MONA FIELD CHARLES P. SOHNER ALEORIA GOVERNMENT D O THIS VEN

California Government and Politics Today

SEVENTH EDITION

Mona Field

Glendale Community College

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El Camino College

To Raoul Teilhet, embodiment of the best in teaching and trade unionism. C.P.S.

To my parents, Helen Colton and Martin Field, whose wisdom always guides me.

M.F.

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Preface

Since the earliest explorers and conquistadores, California has held a mystique of golden potential for people from all over the world. Today's California is a reflection of its own past as well as a complex, ever-changing mosaic of the future. It is a destination for many, even as others are choosing to leave. California today is a "salad bowl" of ethnicities, classes, and cultures, all of whom must co-exist within a framework of limited resources and enormous social needs.

It is this text's goal to present the complexity not only of the political process but also of the social and economic circumstances in California today. The concise (yet thorough) exploration of these themes is designed to give readers many opportunities to reflect on their experiences living here and to consider ways in which they can become part of the process.

Features that make the text accessible to readers include opening quotations for each chapter, comparative data at the end of each chapter, charts, a list of political organizations and interest groups, and (in response to student requests) an expanded glossary of italicized terms. In addition, an extensive appendix section gives an up-to-date list of elected officials and how to reach them.

Special emphases of this edition that add to its currency are issues relating to the 1994 elections, the continuing ramifications of Proposition 13 as evidenced in the bankrupcy of Orange County, and the unpredictable nature of both the electorate and the legislative bodies in a time of term limits and polarization. As always, the book pays close attention to the demographic and economic indicators and the political implications thereof. For the benefit of instructors, a complete test bank is available including a computerized version.

The authors' highest aim is to enlighten and inform the readers while gently reminding them that the fate of our golden state is in our hands. If we do not participate, who will? We hope our efforts are successful, and we thank those who made this book possible: our editor, Leo Wiegman; our reviewers; and, of course, our families who patiently accepted our long hours at the computer.

We remain fully responsible for our work, both the positive aspects and any omissions or errors that it may contain.

Please read, reflect, and consider joining us in a long-term commitment to make California the very best it can be.

Mona Field Charles P. Sohner

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Chapter **1**

California Politics in Perspective

"Now is the time to re-assemble, renew, and re-earn California."

—Kevin Starr, State Librarian of California

alifornians have experienced enormous upheavals in the 1990s. Nearly every sort of natural disaster, including fires, floods, and earthquakes, has occurred, along with human-created disasters, including a massive urban uprising and an unprecedented declaration of bankruptcy by one of the state's wealthiest counties. Economic stress, brought about by the longest *recession* since the Great Depression of the 1930s, has combined with increasing tensions between ethnic groups to promote an atmosphere of rising prejudice and backlash. While the state's population still ranks it "number one" in the nation, that fact does little to unify the nearly 32 million Californians, who have become increasingly diverse culturally and more fragmented in their social and political attitudes. This fragmentation, or *polarization*, has intensified the traditional differences between the two major political parties as well as increased the sense of frustration among Californians of all political views and cultural backgrounds.

In his reelection campaign of 1994, Governor Pete Wilson may have increased the gaps between the secure and the struggling by emphasizing illegal immigration and crime as his primary campaign issues. While that campaign was successful in gaining him a second term, many observers worry that the governor may be too focused on what divides Californians, rather than what unites them.

NATIONAL IMPACT

Although California's growth has leveled off during the 1990s, both in terms of population and wealth, it is still the most populous state in the nation. This large population gives California enormous clout in the national scene. Two of the last six presidents, Nixon and Reagan, came from California, and of the nine members

currently on the U.S. Supreme Court, four were either born or educated in California. The state has 52 of the 435 members of the House of Representatives, 11 more than any other state, and 54 *electoral votes*, a fifth of the 270 necessary to elect a president.

