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## Review of *California: America's High Stakes Experiment*. Peter Schrag. Reviewed by Bart Grossman.

Edward Cohen  
*University of California, Berkeley*

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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.

Bart Grossman  
University of California, Berkeley

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

innovative.

The first chapter sets the stage by questioning the distinction between observational and experimental research designs, as a foil to the typical criticism that case study research is “merely” observational, a perfect storm of weak design and subjective conclusions. Taking a cue from John Stuart Mill (quoted later in the book) that “...there is, in short, no difference in kind, no real logical distinction, between the two processes of investigation,” Gerring sets out to integrate this dichotomy, evaluating various approaches to the case study with a foot on both sides of the line—the evidentiary criteria of experimental design, along with the convincing knowledge that can be gained only from careful observation.

The remaining six chapters are organized under two parts: Thinking about Case Studies (Chapters 2 and 3) and Doing Case Studies (Chapters 4-7). Chapter 2 explores the definition of a case study, no small task given the various uses of the term in research, the business literature, and in near-synonyms such as single subject design. In this book, “case” refers to “a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time.” “Case study” entails the study of a single case or multiple cases, but few enough in number to allow intensive study. A larger number would constitute cross-case research, what we usually think of as quantitative research with statistical hypothesis testing. Since the author views a single case as representative of a larger population (even if only implied) and often consisting of large N “within-case” observations, cross-case analysis strategies also have a role to play in many of the analytic strategies of the book. Whereas other advocates of case study research prefer a sharper distinction, Gerring views experimental design and large N research as logical extensions of the case study.

After a preliminary introduction to Part II, chapters 5 and 6 constitute the heart of the monograph. Chapter 5, “Techniques for Choosing Cases,” describes a typology of case-selection techniques, a major contribution of the book. I use the word *typology* since the labels and descriptions of the nine techniques also double as descriptors of specific types of cases. The techniques address how to choose a case (sample) among the population of alternatives. The nine techniques–case types are:

typical, diverse, extreme, deviant, influential, crucial, pathway, most-similar, and most-different. In the most-similar technique, for example, two or more cases are similar in various ways but differ, surprisingly, in an outcome measure. Examples of each are given, along with an assessment of the techniques' strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 6 shows how to construct a case study design that addresses causal or correlational relationships among the variables of interest. The template refers to a very useful two-by-two matrix showing the extent to which the research question implies temporal (longitudinal) variation vs. spatial variation (comparison of two or more cases). The four cells of the matrix contain the research designs labeled dynamic comparison (both temporal and spatial variation), longitudinal comparison (temporal but not spatial variation), spatial comparison (spatial but not temporal variation), and counterfactual comparison (neither temporal nor spatial, mainly a "what if" scenario, quite common when there are no feasible comparison cases or when there is insufficient time to have observed the effects of events over time).

The final chapter covers the "detective work" of research—uncovering the underlying mechanisms or pathways from factors to outcomes. This chapter is reminiscent of program evaluation methods espoused by Peter Rossi and Huey-Tsyh Chen, linking process and outcome measures theoretically with the use of logic models. Explaining a single outcome is the subject of an "Epilogue: Single-Outcome Studies." Gerring likens this process to an unfortunately outdated (1939) definition of social case work—analyzing the data to arrive at a diagnostic formulation "with little or no regard for comparison, classification, and scientific generalization." Examples of single outcome research questions: "Why does the U.S. have a relatively small welfare state?" "What led to the terrorist attacks of 9/11?" The book ends with a short glossary covering case study research terminology.

Social work researchers patient enough with some unfamiliar political science terminology in the examples (social welfare examples could easily be substituted) will find this book rewarding in its systematic approach. Selected chapters of the book would be useful in advanced courses on mixed

methods, policy evaluation, program evaluation, or case study research, however not for a general introduction to quantitative or qualitative research methods. For case study enthusiasts, Gerring's work would be a worthwhile adjunct to other texts on the subject.

Edward Cohen  
University of California, Berkeley

Robert D. Leighninger. *Long Range Public Investment: The Forgotten Legacy of the New Deal*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007. \$ 24.95 papercover.

The belief that governments have a major role to play in steering the economy and promoting the well-being of their citizens enjoyed widespread support during the middle decades of the last century. For many social historians, the New Deal of the 1930s exemplified the welfare statist ideal. Earlier campaigns by progressives to extend the role of government in economic and social affairs were resisted, but the mass unemployment, deflation and widespread bankruptcies caused by the Great Depression provided the impetus for radical change and the massive expansion of government intervention.

Now sixty years later, the core principles of the New Deal have been widely challenged and the proponents of state intervention have been put on the defensive. However, there are signs of a growing disillusionment with the market liberal gospel of laissez-faire. The retrenchments that have characterized social policy since the 1980s have not brought about the social improvements that were promised. Indeed, many believe that the changes that have taken place have exacerbated social problems. Another concern is the way the power and resources of the state have been appropriated to serve corporate interests. Despite the rhetoric of limited state involvement, a small but already privileged section of the population has benefited enormously from state intervention. There is also growing support for the idea that instead of adopting a hands-off approach, governments should actively promote economic