The Politics Industry: How Political Innovation Can Break Partisan Gridlock and Save Our Democracy, Katherine M. Gehl and Michael E. Porter, Harvard Business School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2020. 316 pp. $30.00 (cloth)

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Katherine Gehl and Michael E. Porter have indicted party politics *as many know it*. This is their book's greatest strength -- and problem. Its description of parties is accurate enough, but the model of party competition is not. An implicit, one-dimensional spatial perspective leads to mischaracterization of primary elections. It also overstates the disruptive potential of the authors' proposed reform: non-partisan, two-round, single-seat elections with ranked ballots in round two. The authors' key term, "public interest," boils down to 'not this party alignment.' And despite repeated claims that we need more parties (pp. 5, 21, 34, 45, 105, 123, 125), the book never mentions proportional representation (PR). Ironically, much of the book's own logic implies a need for just that.

The introductory chapter is for problem definition. It casts the party system as "a self-serving, self-perpetuating private industry" (p. 3) that does not "work for us -- for the citizens, the voters, the public interest" (p. 4). Immediately, the book targets two audiences: those who cannot win major-party primaries, then those who might "launch a startup: a new political party" (p. 5).

The rest of the book builds on four literary devices: elections machinery, legislative machinery, a political-industrial complex (PIC), and policy in the public interest.

"Elections machinery" encapsulates two issues: party control of the party label, then how winners are chosen (e.g., via plurality). The authors combine these unrelated dimensions in order to appeal to disparate groups: "moderates…, independents and third parties" (p. 45).

"Legislative machinery" means the constellation of rules and practices used to organize Congress: committee appointments, the Hastert Rule, and caucus meetings (pp. 52-63). This part of the book also nostalgizes "Washington of the 1950s and 1960s," then laments decisions to rein in committees (p. 56). Students of the Civil Rights realignment are likely to raise an eyebrow (compare Katznelson and Mulroy 2012).

In "political-industrial complex" (PIC), social scientists will recognize recent theories of party (compare Koger et al 2010; Bawn et al 2012; also see McCarty and Schickler 2018). These are complex networks of lobbyists, donors, media outlets, et cetera, that coordinate primary voters and legislative outcomes (pp. 19-34).

Harder to pin down is "public interest." Chapter 1 suggests what it is not: gridlock and recent cases of mean-spirited policy. Strictly speaking, though, "public interest" is in opposition to whatever policy bundle the PIC has put forward. Its clearest image comes in the discussion of Congress: "Party-line legislation dominates partly because there simply aren't enough moderates remaining who can bridge the gap between the extremes of the two sides" (p. 67).

As the word "moderate" suggests, the book is built on median-voter logic (Hotelling 1929; Downs 1957). With respect to voters, primary electorates are "*further to the left or right* in their respective parties." With respect to the party-as-organization, there is a "tacit agreement to split the electorate and *target extremes* (p. 24, emphases mine). Finally, with respect to parties-in-government, first-dimension NOMINATE scores dominate the discussion of "legislative machinery" (p. 68).

The reform proposal flows from the one-dimensional model. The theory is that most voters are in the middle, deprived by PIC of centrist alternatives. Third parties are important for raising issues, but "cross-partisan, problem-solving, consensus-seeking moderates are crucial for delivering practical solutions" (pp. 131-2). Final Five Voting, as the authors call it, is built for electing moderates. Parties no longer choose their nominees. All candidates run in a plurality election, and the top five vote-getters face off in round two, where a ranked-choice procedure leads to crossover voting.

But primaries are not about locations in one dimension. Rather, they are about choosing *which dimension will be salient*. Political scientists regularly find that two or more dimensions are needed to model policy views. Typically these are "economic" and "cultural" (Miller and Schofield 2003, Treier et al 2009, Malka et al 2017). Two dimensions also hold for congressional voting when the party system is in flux (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). Finally, research shows that primary- and general-election voters do not differ in terms of *specific policy attitudes* (Ranney 1968, Sides et al 2020). Primaries matter not for candidate "extremity" -- but for the issue substance of electoral competition. Hence research finds that primary reform has little to no effect on polarization (McGhee et al 2013, McGhee and Shor 2017; but see Grose 2020), which is largely an indirect mea-

sure of legislative cohesion. The "political-industrial complex" adapts, as the authors even note with respect to Donald Trump (pp. 36-7).[1]

In making the case for Final Five Voting, Gehl and Porter show how Progressive reformers forced party competition onto a new dimension: Australian ballots, direct primaries, initiative-and-referendum, direct election of Senators, and a revolt against Speaker Joe Cannon (pp. 110-4). (Again, Civil Rights scholars might raise an eyebrow [Valelly 2009].)

Curiously, though, the history lesson is silent on ranked-voting schemes (Barber 1995). Our best account of something like Final Five Voting -- nonpartisan elections via ranked ballot in single-seat districts -- holds that "the party organizations soon discovered… that they could throw the whole weight of the party organization behind [preferred] candidates" (Maxey 1922, pp. 84-5). It is hard to imagine Final Five Voting leading to different outcomes. The strategic imperative in two-round runoff is "to set up the best possible second round" (Cox 1997, p. 144) -- something a "political-industrial complex" is perfectly equipped to do (compare Masket 2009). For this reason, the mugwumps of a century ago came to prefer PR instead (Hoag 1914).

In conclusion, it is worth noting how things get measured as "centrist." Two passing references to multiple issue dimensions suggest the authors might have gone down this road (pp. 62, 103). Congressional centrists are measured as such because they vote with the opposition, on certain issues, some of the time. Similarly, "centrist" voters hold liberal and conservative positions on different sets of issues (Hare et al 2018). Finally, PR elections generate "centrist" policy precisely because they make coalitions fluid (McGann and Latner 2012, Li 2019). What do all of these centrists have in common? A single dimension cannot represent their behavior, so a confused computer puts them in the middle (Nagel 2006).

Winner-take-all reforms (such as Final Five Voting) are not likely to produce the dynamism Gehl and Porter seek. If the goal is to elevate issue dimensions that defy a party alignment -- ideas that cannot win vote majorities, yet might belong in legislative majorities -- majoritarian fixes probably will fall short.

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[1] Note that bringing independents into primaries (or doing away with primaries altogether) is not likely to change this dynamic (Klar and Krupnikov 2016a, 2016b; Dyck et al 2018).

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