California's national importance flows largely from three traditional sources of political power—money, publicity, and population. Even during the prolonged economic slump of the early 1990s, California remained the home of one-fifth of the nation's wealthiest people. Although the rich are a tiny minority of the population, they can have enormous influence on politics, both through campaign contributions and through their own political activism. The emerging custom of wealthy individuals using their own money to run for office resulted in the election of Richard Riordan as Mayor of Los Angeles and created a close call for incumbent U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein in her 1994 race against Michael Huffington.

Along with dollars, media and publicity also play a key role in political outcomes. During both good times and bad, California gets an ample share of attention in the national media. The state still gets international media coverage for upbeat events, such as the annual Tournament of Roses Parade, as well as less-favorable attention when its residents suffer the ravages of earthquakes or riots. Because California is home to people from all over the world, events in Los Angeles or San Francisco may be front page news in Manila, Ho Chi Minh City, Seoul, or San Salvador.

It is sheer numbers, however, that contribute most to California's political might. Its nearly 32 million people² earn the state both the largest Congressional delegation and the largest bloc of electoral votes, and also, under most circumstances, enable it to receive more federal grants and government contracts than almost any other state. It is no wonder that prominent Californians—including, certainly, Governor Pete Wilson—are frequently mentioned as potential presidential candidates.

THE STATE AND ITS PEOPLE

Despite California's prominence in national affairs, the daily lives of its people are affected more closely by the politics of their own state. The state determines the grounds for divorce, the traffic regulations, public college tuition fees, penalties for drug possession, and the qualifications one needs to become a barber, psychologist, or lawyer. It establishes the amount of unemployment compensation, the location of highways, the subjects to be taught in school, and the rates to be charged by telephone and gas and electric companies. Along with the local governments under its control, it regulates building construction, provides police and fire protection, and spends about 15 percent of the total value of goods and services produced by California residents.

The policy decisions made in these and other areas are influenced by the distribution of political power among various groups with competing needs and aspirations. Some of the power blocs reflect the same conflicts of interest that the nation experiences: labor vs. business; landlords vs. tenants; environmentalists vs.

oil companies. But, as in so many things, these battles are fought on a grander scale in California. Struggles over the use and abuse of public tax dollars have become intensified in California due to the chronic deficits in government during the long recession—a recession that may or may not end before the century closes. Battles over health care, welfare, and public safety are not debated solely in the legislative bodies of the state, counties, and cities, but also among voters who have the options to create policy through *ballot initiatives*.

Ballot propositions, or *initiatives*, in recent years have dealt with topics including euthanasia, single-payer health care, "three strikes and you're out," and the controversial Proposition 187, a largely unconstitutional measure designed to "send a message" that Californians want federal action to stem illegal immigration. Whether these issues are handled through the legislative process or the initiative, the final outcome usually depends on such factors as money, media, and the public mood.

THE STATE AND THE FEDERAL SYSTEM

Like the other states, California is part of the American federal system. *Federalism* distributes power to both the national and state governments, thereby creating a system of dual citizenship and authority. It is a complex arrangement designed to assure the unity of the country while at the same time permitting the states to

Table 1.1

CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION: GROWTH SINCE STATEHOOD

Year	Population	
1850	92,597	
1860	379,994	
1870	560,247	
1880	864,694	
1890	1,213,398	
1900	1,485,053	
1910	2,377,549	
1920	3,426,861	
1930	5,677,251	
1940	6,907,387	
1950	10,586,223	
1960	15,717,204	
1970	19,971,069	
1980	23,667,902	
1990	29,839,250	
1994	31,400,000	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

4

reflect the diversity of a sprawling population with pluralistic traditions and economic interests. Although national and state authority overlap in such areas as taxation and highway construction (examples of what are known as concurrent powers), each level of government also has its own policy domain. The U.S. Constitution gives the national government its powers, including such areas as interstate commerce, foreign policy, national defense, and international relations. The states are permitted to do anything that is not prohibited or that the Constitution does not assign to the national government.

Within each state, the distribution of powers is *unitary*. This means that the cities, counties, and other units of local government get their authority from the state. States and their local bodies generally focus their powers on such services as education, public safety, and health and welfare.

