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Biomedicalization of Alcohol Studies: Ideological Shifts and Institutional Challenges. Lorraine T. Midanik.
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demographic and cultural changes, as Sweden in particular becomes less culturally homogeneous?

In conclusion, Midanik is to be commended for her effort; she has undertaken a daunting challenge here—one that she brings off with a considerable degree of success. The book is clearly written, well considered and well documented in addition to being timely and of great currency.

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Peter Schrag. *California: America's High Stakes Experiment*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006. \$24.95 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

The story of California is often related as the signal expression of post-World War II American optimism. Writers have depicted California as the bellwether that previews the American future. Peter Schrag tells us in *California: America's High Stakes Experiment*, that it is very difficult to predict California's future because it presently faces an array of profound difficulties in the context of a rapidly diversifying and disunited population and a dysfunctional political system. Moreover, Californians have saddled themselves with political and fiscal constraints that make the solution of large-scale problems seem nearly impossible.

Some time in 1999, just around the anniversary of the Gold Rush, California became the first State with a majority/minority population. By 2001 more than half of the babies born in California were Latino. It is projected that by 2010 Latinos will become the largest single ethnic group in the State. There is also growing and diverse population of Asians including Chinese, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodians and other groups.

The national fight over immigration arguably began in California, where some leaders contend that the presence of low-skilled, mostly undocumented migrants benefits the economy by providing a workforce willing to engage in menial

labor and contribute tax revenue, particularly to social security. This workforce is also unable to claim benefits, and it keeps prices low for the rest of us. Others assert that young Latino families utilize more services than they pay for in taxes and that the presence of this population substantially hurts low-skilled Americans, who would take the jobs that "Americans do not want," if this work paid a living wage.

As a young immigrant population begins to dominate the State's labor pool, levels of academic preparation are falling. The question arises as to whether the future workforce of the State will be sufficiently productive to support services for the enormous Baby Boom population as it retires. The reasons for this decline in achievement may be largely attributed to a marked decline in the quality of education offered to the children of the new immigrants.

California, once one of the highest spending States for education, has fallen into the bottom tier. This situation, in turn, stems from the current political reality in which the largest group of voters in the State is older whites who are unwilling to support increased taxes to enhance education and other services for young non-whites. In effect, Schrag argues, Californians are divided, and the result is political stalemate and a failure to invest in the future.

Schrag documents how a conservative reaction to the growth-oriented policies of the 60s culminated in the 70s with the passage of Proposition 13, which froze real estate taxes, resulting in massive cuts in services and education. Proposition 13 was part of a new trend in California of government by plebiscite, whereby citizens groups increasingly made end runs around the State legislature, turning to the people through the initiative process. A series of propositions passed in the last 30 years included provisions increasing prison sentences, reducing class sizes, guaranteeing school budgets, limiting services to immigrants and limiting legislative terms. Many of these propositions had unanticipated budgetary and political impacts.

Perhaps the most stunning example of direct rule by the voters was the 2003 recall of Governor Gray Davis and the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger. However, when the movie star Governor attempted to use the initiative to reverse a leftward

trend in California politics and provide a conservative policy framework he was soundly defeated. Schrag asserts that the current balance of political forces in the State seem to prevent movement in any direction.

Conservative policies are defeated by the power of unions and the left-leaning cities. Liberal ideas cannot advance because of the requirement of a two-thirds majority to pass the State budget and most tax increases. Any attempt to reverse or modify popular propositions like 13 and three strikes through the initiative process faces inevitable defeat, and often political retribution for sponsors.

The book provides a clear and detailed overview of the political and social environment of California today. The tone is journalistic, which makes the book quite readable, although sometimes the level of detail seems to distract from the central themes. While the book succeeds as political history, Schrag is unable to point toward a way forward through the current quagmire. He suggests that a new narrative is needed to unite the disparate population of the State, but he fails to reveal the shape of that narrative or the process by which it could emerge.

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John Gerring. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. \$70.00 hardcover, \$24.99 papercover.

John Gerring, an Associate Professor of political science at Boston University, has written a thoughtful monograph on the case study method in social research. This is not a "how to" guide, but rather an exploration of the scientific merits of case study research and how it is situated within the tradition of causal inference and generalization. The book presents categorizations and typologies of case study types and techniques (both quantitative and qualitative) that are firmly rooted in previous research, yet the organization of the material is quite