“Bennett and Checkel have assembled an impressive group of scholars on the cutting-edge methodological issues involved in process tracing, while at the same time providing concrete, practical advice for scholars who wish to use this technique of analysis in a variety of different research programs. As a result of this dual approach, this volume represents a steep change from earlier methodological studies on process tracing and fills a real gap in scholarship. There is no doubt that it will be compulsory reading on graduate-level courses in qualitative methodology for a long time to come.”

Giovanni Capoccia, Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Oxford

“Bennett and Checkel’s remarkable book will bring process tracing to the attention of a wide spectrum of disciplines – sociology, anthropology, history, public policy analysis, and beyond. This valuable tool for causal inference has been developed primarily by political scientists, and their volume will accelerate much wider adoption of the method.”

David Collier, Robson Professor, UC Berkeley

“This volume is the next milestone in the dynamic debate over causal mechanisms and the standards and practices of process tracing. These contributions by leading figures in the discipline covering a broad range of topics and research areas are a must-read for anyone interested in and using qualitative methods.”

Ingo Rohlfing, Professor for Qualitative Methods, Political Science, Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences

Advances in qualitative methods and recent developments in the philosophy of science have led to an emphasis on explanation via reference to causal mechanisms. This book argues that the method known as process tracing is particularly well suited to developing and assessing theories about such mechanisms. The editors begin by establishing a philosophical basis for process tracing – one that captures mainstream uses while simultaneously being open to applications by interpretive scholars. Equally important, they go on to establish best practices for individual process-tracing accounts – how micro to go, when to start (and stop), and how to deal with the problem of equifinality. The contributors then explore the application of process tracing across a range of subfields and theories in political science. This is an applied methods book which seeks to shrink the gap between the broad assertion that “process tracing is good” and the precise claim “this is an instance of good process tracing.”

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