Just as California has a mighty impact on the country as a whole, the national government exerts reciprocal influence on the states. Federal funds often come with strings attached. In 1994, California joined nineteen other states in changing its marijuana laws in order to retain its federal highway funds. The federal government, in its efforts to stem crime, had demanded that states impose stricter punishments for illegal drug usage. In order to keep \$54 million in road construction and maintenance funds, the state changed its own \$100 fine for possession or cultivation of one ounce or less of marijuana to a six-month suspension of a driver's license. Such federal mandates continue to cause debate over states's rights and the proper role of the federal government.

Federal funding does not always come directly to government itself. For nearly fifty years, since the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, California's private defense industry relied heavily on federal contracts to create a thriving military-based economy. Major corporations, such as Lockheed, Hughes, Rockwell, and many others, enjoyed high profits and provided well-paying, secure jobs to engineers, managers, secretaries, and assembly line workers. When the Cold War ended in 1989, this entire military contract system crashed abruptly, leaving a large hole in the California economy. The layoffs and their ripple effects into the affected communities have continued throughout the decade, leaving both economic and emotional stress for tens of thousands of individuals. It is estimated that over 200,000 jobs in aerospace were lost in the first half of the 1990s, and the demilitarization of California continues to require innovative responses from both government and the private sector. Retraining, education, and job creation are three of the many issues that must be resolved as California recovers from its long-time dependence on the federal defense budget.

While relations between the federal government and each state are complex and significant, the relations between states are also important. The U.S. Constitution requires every state to honor the laws of every other state, so that marriages and other contracts made in one state are respected in all states and criminals trying to escape justice cannot find safe haven by leaving the state in which they have been convicted.

Federalism is perhaps America's greatest political invention. It not only permits states to enact their diverse policy preferences into law on such matters as

gambling, prostitution, trash disposal, and wilderness protection, but to act as social laboratories, testing previously untried programs. California has become known as a place of experimentation, and our experiments are often imitated nationwide. The taxpayers' revolt of the 1970s and 1980s began in California when Proposition 13 passed in 1978, and California's successful propositions of the 1990s may be on other state agendas, or even the national agenda, by the year 2000.

Because federalism allows states great autonomy, and because California has developed a complex web of local governments, the average California voter must make numerous decisions at the ballot box. Each Californian, whether a citizen or not, lives in a number of election jurisdictions, including a Congressional District, a State Senate District, an Assembly District, and a County Supervisorial District, plus (in most cases) a city, a school district, and a community college district. This array of political jurisdictions provides many opportunities to exercise democracy. It also creates confusion, overlaps, and many occasions on which voters feel unable to fully evaluate the qualifications of candidates.

Other problems linked to federalism include outdated state boundaries that have created some super-states, with land masses and populations that may be ungovernable, and the differences in resources between states. California's size has certainly caused numerous controversies over whether the state should be divided somehow. Meanwhile, variations in state wealth perpetuate inequality in schools, public hospitals, and other government facilities, leading to the debate over whether people come to California to enjoy better public benefits than they could get in other states. The federal system also promotes rivalry between states as they compete to attract new businesses (and jobs) or keep existing ones. Among the tactics used in this strugle are tax breaks, reduced worker compensation, and relaxed environmental protection standards. Nevada, with its lower taxes, attracts some California enterprises, while Utah offers a highly educated workforce and relatively low crime rates as primary incentives for businesses to relocate. On a larger and more complex scale, the appeal of relocating across the border in Mexico has been enhanced by the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which eliminates import tariffs and encourages American companies to open factories where wages are low and worker protection is minimal. In the global economy of the new millenium, California faces tremendous challenges in providing decent jobs, education, health services and, in general, the high quality of life that the state has always promoted as its chief claim to fame.

CALIFORNIA IN COMPARISON

In terms of political strength, California, with its 54 electoral votes, equals the votes of New York and Ohio combined, while seven states have only three electoral votes each, the constitutional minimum. In terms of economic strength, California ranks first in its share of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, with 13 percent of the total, and its economy ranks seventh in the world.

