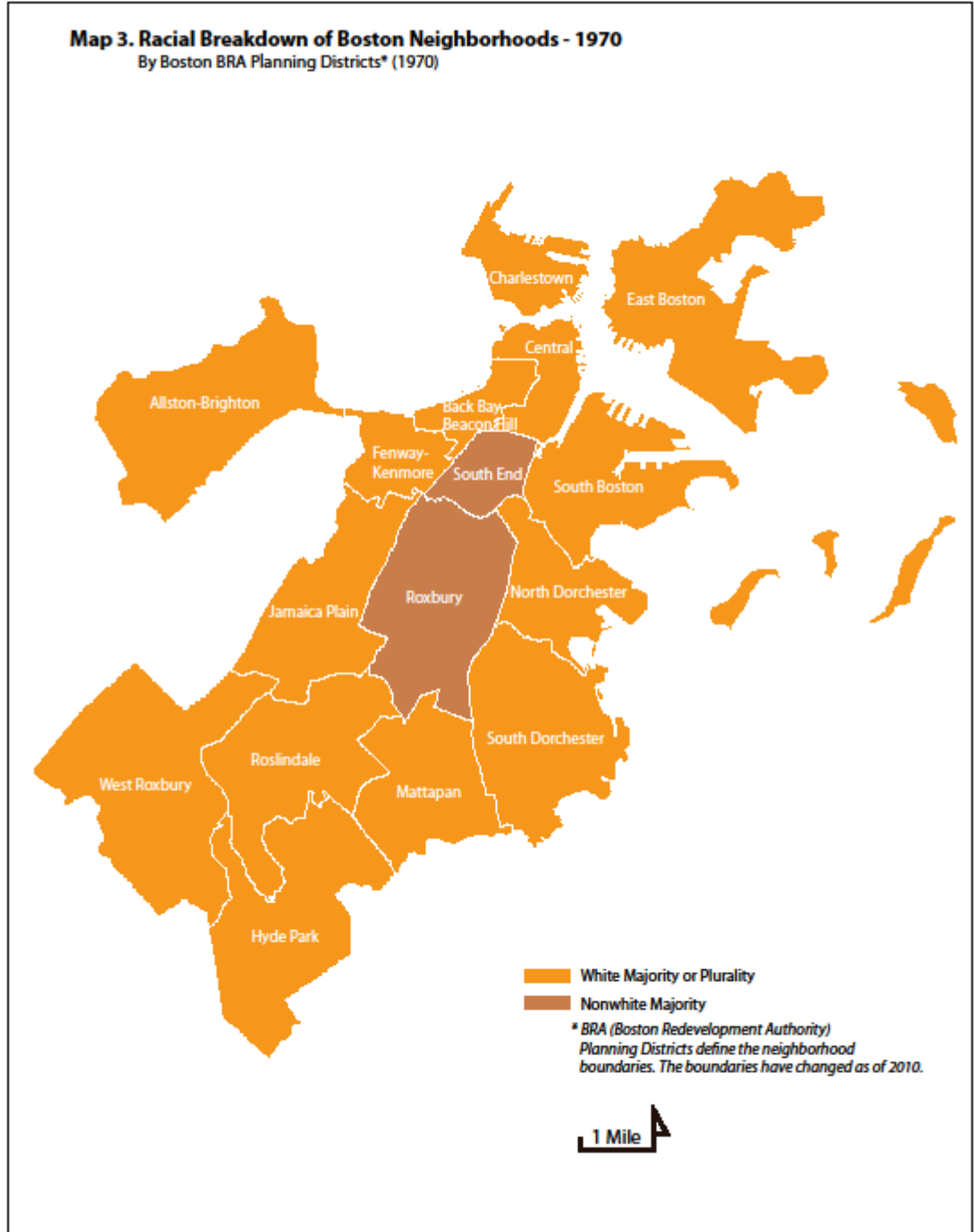


APPENDIX B  
Map 2



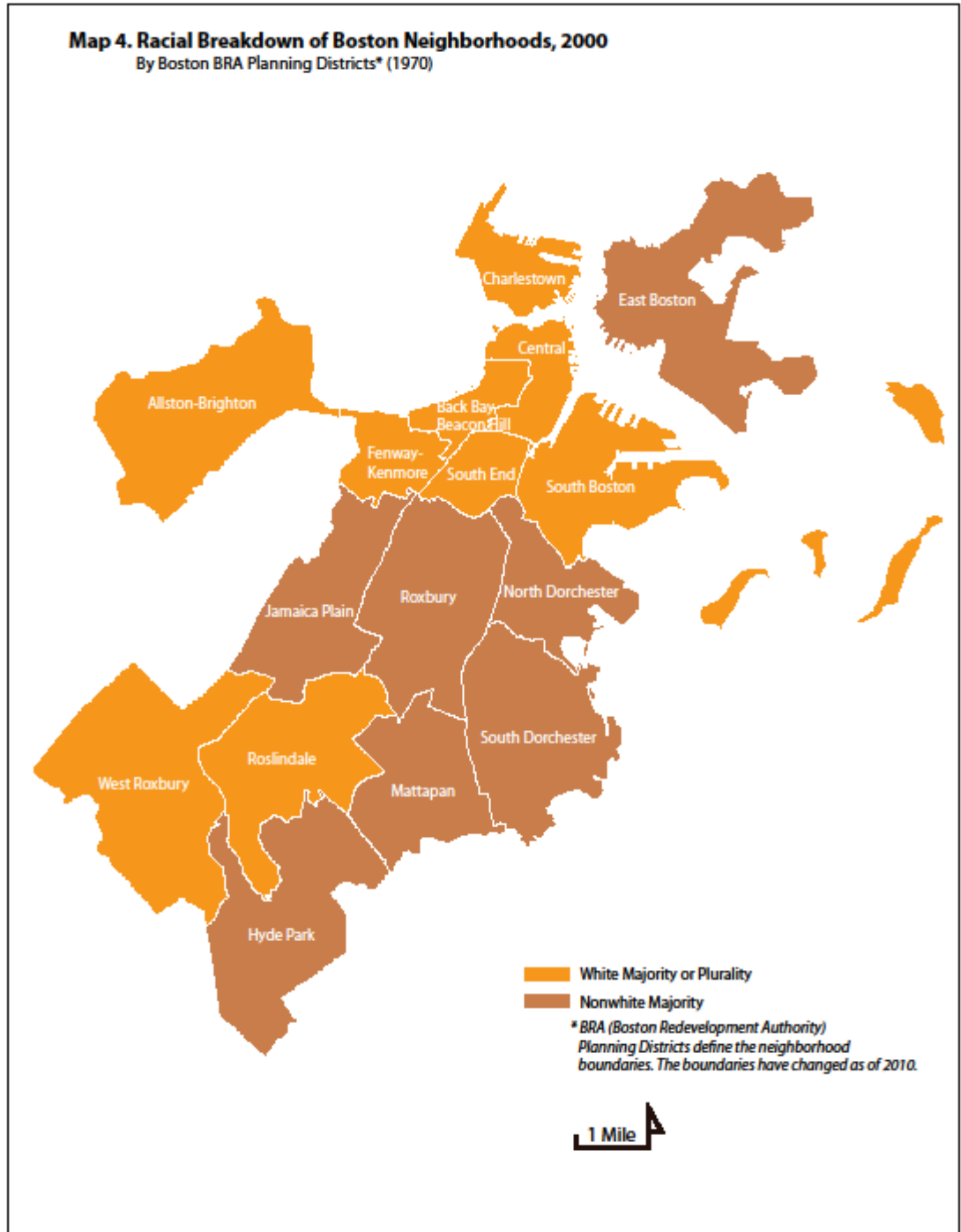
# Appendix C

## Map 3



# Appendix D

## Map 4



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