Book Review

Politics at the Periphery: Third Parties in Two Party America.
   By J. David Gillespie. Columbia: University of South Ca-
   rolina Press, 1993, 334 pp., $14.95 paper.

It will be unfortunate if this wonderfully researched and
written book is read only because it includes a chapter that
reports the results of some research using Q methodology.
Gillespie has demonstrated an historian's insight and a social
scientist's analytical skills in producing a book that should be
of interest to those concerned with political parties, elections,
and political ideology. The book examines in painstaking de-
tail the historical development of America's third parties,
their platforms, and their leadership. Methodological diver-
sity is on display in the book; Gillespie integrates analyses of
historical documents, party publications and meetings,
election statistics, poll data, intensive interviews, and the re-
sults of a Q sort of party leaders in providing portraits of some
of America's most obscure political organizations. In pursuit
of contemporary material he travelled the country interview-
ing party leaders in their homes, in coffee shops, and at party
headquarters. He attended numerous meetings and rallies.
   To his credit Gillespie rejects what he calls the "elitist
penchants many scholars have for imposing definitions from
above" and argues that any group that calls itself a party
should be considered a party. However, he is careful about
detailing the common characteristics and the roles within the
political system of those groups he characterizes as third par-
ties. The first chapter includes a taxonomy of third parties
partially based on the work of V.O. Key. Key identified "con-
tinuing doctrinal parties" as those that sustain themselves for
several decades because of the strength of their activists' com-
mitments to party doctrine. Some examples include the
American Nazi Party, the Prohibition Party, and the Liberta-
rian Party. "Short-lived parties" are those identified by Key
as those that originated from organized economic protest or a

splinter from one of the major parties. Some examples are the Anti-Masons, the Bull Moose Progressives, and John Anderson's National Unity Campaign. To the two-fold typology offered by Key, Gillespie adds "non-national significant other parties" such as the Wisconsin Progressives, New York Conservatives, and the Burlington, Vermont Progressive Coalition. The chapters following the first generally correspond with the typology of third parties. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with transient national third parties in the 19th and 20th centuries. The fourth chapter gives special attention to third parties organized on the basis of gender, race and ethnicity. Doctrinal parties are discussed in the fifth chapter and "non-national significant others" in the sixth. The seventh chapter reports an analysis of Q sorts provided by party leaders.

In chapters dealing with the transient national parties and the parties based on race and gender, Gillespie begins with an overview, then proceeds chronologically by providing a detailed discussion of the historical development and political positions advanced by those deemed to be important. The chapter dealing with the doctrinal parties is organized generally in terms of the left-right political spectrum, with the parties of the left such as the Socialist Labor Party and the Communist Party-USA considered together, and the parties of the right such as the American Nazi Party and National States Rights Party considered in the same section. Special attention is given to the Libertarian Party. A useful table organizes the discussion of the non-national third parties in the sixth chapter. Gillespie's discussion of the parties is thorough and rich in historical detail. He helps the reader understand the political positions of some of the more obscure parties by discussing them in contemporary terms. For example, he notes that the 19th century Anti-Masonic Party can be understood in terms of contemporary fundamental Christian attacks on secular humanism.

While Gillespie provides an interesting description and analysis of each party, what makes his book especially interesting are the "boxes" that are included in each chapter. Material that is boxed off from the rest of the text varies in

substance, but is always fascinating. For example, in one box Gillespie notes that Lyman Frank Baum's book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,* was intentionally presented as an allegory of the Populist movement. In another box Gillespie provides a biography of Belva Ann Lockwood, who twice ran for the presidency as the nominee of the Equal Rights Party. Yet another box included a transcript of Gillespie's interview with Martin Kerr, the National Organizer of the National Socialist White People's Party.

If there is a weakness in the book's analysis it probably involves the most contemporary third parties. Attention is given to George Wallace's American Independent Party, John Anderson's National Unity Campaign, and to Ross Perot's surprising success. However, it seems to me that they should have received more extensive treatment. Poll data are available to examine the basis of support for these recent efforts and perhaps some should have been used in order to tie the book to the argument that the major parties are in decline.

Q methodologists will be most interested in the results of an analysis of third party leader beliefs and values. Fifty-five statements were sorted by a P sample of party leaders drawn from across the political spectrum. The statements dealt with basic political beliefs, social outlook, and self-image. Three factors, identified as belief systems, emerged from the analysis. The first factor included the leaders of the leftist parties and the Libertarians. The second was clearly a Nazi factor, while the third included party leaders from parties that could be characterized as conservative. Those leaders who loaded on the first factor rejected pragmatic politics, embraced leftist principles, rejected authoritarianism, and indicated a deep sense of alienation from the American political mainstream. Those on the Nazi factor, like those on the first factor, rejected political pragmatism in favor of principle and were alienated from the mainstream, but unlike those on the first factor embraced authoritarianism and the idea of a strong leader. They also embraced a deterministic view of history, believing that the superior races would prevail. Leaders who were found on the Conservative factor were more pragmatic and less alien-

ated than other leaders. They embraced many of the ideals of American liberal democracy and shared values with those in the conservative mainstream. The Q analysis provides some important insights into the types of individuals who become leaders of third parties. It adds an important dimension to the book that is not present in earlier studies of third parties.

An understanding of third parties is greatly improved by this book. It is extremely informative, and yet interesting and engaging, which cannot be said for many scholarly books about politics.

James M. Carlson, Department of Political Science, Providence College, Providence, RI 02918-0001

Q Bibliographic Update (Continued)

Additional references appear in previous issues of this newsletter, and in "Bibliography on Q Technique and Its Methodology," Perceptual and Motor Skills, 1968, 26, 587-613 (available upon request).

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