

CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

THIRD EDITION



JOHN L. KOREY



California Government

Third Edition

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Preface

When the first edition of *California Government* was published in 1995, the state's economy was just emerging from a severe recession, and the government was hamstrung by a "structural deficit" that many thought would only worsen for the foreseeable future. By 1998, however, California had experienced a remarkable comeback. Political leaders in Sacramento were debating over what to do with a growing surplus, a far more enjoyable task than the burden of allocating the pain of revenue shortfalls. Now, the state may again be entering a time of crisis as the governor and legislature debate what to do to solve a severe energy shortage.

What is constant through all of this change is that California is a state of enormous complexity and contradiction. This is not any less true of its political system. With its emphasis on direct democracy, the political system places especially high demands on the state's citizens to act in an informed way, which assumes a basic understanding of California's political processes. It remains the goal of this edition to contribute to such understanding.

Most readers of this text will be using it as a supplement to an American government text. In California, political processes at the state and local level are just different enough from those at the federal level to be confusing. If there is a central theme in this book, it is the exploration of these similarities and differences.

The new edition retains the conciseness and clarity of the first two. Like previous editions, the third edition goes beyond description of the formal structures of politics and focuses on how people actually engage in political activity. Where necessary, I have undertaken original research to fill gaps in available information.

REVISIONS

The basic structure of the third edition resembles that of the second. All chapters have been thoroughly updated, and several have been reworked. Chapter 3, for example, contains a completely new analysis of regional and ethnic patterns in public opinion. Chapter 4 includes new material on ideological differences between Republican and Democratic voters and treats more succinctly the roles of parties and interest groups as institutions. Chapter 5 includes new sections on the recent decline in the fortunes of the

California Republican party and on the demographics of party coalitions. Chapter 10 includes new material comparing budget allocations in California to those in other states. A new Note on Sources feature has been added at the end of the text to detail the logic behind listing online versus hardcopy sources; it will serve to assist instructors and students in tracking down source materials.

HELP FOR STUDENTS

Glossary. Key terms that are either specific to or especially important in California politics are indicated in boldface when they first appear in the text (except when mentioned incidentally). A glossary of these terms is provided in the back of the book.

Surfing California: Internet Resources. Each chapter ends with a set of suggestions and URLs for students to use in exploring California politics on the world wide web. In addition, the Houghton Mifflin College Division Web site (at college.hmco.com) includes a book companion site where students will find chapter summaries, updated chapter links, and sample test questions.

HELP FOR INSTRUCTORS

Test Item File. Instructors adopting *California Government* can obtain the password to access this online resource by contacting their Houghton Mifflin campus sales representative.

Political SourceNet. A wealth of resources for adopters of the text and their students, including the award-winning *Crosstabs* program, *You Decide* . . . simulation activities, primary source documents, web links, and Internet assignments, is available on Political SourceNet. Instructors can obtain the password to enter PSN, the link to which is found on the book's companion web site, from their campus sales representative.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I remain in the debt of all whose contributions were acknowledged in the first two editions. Doug Glaeser was particularly generous in guiding me through the constitutional issues addressed in Chapter 8. The new work in this edition on trends in party identification draws on current research with Ted Lascher. The reviewers for this edition

contributed a number of insightful suggestions—Marn J. Cha, California State University, Fresno; John H. Culver, California Polytechnic State University; Gregory Freeland, California Lutheran University; Lawrence L. Giventer, California State University, Stanislaus; and Brian P. Janiskee, California State University, San Bernardino. I'd also like to thank the editors at Houghton Mifflin—Tonya Lobato, Carol Newman, and Martha Rogers—who provided guidance and encouragement (and kept me on schedule). Richard Stephens, my wife Mary Haggerty Korey, and our son David Korey, read the entire work and significantly improved its clarity and style.

J.L.K.



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1. “America, Only More So”¹

What happens here happens five years before anywhere else in America.

—HARLAN ELLISON²

For better and for worse, Californians tend to *think* they are different. When asked in a Fall 2000 Field Poll³ whether they thought that they were “fundamentally different” from other Americans, almost half of those surveyed thought that they were, while only a third thought that they were not. Californians’ self-image was generally but not completely favorable. Specifically, a majority thought that Californians were “trendier,” more “diverse,” more “enterprising,” more “health-conscious,” more “tolerant/open-minded,” more “money oriented,” and less “old fashioned.” Respondents were also more likely (though there were not majorities on either side) to see Californians as “self-indulgent,” “fun loving,” “arrogant,” and “dishonest” and less “God fearing” and less “family oriented.”

