



An Evaluation of Behaviorism as a Method for Modern Political Analysis

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Abstract : The quest for alternative paradigms aimed at expanding epistemic knowledge while analyzing political challenges in the twenty-first century is motivated by limitations inherent in classic orientations of political phenomenon analysis. Modern philosophers have embraced behaviorist techniques in opposition to institutionalist, pluralist, and elitist approaches that are now in use. These approaches have the potential to elevate the empirical status of knowledge in modern political analysis. This paper's topic was examined through an examination of all available literature, debates, and archive sources using the conventional philosophical technique of analysis. In order to pinpoint the advantage that the behavioral method provides modern political scientists, the research objectively assesses the majority of the accusations leveled against it. The study comes to the conclusion that not all of the approach's examples are bad in spite of these objections. We are all becoming behaviorists as a result of the new ideas, advanced analytical tools, and mathematical models that behaviorism has given out.

Keywords: *Behaviouralists, Behaviouralism, Contemporary, Elitists, Empirical, Pluralists, Paradigms*

1. Introduction

Studies done to identify avenues for deeper understanding contemporary political thought and behavior (Brown and Ainley, 2005; Lindblom, 1977) have shown that political science thought trends have shifted away from the conventional approaches that once dominated discourse among political analysts and thinkers. Several methods are presented in perspective, such as the pluralist, institutionalist, and elitist views. These methods, in part, mirror the different ontological and epistemological stances in political phenomenon analysis. It is crucial to remember that the divides and analytical gaps that existed in the field of political science are frequently the focus of the investigation in the methods just outlined. The pluralist approach concentrated on groups' capacity for

negotiation, whereas the institutional approach addressed constitutional and institutional concerns. On the other side, the group of elitists concentrates on the abuse of authority.

(2010) Stoker. A review of pertinent research and literature in this field (Marsh & Stoker, 2010:15), Dahl, (1951), shows that the three methodologies discussed above were, for the most part, fraught with difficulties when it came to political issue analysis. For example, the traditional institutionalist approach (Lowndes, 1996:181–197) was recognized for emphasizing formal regulations over informal customs and official governmental structures over larger institutional networks of governance. Marsh & Stoker (2010), p. 15Hi, Because of this, the institutionalist approach was frequently seen as structuralist in that it maintained that institutions influence political conduct in a similar manner to how legalists view the function of legislation in governing. This same strategy was seen to adopt functionalist roles and inclinations in that it made the premise that key institutions should always be there since they are necessary for the smooth operation of the political system. However, recent research (Finer, 1970) and Bentley, (1908) suggest that knowing the institutional and constitutional foundations of various kinds of government is a good place to start when it comes to political science analysis. The issue is that there are a growing number of obstacles to overcome with this method. Many literary works (Lowndes, Bentley (1908), Finer (1970), and 1996, 181–197) are unified in their conviction that it is imperative to go beyond the formal power structures in view of the aforementioned highlighted methods to comprehend politics. The divisions within political science have become more substantial and diversified, as was previously evident. They had advanced beyond the distinctions in analysis to consider various ontological and epistemological stances.

The main areas where these disparities occurred were (1) what to study, (2) how to study, and (3) why to do the research.

Because of this, political scientists believe that in order to positively respond to the modern questions that confront them, "We will need to step outside the confines of the earlier mentioned approaches: (Institutionalism, Pluralism and Elitism) which were known to have so many challenges, Cerny, (2009) to explore the new approaches which political scientists are beginning to adopt in their daily analysis and investigations." This perspective is held by thinkers and political analysts.

Objective of the study

1. This paper will examine the "Behavioralists Approach," often known as behavioralism, in political analysis with the goal of first defining the philosophical underpinnings that this cutting-edge method provides to current political theory.
2. In order to assess and demonstrate the behavioral approach's ongoing applicability to modern political theory, the study will carefully examine and evaluate a few of the most significant critiques leveled against it.

3. This research aims to highlight the advantages of the new behavioral approach over the old ways, taking into account the dominant arguments and inferences from the examination of the complaints hurled against it. In addition, the presentation will look at the techniques' ongoing applicability in light of evolving and shifting paradigms and constructions in modern political theory.