National Level President	Elected by Entire state	Term 4 years	Election Year Years divisible by four
U.S. Senators	Entire state	6 years	Every six years counting from 1992 Every six years counting from 1994
Members of Congress	Districts	2 years	Even-numbered years
State Level Governor ¹			
Lt. Governor ¹ Secretary of State ¹	Entire state	4 years	Even-numbered years when there is no presidential election
Controller ¹ Treasurer ¹ Attorney General ¹			
Insurance Commissioner —			
Members of Board of Equalization ¹	Districts	4 years	Same as governor
State Senators ¹	Districts	4 years	Same as governor for even-numbered districts Same as president for
Assembly members	² Districts	2 years	odd-numbered districts Even-numbered years
Nonpartisan Offices			
State Level Superintendent of			
Public Instruction Supreme Court	Entire state	4 years	Same as governor
justices Court of Appeal	Entire state	12 years	Same as governor
justices Superior Court	Entire state	12 years	Same as governor
judges	Counties	6 years	Even-numbered years

Figure 1.1 Federal and State Officials Elected by California Voters. (Source: League of Women Voters.)

NOTES

- 1. "Bill Gates Tops List in Forbes Ranking of Richest in U.S.," Los Angeles Times, 3 October 1994, p. D1.
- 2. "State's Population at Peak but Growth Rate is Slowing," Los Angeles Times, 24 December 1994, p. A22.
- 3. Carl Ingram, "'Smoke a Joint, Lose a License' Law in Effect," Los Angeles Times, 1 December 1994, p. A3.
- 4. Judith Apablaza, "Job Market Trends Summary," Glendale College Career Center publication, 21 November 1994, p. 1.

Chapter **2**

The Californians: Land, People, and Political Culture

"The uniqueness we assumed we had has come unraveled. We are so much more like the rest of the country, and we have problems. . . They have snow and ice, and we have earthquakes."

-Neil Morgan, columnist

Leading to the political process in California, as in other states, is conditioned by many geographic, demographic, and cultural influences. While geography changes only slowly, population shifts and cultural influences can rather suddenly inject new and unpredictable threads into the complex web that forms the state's identity and future prospects.

GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

With an area of 156,000 square miles, California is larger than Italy, Japan, or England and trails only Alaska and Texas among the states. It is shaped like a gigantic stocking, with a length more than twice its width. If California were superimposed on the East Coast, it would cover six states, from Florida to New York. The enormity of the state as well as recurrent battles over water supplies and financial resources have resulted in periodic proposals that the state be divided into two or even three separate states, with the presumption that the Northern, Central and Southern regions could each stand alone as political entities.²

While California's size has contributed to its political dynamics, its location has been at least as important. As the leading state on what is called the Pacific Rim (those states bordering the Pacific Ocean and facing the Far East), it has attracted large numbers of Asians to its shores, led the nation in commercial fishing, and attracted huge federal investments in naval installations. The state is also one of

only 15 that borders a foreign nation. In part as a result of its proximity to Mexico, Californians of Mexican descent have become the largest ethnic minority in the state, one which includes both first-generation Mexican Americans and "Chicanos" whose parents or ancestors originally came from that country.

Two other geographic influences command attention: rich natural resources and spectacularly beautiful terrain. Between the majestic Sierra Nevada range along the eastern border and the Coastal Mountains on the west lies the Central Valley—one of the richest agricultural regions in the world. As a result, California leads the nation in farm output, although agriculture's political influence has diminished as urban residents and environmentalists have begun to win the water supply wars.3 While over 40 percent of the state is forested, battles over environmental standards and redwood preservation have somewhat reduced the power of the lumber industry and caused lengthy litigation. 4 California has plentiful oil, yet even the once invincible petroleum industry has occasionally been prevented from building pipelines through urban areas by grassroots organizations concerned about safety. While agriculture, timber, and oil remain economically important as well as environmentally controversial, another natural resource is also the subject of continual political debate over how much to exploit it: California's landscape. Ranging across arid deserts, a thousand-mile shoreline, and remote mountain wilderness, the terrain itself has become a battlefield between conservationists and commercial recreation developers. About 45 percent of all land is government owned (including six national parks and seventeen national forests) compared with less than 34 percent in the entire nation.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