In more specifically political terms, the state has long enjoyed and suffered an image of being on the cutting edge of change: a place in which trends originate before spreading to the rest of the country. These trends might be in a liberal direction, such as the movements against nuclear power or for gay rights, or in a conservative direction, such as the tax revolt or the movement to curtail bilingual education.

Whether this will continue to be true in the new century is the subject of some controversy. The authors of the respected *Almanac of American Politics* write that “it is uncertain whether [California] is still the harbinger of the future it has been for most of the last half of the twentieth century.”⁴ A recent article about the state was headlined, “California Doesn’t Matter: The Political Future Once Happened There; No More.”⁵ Another article, however, rejected this conclusion, arguing that America as a whole still “shows every sign of following California’s culture and politics.”⁶

CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION

Part of this debate revolves around the question of the extent to which California has become a different sort of place from the rest of the country. The “California lifestyle” is often stereotyped, but there are some ways, good and bad, in which the state is in fact

distinctive. It is in certain respects the most health-conscious place in America, ranking first in seat-belt use and next to last (ahead of Utah) in proportion of smokers to non-smokers.⁷ This concern for one's health does not necessarily extend to concern for the health of others: California's rate of violent crime in 1998 was 24 percent above that of the nation as a whole.⁸

Depending on the measure used, Californians generally are about as well off economically as other Americans.⁹ However, the gap between the rich and poor is significantly greater in California and has been growing at a more rapid rate at least since the latter part of the 1960s.¹⁰

Overall, California's economy has undergone dramatic change in recent years. With the end of the Cold War, the state, heavily reliant on the defense and aerospace industries, was hit especially hard by the recession of the early 1990s. By mid-decade California had rebounded, in part by becoming a national and world leader in "new economy" fields such as information and biotechnology. The new prosperity, however, brought new problems. For example, a burgeoning population of the newly well-to-do in Silicon Valley and other areas (mostly near the coast) caused housing prices to skyrocket. This forced many lower income workers to move inland and endure seemingly interminable commutes to work.¹¹ By early 2001, the state's economy was once again threatened, this time by, among other things, an energy crisis.

In politics, California has shown an increasing tendency in recent years to favor the Democratic party. In each of the last five presidential elections the Democratic candidate has done better in California than in the rest of the country. This difference reached a peak in 2000, when Democrat Al Gore led Republican George W. Bush by almost 12 percentage points in the popular vote in California compared to his about half point lead in the nation as a whole. Democrats also have come to dominate elected offices at the state level. Democrats (as of early 2001) held seven of eight statewide elected positions¹² and enjoyed substantial majorities in both chambers of the state legislature.

POPULATION TRENDS

The most obvious way in which California is different is the size of its population; its status as the most populous state is critical to the state's prominence in national politics. When it became a state in 1850, California had a population of less than 93,000, less than 0.5 percent of the nation's total. By the 2000 census, almost 34 million people, 12 percent of all Americans, called California home.¹³ As a result, California has the largest contingents, and potentially the most clout, in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the electoral college (which chooses the president of the United States). As a result of the 2000 census, the state will hold 53 seats in the 435-member House and cast a bloc of 55 electoral college votes out of a total of 538. A U.S. Bureau of the Census estimate is that by 2020 California's population will have grown to more than 45 million, or about 14 percent of the total for the country as a whole.¹⁴ If the House of Representatives and

the electoral college remain the same size, California will then be entitled to about 61 seats in the House and about 63 electoral votes.

California has not only the largest population of any state but also the most ethnically diverse. Table 1.1 shows a breakdown by ethnicity of the estimated 2000 population for California and for the United States as a whole. Anglos, who made up almost three-quarters of the nation's population, were less than half of the population of California, making this state (along with Hawaii and New Mexico) one of only three "minority-majority" states. Like Anglos, African Americans are a smaller proportion of the population in California than in the United States as a whole. Whereas about one of every eight Americans is an African American, the same is true of only about one in every sixteen Californians. Latinos and Asian Americans, on the other hand, are represented in California at about three times the national rate. In fact, about 31 percent of all Latinos in the United States and about 36 percent of all Asian Americans live in California. Native Americans make up less than 1 percent of both the U.S. and California populations.

Figure 1.1 shows population estimates for California through 2025, based on a study by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. According to the study, Latinos will become the state's largest ethnic group by around 2015 and by 2025 account for about 43 percent of the state's residents. Rapid growth is also projected for the Asian American population, which is expected to constitute about 17 percent of the total California population by 2025. Anglos are expected to make up about 33 percent of the state's population in 2025, African Americans between 5 and 6 percent, and Native Americans less than 0.5 percent. As we will see at several points throughout this text, California's changing demographics are already having a profound impact on its politics.