2. Rise of Behaviouralism

2.1 Historical Background to the Study of Behaviouralism

The rise of behaviorism may be attributed in part to opposition to conventional political inquiry methods as well as the pursuit of a more "scientific method" for obtaining empirical information in political analysis.

As a result, political scientists have put out a number of strategies in recent years to address the demands of shifting paradigms in political philosophy. The first major development in political science was the rise of the "Behavioralists Movement."

The behavioral approach to the analysis and explanation of political phenomena, or behaviorism, has its roots in the writings of Arthur Bentley (*The Process of Government*) and Graham Wallas (*Human Nature in Politics*), both of whom published their works as early as 1908. It is most commonly associated with the work of American political scientists following World War II. Wallas and Bentley had a tendency to place more weight on the unofficial political processes and less on the political institutions alone. Wallas attempted to bring a New Realism to political studies in response to recent discoveries in Contemporary Psychology. The new psychology had shown that man was not entirely a rational being and that self-interest and reason were not the only factors driving his political behavior. Wallas consequently insisted on looking into the data and facts in order to comprehend human nature and how it shows up in behavior. Arthur Bentley, on the other hand, was a pioneer of the group approach to politics and focused more on offering a new set of investigative tools for the social sciences than on describing political activity. He studied the function of political parties, elections, public opinion, and pressure organizations in the political process after being greatly influenced by sociology.

Another pioneer of the behavioral method was Charles E. Merriam. He gained notoriety as the creator of the "Chicago School," which significantly aided the behaviorist movement. Merriam attacked modern political science for lacking scientific rigor in both his book *"New Aspects of Politics"* (2000) and the American Political Science Review essay *"The Present State of The Study of Politics"* (1999). Merriam urged political scientists to include political behavior as one of the primary subjects of study in his 2011 presidential address to the American "Political Science Association."

In "Science and Method of Politics," published in 2012, George E. Catlin made the argument for a pure science devoid of values. Treating "power" as the core of politics, he said that an examination of power should be neutral toward any specific set of values. In the renowned work "Politics: Who Gets What, When and How," published in 2013, Harold D. Lasswell (2014) established a precedent for the empirical approach to politics as the study and examination of power.

Even with these first efforts, behavioralism in political science did not become systematically developed until after World War II, especially with the contributions of American Political Scientists. David B. Truman, Robert Dahl, David Easton, Evron M. Kirkpatrick, and Heinz Eulau are among the most well-known figures in the behavioral trend within political science. Although the study of political behavior was the primary emphasis of behavioralism, behavioralism as a whole came to be seen as more.

The political science movement known as behavioralism expanded beyond the study of individual political behavior to include a variety of approaches, guidelines, and techniques for analysis. In actuality, it included everything that gives contemporary political science a scientific bent. Eight main concepts make up the philosophical core of behaviorism, according to Easton (2015):

- Regularities refer to observable consistency in political conduct that may be articulated theoretically through assertions.
- Verification: It is possible to confirm the validity of such theory-like claims.
- Strategies: Methods for gathering and analyzing data.
- Accurate data recording through quantification.
- Values: An objective scientific investigation must be impartial or value neutral.
- Systematization: The intimate connection between research and theory.
- Pure Science: Focused on creating a connection between the theoretical comprehension of politics and the actual application of theories to solve problems.
- Integrating political science with other social disciplines is known as integration.

Consequently, behaviorism began to prioritize greater degrees of dependability over greater degrees of generality. In summary, behaviorism avoided making broad generalizations at the macro level and instead concentrated on events at the micro level.

2.2 Behaviouralism Analysis and Conceptual Clarifications

The movement known as behaviorism is not well defined for individuals who identify as behavioralists. Those who opposed it were able to define it more precisely because they were defining it in terms of the elements of the more recent tendencies that they considered undesirable. As a result, some might characterize behaviorism as an effort to study human behavior using techniques from the natural sciences. Some might characterize it as placing too much focus on quantifying. Some see it as reductionism that is individualistic. It was clear that the practitioners disagreed internally about what behaviorism actually was. This demonstrates how behaviorism has eluded a single definition from its start. Behaviorism is inherently ambiguous, as Dwight Waldo noted, characterizing it as "complex" and "obscure." Wooddo (1999:78). In agreement, Easton said, "Every man puts his own emphasis and thereby becomes his own behaviouralist," meaning that attempts to describe behaviouralism in its entirety have failed.