The population trends in California have changed dramatically in recent years. In contrast to the 1980s, when California's population boomed, the 1990s have seen a slowing of population growth.⁵ The fastest growing cities are no longer the large ones, but rather small places such as Adelanto, Delano, Lathrop, and Twentynine Palms.⁶ Instead of steady and large population increases, California now has a "crisscross" growth pattern in which *outmigration* of disappointed Californians runs almost even with the influx of hopeful new arrivals. Only high birthrates, especially among recent immigrants, kept California in the "growing" category. However, long-term predictions suggest a 52 percent growth by the year 2020, with profound consequences for the political and economic structure as well as for the environment. Most of the growth will be among Latinos and Asians, with Latinos expected to be over one-third of the state's population by that year. Meanwhile, even during a period of slow growth, California remains the most populous state, with over 12 percent of the nation's people.⁷

The crisscross migration patterns of the 1990s have created interesting demographics. Those leaving the state tend to be better educated and older than those arriving, while many of the newcomers are not transplanted Americans but are arriving from all over the world, contributing to the extraordinary racial and cultural diversity of the state. The special needs of foreign immigrants for education,

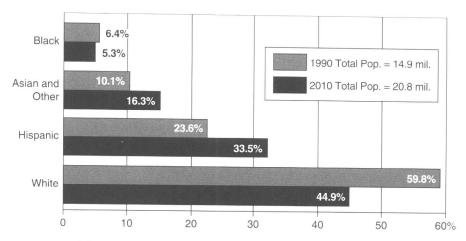


Figure 2.1 California Labor Force by Ethnic Group 1990–2010: Percentage of Labor Force Population (*Source:* Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy.)

health care, transportation, and other services during a time of reduced government revenue has created an often ferocious debate about immigration and about immigrants, with many newcomers feeling nervous about their reception and many longtime residents worrying about how the economic pie is divided. These tensions contributed to Proposition 187, a largely unconstitutional attempt to deny public services to undocumented immigrants and their children, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

The increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the state's population is unlikely to change. In the 1991–1992 fiscal year alone, more than half of California's legally reported newcomers were foreign born, while the numbers of illegal immigrants can only be estimated. The largest immigrant groups come from Mexico, Central America, and the Asian Pacific region, with substantial numbers arriving from the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. Unlike their predecessors of other eras, recent immigrants do not necessarily settle in urban areas, but are increasingly integrating formerly "white" suburbs, such as Santa Clarita and parts of Orange County. In less than twenty years, most children of immigrants become voting age U.S. citizens and the political landscape may change dramatically if California's newer citizens are mobilized.

In many communities, concentrations of new ethnic groups have already altered the social and political landscape. Out of choice or necessity, ethnic enclaves develop wherever a group puts down roots, their presence reflected in the language of storefront signs, distinctive architecture, and types of food available. Daly City is called "Little Manila," and Fresno is home to 30,000 Hmong, members of a Laotian hill tribe. Stockton has 35,000 refugees from several areas of Indochina; Glendale has a substantial concentration of Armenians; Westminster, in Orange County, is known as "Little Seoul," and Monterey Park, the first city in the continental United States with an Asian majority, is 56 percent Chinese. About three million Hispanics, mostly Mexican, live in Los Angeles County, and the school children there speak 80 different languages. 12

100.00
RANKING OF AVERAGE INCOME AMONG 30-YEAR-OLD CALIFORNIA WORKER
(OVERALL AVERAGE \$32,861)

Table 2.1

CATEGORY	INCOME	
White males	\$39,279	
Asian male citizens	\$35,361	
Hispanic male citizens	\$34,554	
Black males	\$30,842	
White females	\$28,938	
Asian female citizens	\$28,046	
Black females	\$26,588	
Hispanic female citizens	\$25,488	
Asian male immigrants	\$24,713	
Hispanic male immigrants	\$21,191	
Hispanic female immigrants	\$19,392	
Asian female immigrants	\$19,202	

Source: McLeod, Ramon G. "White Women, Young Minitories Make Pay Gains," San Francisco Chronicle, September 6, 1993.