TABLE 1.1

Ethnicity: California and the Nation

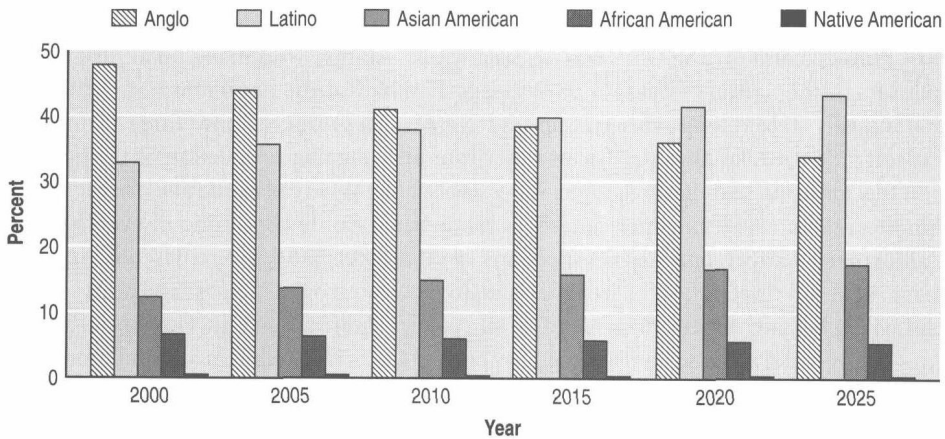
	California		U.S.	
	Millions of people	Percent	Millions of people	Percent
Anglo	15.8	47	194.6	69
Latino*	11.0	32	35.3	13
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.8	11	10.5	4
African American	2.2	6	33.9	12
Native American	0.2	1	2.1	1
Other/More than one	1.0	3	5.1	2
	33.9	100	281.4	100

*Latinos may be of any race

SOURCES: Elizabeth M. Griego and Rachel C. Cassidy, *Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001), 10; *Population by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin, for All Ages and for 18 Years and Over, for California: 2000* 29 March 2001, (30 March 2001) http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/tables/ca.tab_1.PDF. Totals may not agree due to rounding.

FIGURE 1.1

Projected Ethnic Distribution of California Population, 2000–2025



SOURCE: Based on estimates from Paul R. Campbell, *Population Projections for States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2025*, PPL-47 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, 1996): 62–73.

Figure 1.1 should come with several qualifications. First, projections going forward a quarter century are certain to prove inaccurate in important respects as the result of developments, both domestic and international, that are impossible to predict. An analysis of several population projections shows that estimates of the state's total population in 2025 range from a low of 41.5 million to a high of 51.8 million, with considerable variation in the projected growth rates of different ethnic groups.¹⁵ Second, even if the numbers should turn out to be approximately correct, their social and political meanings are likely to change. After all, German, Irish, Italian, and various other Americans now generally considered part of the "Anglo" majority were once considered what today are called "ethnic minorities." Third, high rates of ethnic intermarriage are already creating many people like California-raised golfer Tiger Woods, who fits into no single category. In 1997, about one in seven births in the state were multi-ethnic.¹⁶

Finally, dividing people into ethnic groupings such as we have done here may hide more than it reveals. Each of the categories in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 includes various subcategories. To give just one example, although both are classified as Asian Americans, Japanese Americans tend to be quite different from Korean Americans in political attitudes and behavior.¹⁷ Moreover, ethnicity is only one of myriad factors that help make us who we are; other factors include age, class, gender, occupation, marital status, length of time our families have lived in the United States, religion, and sexual orientation, as well as the various personality traits and experiences unique to each individual. From time to time in the course of this book, we will make certain generalizations about the impact of people's ethnicity on their politics, but these will be just that, generalizations.

DEMOCRACY, CALIFORNIA STYLE

In broad outline, the government of the state of California resembles that of the federal government. To mention just some of the similarities, the same two parties, Democrats and Republicans, dominate both levels of government; both state and nation are governed under constitutions providing for the separation of powers among legislative, executive, and judicial branches; both Congress and the California state legislature are bicameral (that is, divided into two chambers); most federal and state employees work under civil service systems; both levels of government have court systems headed by “supreme” courts. Throughout this text, we will tend to focus on some of the differences between the two systems, but this focus should not obscure the far more basic similarities.

Chapter 2 will discuss the state constitution, a radically different sort of document from the U.S. Constitution. It is far longer and far more specific about the powers, structure, and operations of government, goes into far greater detail in prescribing public policy, and is far easier to amend. Also, whereas the U.S. Constitution provides that decisions about public policy be made by officials *representing* the people, the state constitution adds to representative democracy an overlay of *direct* democracy, through which the people can themselves vote on policy questions.

