

as Ragin favors, synthesized, which means that several features of each are integrated. The major advantages of a synthetic comparative approach are that (1) a large number of cases may be addressed; (2) parsimonious explanations (useful in a policy setting) can be formulated; (3) there is an analytic aspect; and (4) alternative explanations are considered.²⁵ Over all, the case-oriented strategy is discredited to the profit of more encompassing methodologies. However, their value should not be forgotten.²⁶

17. From a practical point of view, the case-oriented approach can be the object of appropriate use, outside theory-building. Harry Eckstein's work seeks to demonstrate the validity of case studies to theory-building. Yet, his typologies of case studies are an indication of the various ways by which case studies can be purposeful, especially for the policy planners of our discussion. However, his configurative-idiographic case study, which deals with complex collective individuals such as polities, parties, etc., can be accused of suffering from the same criticisms addressed to the traditional approach. Eckstein's own criticisms are rather similar in contents. A second type of case study identified is the heuristic case, by which the study is one of gradual unfolding and not of simultaneous inspections as in a comparative study. The main

²⁵ See Ragin, The Comparative Method [...], page 82-84.

²⁶ See the demonstration of Harry Eckstein to the effect that the contribution of case studies to theory-building should not be dismissed. Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science", in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby [Eds.], Handbook of Political Science. Vol. 7: Strategies of Inquiry (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975), pages 79-137.