

Behaviouralism

David Easton outlined eight major tenants of behaviouralism which are as follows:

- Regularities or uniformity in behaviour which can be expressed in generalizations or theory
- Verification or the testing of the validity of such generalizations or theories
- Techniques for seeking and interpreting data
- Quantification and measurement in the recording of data
- Values as distinguished between propositions, relating to ethical evaluation

and those relating to empirical

- Systematization of research
- Pure science or the seeking of understanding and explanation of behaviour,

before utilization of the knowledge for solution of societal problems

- Integration of political research with that of other social sciences

Behaviouralism came to accord primacy to higher degree of reliability vis-à-vis higher degree of generality. It, therefore, focuses on questions that could be

answered on the basis of the methods available. In a nutshell, behaviouralism focused

on the micro-level situations rather than attempting macro-level generalizations as a whole.

The approach has come under fire from both conservatives and radicals for the

purported value-neutrality. Conservatives see the distinction between values and facts

as a way of undermining the possibility of political philosophy. Neal Riemer believes

behaviouralism dismisses 'the task of ethical recommendation' because behaviouralists

believe 'truth or falsity of values (democracy, equality, and freedom, etc.) cannot be

established scientifically and are beyond the scope of legitimate inquiry'.
Christian

Bay believed behaviouralism was a pseudo political science and that it did not represent

'genuine' political research. Bay objected to empirical consideration taking precedence

over normative and moral examination of politics. Behaviouralism initially represented

a movement away from 'naive empiricism', but has been criticized as an approach for

'naive scientism'. Additionally, radical critics believe that the separation of fact from

value makes the empirical study of politics impossible.