Chapter 3 will focus on public opinion and the media. For the most part, patterns of public opinion in California are similar to what is found in the rest of the country—Californians have political views not radically different from those of their fellow Americans. Two patterns, however, deserve special attention in the California context. The



These students at a California elementary school reflect the state's growing racial and ethnic diversity. (Ken Hively/© Los Angeles Times Photo)

first is regional differences within the state. These have usually been described as differences between northern and southern California. Careful examination, however, shows that regional differences come closer to being coast versus interior rather than north versus south. The second pattern that needs special attention in the California context is the relationship between opinion and ethnicity, a relationship which turns out to be a very complex one.

Chapter 3 will also cover the somewhat paradoxical role of the media. On the one hand, California is highly dependent on mass media, and events in the state, from natural disasters to sensational murder trials, are the focus of intense interest, not only in the state but throughout the country. On the other hand, except for major elections, state government receives little in-depth coverage. The local governments of all but the largest cities and counties receive even less attention.

Ever since the Progressive era early in the twentieth century, California has had a reputation as a state with weak political parties and strong interest groups. While interest groups remain strong and while parties *as organizations* continue to be feeble, there are sharp differences between Democrats and Republicans among voters and, even more so, among elected officials. The roles of political parties and interest groups in California politics including the recent experiment with blanket primaries (in which a voter could vote without regard to his or her party affiliation) will be described in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 will be devoted to an explanation of campaigns and elections. In addition to setting forth the formal rules governing these subjects, the chapter will devote particular attention to voting patterns, including the growth of absentee voting, as well as to the roles of campaign finance and of campaign-management firms.

Chapters 6 through 8 will cover, respectively, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government. The basic structure and function of the state legislature are similar to those of the U.S. Congress. There are, however, significant differences in such things as size, voting procedures, and leadership roles. Chapter 6 will explore these differences and will, among other things, discuss the way in which legislative district boundary lines are drawn and the impact that term limits have had on career patterns and membership characteristics. It will also compare how Republican and Democratic lawmakers vote on legislation.

Chapter 7 will examine the executive branch of state government. In contrast to the national government, which has only two elected executives, the president and the vice president (both chosen on the same party ticket), California state government has a "plural" executive. It includes eight statewide executives (governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, insurance commissioner, superintendent of public instruction, treasurer, and controller) plus four members of the Board of Equalization chosen regionally. Each of these executives is elected directly by the voters. Chapter 7 will describe each of these offices and will also explain how the administration of state government is organized.

In Chapter 8 attention will turn to the state judiciary. Like the federal judiciary, the state court system can be described in general terms as divided into local trial courts, intermediate courts of appeals, and a high, or supreme, court. The state and federal systems

do differ in a number of ways, perhaps most importantly in the way in which judges are selected, with the state system giving voters some direct say in the process. Chapter 8 will also explore the relationship between the state and federal judicial systems through a discussion of the “independent grounds” doctrine of constitutional interpretation.

In addition to their state government, Californians are served and ruled by the governments of 58 counties, 471 cities (San Francisco counts as both a city and county), about a thousand school districts, and close to five thousand special districts. Chapter 9 will describe what these governing entities do and how they are structured.

Finally, Chapter 10 will examine government finance in California. It will look at where the government’s money (local as well as state) comes from, where it goes, and how decisions on taxing and spending are made. Recent trends in state and local budgeting will be reviewed.

SURFING CALIFORNIA: INTERNET RESOURCES

Most of the more interesting Web sites dealing with California government and politics are specific to topics covered in later chapters. At the end of each chapter you will find the relevant addresses listed and described, usually along with a few suggestions on their use. Here, however, are a few general ones that are useful.

The official California home page is at:

<http://www.ca.gov>

Other good sites:

The Library of Congress, *California State and Local Government*:

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/global/state/ca-gov.html>

Strategic Communication Services, Inc., *Your Bi-Partisan Online Guide to California Press, Political, Election, Legislative and Government Information*:

<http://www.politicalaccess.com>

Rough & Tumble: A Daily Snapshot of California Public Policy and Politics offers full text of news articles, from various sources, with a focus on California politics and policies:

<http://www.rtumble.com>

The University Library, University of California, Davis, *State and Local Governments*:

<http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/govdoc/State>

The Digital Atlas of California (through California State University, Northridge) provides maps showing various demographic and economic patterns in the state as a whole and in major metropolitan areas:

<http://130.166.124.2/capage1.html>