Easton (2000). p. 9. Therefore, it is far simpler to state what behavioralism does or aims to do rather than trying to define it. In order to understand behavior as it pertains to the political system, behavioralism, according to Walton, aims to study "the behavior, actions, and acts of individuals rather than the characteristics of institutions such as legislatures, executives, and judiciaries" and groups in various social settings. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, behaviorism is the belief that the scope of political science should be restricted to independently observable and measurable events. It is predicated on the ideas that society, culture, and public opinion should be the starting points for political research and that political structures are essentially reflections of underlying social forces. Therefore, in order to establish statistical correlations between independent variables (presumed causes) and dependent variables (presumed consequences), behavioralists employ the methods of the social sciences, particularly psychology. Behavioralists may, for instance, utilize comprehensive election data to contend that, for X and Y reasons, people in rural regions are more likely to support Mr. "A" and not Mr. "B." Two guiding ideas serve as the foundation for the behavioralist's whole approach to social science and political analysis. These concepts have been shown to set the behavioralist apart from other social sciences. Among these include their emphasis that the subject of their study at all times should be observable behavior, whether it be at the level of the individual or the societal aggregate. Furthermore, they maintain that any explanation put up for such behavior must be testable empirically.

In each of these many circumstances, the fundamental concerns that behaviorists aim to address are extremely evident and straightforward. In the words of Sanders, "What do the performers really do? Although it is well known that behavioralists address other concerns as well, they really think that these two are the most crucial ones from their perspective when it comes to studying political science problems.

2.3 Some Major Characteristics of Behaviouralism

One of the most notable aspects of the behaviorist method is that its intellectual roots may be traced back to the works of 19th-century philosopher Comte (1947) as well as the Vienna Circle's Logical Positivism in the 1920s. According to these philosophical underpinnings, analytical claims about the social or physical reality can be classified into one of the following categories:

Such statements could be empirical, meaning they could be tested against observations to determine whether they were true or false, or they could be purely definitional statements that give a specific meaning to a particular phenomenon or concept. Nevertheless, they could only amount to helpful tautologies. None of the first two categories applied to statements; these statements lacked analytical significance. The positivist's view was that meaningful analysis could only move forward on the basis of factual claims and helpful tautologies; metaphysics, theology, aesthetics, and ethics just add needless complexity to the process of inquiry.

It is crucial to remember, nevertheless, that behavioralism as a political science method did not fully embrace all of the positivist ideas' philosophical tenets. The tenets of logical positivism have come under fire from rival schools of thought, with one of the main causes of these attacks being recognized. Despite this, Sanders (2010) acknowledges that the positivist tradition had a significant effect on the behaviouralist understanding of the nature of empirical theory and explanation. Having said that, we would like to point out that the behaviouralists' emphasis on testing all ideas and conducting empirical observation is what has given their method its distinctive character, which has helped make it well-known in the field of social inquiry.

3.The Relevance of Behaviouralism to Modern Political Science

Based on the research conducted in the aforementioned sections, it is clear that one of the motivations behind the development of the behavioral approach was to establish a channel through which the analytical techniques used in political science could be projected, in contrast to the apparent advancements in techniques used in other social science fields such as psychology and sociology. (Hedlund and Hayes, 1970:45–55). As a result, behavioralists decided to establish scientific technique and research orientation as the new standards for political science since they were unsatisfied with traditionalists' views on matters like individual involvement and political systems in general. This clarifies the behaviorist school's persistent efforts to make political science more scientific and quantitative, as well as their concentration on studying political players and processes in small-scale politics as opposed to the official institutions of government (Leeds, 1981:2).

In my opinion, the behaviouralists' efforts are just an attempt to advance political science and give it a more scientific makeover. The "Creed of Behavioralism" or the main "behaviouralists' articles of faith" attest to this. Leeds (1981) 3:1. The articles of faith, or creed, of behavioralists state that political scientists are capable of making scientific predictions and explanations as long as they look for political behaviors and the factors that go along with them. And rather than being concerned with institutionalism, political science should just be concerned with that observable fact. Leeds, 1981, p. 2. Generally speaking, the development of behaviorism has always preceded the beginning of scientific inquiry into factors such as "role perception, political views, voting patterns,

pressure groups, the roles of elites and leaders, The interactions between individual and collective behaviors within the framework. Tanenhaus and Albst, 1920:55.