While the debate over the role of immigrants continues, American-born ethnic minorities are also forming an increasingly large bloc in the state's population. African-American Californians are holding steady at about eight percent, while U.S. born Latinos and Asians are expected to quadruple by the year 2020. Although of the same ethnic heritage as their immigrant relatives, American-born Latinos and Asians do not necessarily think or behave like immigrants, yet they may be subject to similar prejudices and discrimination. Despite being U.S. citizens, many African Americans and Latinos still face enormous obstacles in achieving adequate educations, while Asians have often been stereotyped into "perfect student" roles that place burdens on those who do not fulfill that expectation. At the same time, second-generation Latinos and Asians run the risk of assimilating in ways that are counter-productive, joining inner city minority youth subcultures that discourage the pursuit of education and encourage gang activities and other deviant behaviors. And the same time of the pursuit of education and encourage gang activities and other deviant behaviors.

Population diversity, of course, embraces far more than ethnicity. Collectively, Californians seem to embody virtually the whole range of religious beliefs, including nearly 20 percent who profess no religion at all. No "majority religion" exists in California, with 45 percent Protestant, 25 percent Roman Catholic, 5 percent Jewish, and 7 percent "other." About one-third of Californians claim to be "born-again Christians," which may partially account for the strength of the Christian Coalition, a political movement based on a belief that fundamentalist Christian theology should guide American politics. ¹⁵

Another side of California's diverse groupings is the gay community, often a target of the Christian Coalition. Although the state's antigay political movements are well-organized, the gay rights movement also taps into a committed group of

supporters. While there are no precise statistics on the numbers of gay and lesbian Californians, the growing political strength of the gay community indicates that there is enough of a base to support and elect gay candidates in certain areas. The first openly lesbian state Assemblywoman, Sheila Kuehl, was elected in 1994. In Los Angeles, Jackie Goldberg is the first openly homosexual member of the City Council, while Jeff Horton "came out" during his first term on the Los Angeles Unified School Board. Despite these visible electoral gains, homophobia, like racial prejudice, persists in varying degrees throughout the state, and acts of violence directed at gays have mobilized gay organizations to start their own safety patrols in some areas.

CALIFORNIA'S POLITICAL CULTURE

Each state has a distinctive political style that is shaped not only by its geography and population characteristics but also by the values and attitudes shared by most of its people. These elements constitute what is sometimes called the political culture. In many ways, California is similar to that of the rest of the country and is conditioned by the same influences. Californians embrace the principles of patriotism, capitalism, and democracy as fervently as any Americans. But there are differences as well, stemming from both unique historical development and the steady emergence of distinctive problems demanding political attention. California's frontier heritage, for example, includes a legacy of materialistic individualism that may exceed that of most other states. The pioneer mentality that encourages people to come to California, especially during the state's long-term recession, tends also to promote a disregard for tradition that has caused friction with longtime Californians.

Some of the frustrations of longtime Californians have nothing to do with the newcomers, yet newcomers are an easy target. Californians who grew up in the "golden years" remember clean streets, uncrowded schools, quiet beaches, and freeways that worked. Their sunny memories have been badly battered by the current situation, in which all of the positives seem to have turned into their opposites, except perhaps for the perennial sunshine. The dream for which millions came to this state has vanished into the recession of the 1990s, with over 800,000 jobs lost since 1990. Although many of the losses were caused by the dismantling of the Cold War military economy that helped fuel earlier decades of prosperity, theories to explain the economic downturn include everything from "bad karma" to *immigrant-bashing*. For those whose lives were built around the "California Dream," the letdown of recent years has left a gloomy residue, with 50 percent of Californians agreeing that the dream is "struggling."

Because the good times lasted so long, California has fulfilled the dreams of many of its people. But recent events have dimmed the good memories. Even during a recession, the state's housing is still ranked among the least affordable in the nation, while the state's once exemplary educational system has declined into a two-tier system in which large sectors of urban middle- and upper-class parents do not even consider sending their children to public school. As a final blow to Cali-