

Behaviouralism is an approach to the analysis and explanation of political phenomena. It is particularly associated with the works of American political scientists

after the Second World War (1939–45). David Easton, in his book *Political System*:

An Enquiry into the State of Political Science (1953), appealed for building up a

behavioural political science. It has to be closer to other social sciences and would

take part in the decision-making process. However, the origins of the behaviouralist

approach can be stressed back to the works of Graham Wallas and Arthur Bentley

who wrote two famous books *Human Nature in Politics* and *The Process of Government*, respectively, which was published as early as 1908. In their works,

they laid great emphasis on the informal process of politics and less on political

institutions alone.

Graham Wallas in his book *Human Nature in Politics* tried to introduce a new realism in political studies in the light of the new findings of contemporary

psychology. He was influenced by the new psychology teachings which revealed

that man was not a rational creature following his self-interest and his political actions

were not totally guided by self-interest as stated by classical economists and laissez-

faire theorists. It is very difficult to explain the human nature in utilitarian perspective.

Graham Wallas, to overcome this problem, insisted on exploring facts and evidence

for understanding human nature and its manifestations in human behaviour. The gist

of his argument was that the political process could be understood only by analysing as to how people actually behaved in a political situation and not merely by speculating on how they should or would behave. On the other hand, Arthur Bentley who is pioneer of 'group approach' to politics, says that only the description of political activity is not enough. He sought to provide for new tools of investigation. He laid emphasis on the study of informal groups. He almost completely ignored the formal political institution. Unlike Graham Wallas who is influenced by psychology, Arthur Bentley was inspired by sociology. In his study, the roles of pressure groups, political parties, elections and public opinion in the political process are highlighted. Another prominent advocate of the behaviouralist approach was Charles E. Merriam (1874–1953). He was the president of the American Political Science Association in 1925 when he exhorted political scientists to look at political behaviour as one of the essential objects of enquiry in his presidential address. Thus, Merriam was an exponent of the scientific method for the study of politics. At the same time, he was a champion of democracy. He called for employing the science into the service of democratic principle. Thus, he believed that democracy and science can be promoted together, and hence were complementary to each other. The school has done pioneer works in the development of the behavioural approach. Merriam was a vehement critic of contemporary political science. In his book *New Aspects*

of Politics (1925) and in his article 'The Present State of the Study of Politics', which was published in American Political Science Review, argued that contemporary political science lacked scientific rigour. He criticized the work of historians for ignoring the role of psychological, sociological and economic factors in human affairs. He advised that the student of politics should take the help of recent advances in social sciences in the study of politics. He argued that this will help to build an interdisciplinary and scientific character of the political science. He called for the use of the scientific approach in the study of politics. He sought to develop a 'Policy Science' by using quantitative techniques already developed in the fields of sociology and psychology. In this way, Charles Merriam contributed at length to the evolution of the behavioural approach.