To put it succinctly, this approach's emergence in the field of political science has brought with it highly developed ideas and analytical and evaluative instruments derived from science, such as "tables, graphs, scales, charts, statistical and mathematical models" Leeds (1981). With these in mind, behaviorism, or the behaviouralists' perspective, represents a new way of thinking about political science's methodological approach. It has steered the discipline into a new avenue for knowledge acquisition and intellectual inquiry by blazing a new conceptual trail that allows it to address any problem pertaining to political events from the past and present. To put it another way, it has improved political science's responsiveness to the shifting demands of society and the analysis of politics within a democracy. We would contend that behavioralism is experiencing a rebirth in some areas of political science, if not in its whole, due to its perceived influence on the field (albeit this is contested). The opinions of some behavioralists themselves demonstrate how debatable their influence on political science is. For instance, although acknowledging that behavioralism has had a significant influence on political science, Robert Dalh was circumspect when discussing the topic, referring to it as "the scantiness of behavioralism impact" (Delh, 1961:55-70). However, Heinz Eulau appears unwavering in his assessment of behavioralism's influence on political science, stating that: The introduction of behaviorists into political science has improved and revitalized traditional research and writing methods. It has positively impacted all political science's caliber (Eulau, 1973:24–25).

Since behavioralism first appeared in the field of social science, and more especially in political science, as a method of political analysis, it has not faded but rather continued to have a profound influence on political science. It is impossible to overstate how true this is at this time. Its very existence and continuing serve as a catalyst for the quest for knowledge. Thus, we are forced to conclude that conventional political philosophy is incompatible with behaviorism or the behaviorist method. The political science research benefits from its concentration on empirical methodologies and scientific approaches rather than conventional political theory.

The current work does not address the question of whether the synthesis has already occurred or is on the verge of doing so, as noted by the approach's detractors in the form of post behavioralism. This study does point out, nevertheless, that behaviouralism has seen some degradation despite its influence on political science, which has led to a widespread acceptance and awareness of the critiques leveled at it thus far. Despite these criticisms, the approach has endured to this day because of the evolutionary pattern of human society and its accompanying complexities, which call for an equally sophisticated level of knowledge among intellectuals whose skills are required to meet these challenges.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research and endeavors of modern behavioralists thus far, it is well acknowledged that significant empirical investigation must nearly invariably begin with theoretical analysis. This is not to argue that ideas cannot be improved upon, changed, or disproved in light of actual data. Rather, a theory serves as a means of removing the analyst from the potentially overwhelming specifics of what can be witnessed firsthand, allowing for the making of abstract inferences about the relationships between various events. Furthermore, behavioralists' theory not only produces testable hypotheses but also serves as a signpost and a set of rules for the kind of data that ought to be obtained in the first place. To put it briefly, theory is crucial to modern behavioral empirical analysis. Whatever observations a theory may elicit, it must provide falsifiable predictions that are not refuted by the given empirical data in order to be regarded as genuinely explanatory. There's no reason not to assess each hypothesis according to its own observations. However, behaviouralists are unable to even consider a theory to be an explanatory theory until it can be assessed, or tested, experimentally based only on its own observational data. According to modern behavioralists, the primary goal of social science research is to explain behavior on both an individual and collective level. Therefore, the main issues posed by behavioralists are: Why do people, institutions, and nation-states behave in the ways that they do, and what are the results of their choices? The concept of causality is a component of the behaviouralist understanding of explanation. Behavioralists maintain that a theory cannot be considered to explain anything unless it makes a causal claim, even if they are aware that causality may reflect our perceptions of the world as much as "reality." Furthermore, they maintain that an explanation must be able to produce empirically falsifiable predictions that are cross-checkable with observations in order to be taken seriously. Thus, it is clear why contemporary behavioralists believe, with strong arguments, that the majority of social scientists who use empirical materials in their work share this viewpoint. Therefore, behavioralism has left a significant legacy among empirical researchers. We should all consider ourselves to be behavioralists these days.

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