tional figure in the discipline and as a continuing resource to further develop a currently theoretically impoverished sociology of the self.

Crossing the Psycho-Social Divide is an impressive achievement and deserves a wide readership. It is a model for how careful research on the intellectual foundations upon which the discipline is built ought to be done, and offers clear evidence of the gains that might derive from such multi-dimensional thoughtfulness.


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"Apparently, the methodological status of the case study is still highly suspect. Even among its defenders there is confusion over the virtues and vices of this ambiguous research design. Practitioners continue to ply their trade but have difficulty articulating what it is they are doing, methodologically speaking. The case study survives in a curious methodological limbo. . . . This leads to a paradox: although much of what we know about the empirical world has been generated by case studies, and case studies continue to constitute a large proportion of the work generated by the social science . . . the case study method is generally unappreciated—arguably, because it is poorly understood." (Pp. 7–8)

In Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, political scientist John Gerring addresses the confusion and ambivalence surrounding the case study as a methodological tool within academia. In this work, he provides a thorough account of the case study and how it has been used successfully within several academic disciplines, citing the classics of case study research and pointing to their strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, Gerring nests his discussion of the case study carefully between qualitative and quantitative traditions, demonstrating how the case study can and does make useful linkages between them.

Gerring is clear in his purpose. His task is to inspect the case study as a method, to point out when and where it has been used across the social sciences, and how it can be used well. He calls into question the ambivalence that many scholars have for the method, querying, "If case studies are methodologically flawed, why do they persist?" (p. 8). Indeed, Gerring explores the flaws, the misunderstandings and misuse of the method, and calls for a more appropriate and useful application of this method that has great cross-disciplinary appeal. He notes the political discussions surrounding the use of the case study, outlines how and when the case study is used well, and addresses concerns about when it is not. In this, he promotes a better understanding of the method, regardless of the discipline, and how we can use this method to enhance our research practices.

Specifically, the book is organized into two parts. Part I, "Thinking about Case Studies," highlights the history of the case study and how it has been used effectively. The chapters, "What Is a Case Study?" and "What Is a Case Study Good For?" cleverly engage the reader into conversation regarding the misunderstanding of the case study. In these chapters, Gerring shares with the reader his expansive knowledge of the case study across the social sciences, citing the classics, including discussions of Lynd and Lynd’s Middleton research, Thompson’s study of the English working class, as well as Skocpol’s work on social revolutions. In these discussions, Gerring addresses the controversies present in how these works were received, and includes them as examples throughout the text, noting such things as choosing cases, validity, and reliability.

In Part II, “Doing Case Studies,” Gerring outlines, in a clear nuts-and-bolts kind of way, how to think about and do case study research well. In this section of the book, he provides detailed chapters on how to engage in case study research, including a chapter on choosing cases, two chapters on internal validity, and an epilogue centered on single-outcome studies. Throughout the text, Gerring is careful to demonstrate the important role that the case study plays in social science research. He proffers important macro-

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micro connections, and bridges the gap between qualitative and quantitative research, noting how the case study is flexible enough to be used effectively within both traditions.

The author’s knowledge and extensive research across the social sciences on the case study is notable. Gerring makes a contribution to the social sciences, as he documents the development of this method over time. Specifically to sociology, Gerring analyzes existing “classic” case study research, with suggestions about how to make future improvements. In addition to these contributions, Gerring writes well, presents a clearly organized argument, and engages the reader, which is greatly appreciated, in a methodological discussion. This book is ideal for use in an advanced methods course, as well as courses solely about the case study. For example, I can envision reading Case Study Research alongside some of the classic monographs mentioned, working through each piece of research with Gerring’s thoughtful and thorough guidance, noting strengths and acknowledging room for improvement in present and future research endeavors.

Having read this book, readers will leave with a better understanding of the historic and present complexities within the case study method. Gerring provides us with concrete information about how and when this method is used, how it can be used better, and, despite all the controversy and doubt regarding this choice of method, that it continues to be useful within the social sciences.

Saskia Sassen has written an erudite and incisive analysis of contemporary global social change that significantly advances the thinking of the “global capitalism” school. Sassen effectively answers many of the objections to the proposition that world history has entered a qualitatively new phase since the 1980s. She does not ignore history; instead, she mines it for data as she examines the emergence of the world of the national, and then sheds light on the ways the institutions of the national world still exist at the same time the globalized system is emerging or has emerged.

Her main idea is that the old national institutions have become reconfigured for new global purposes. Institutional capabilities can “jump tracks” to support new normative orders. While the institutions are serving a new logic, traces of the old logic more or less remain and new assemblages occur within the structures built with the previous logic. She provides support for this thesis by focusing on the patterned changes and continuities in the nature of territorial authority, political economy, and citizenship and law in European and Europe-descended societies since the eleventh century. She begins by tracing the emergence of a system of national societies out of a multijurisdictional and multiscale medieval assemblage of manors, city-states, empires, and churches. The divine right of kings (legitimation from above) became reconfigured as secular national authority based on social contracts with citizens.