

**Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings** by *Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964.—xxiii, 712 pp. \$8.95.

In writing this book Berelson and Steiner have undertaken a herculean task, and all of us who use in our own work the findings of the behavioral sciences are in their debt. The book is an authoritative overview of the more dependable and significant generalizations about behavior which have been established, or at least partially established, by anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and behaviorally-oriented economists and political scientists. The 1,045 major findings are presented in a sequence that begins with the individual, moves on to the family and small groups, and outward to organizations, institutions, social stratification, ethnic relations, mass communication, opinions, society, and culture. The eight chapters running from the study of organizations to culture will be of particular interest to behaviorally-minded political scientists. It is hard to think of a better single reference for summarizing what we now know about these matters. As the authors put it, the book is indeed an inventory, and it consequently has the virtues and defects to be expected of inventories. Among other things this means that the baldness of formulation, the absence of complex qualification, and the necessarily patchy analysis of evidence will set some teeth on edge, but these characteristics seem inevitable in a book of this sort, and I do not regard their presence as a basis for criticizing the authors. I mention them only as a warning to the reader who might expect too much depth of treatment.

It perhaps would have been possible to give a more accurate and probing assessment of the rather different kinds of evidence cited in support of the 1,045 findings, but a serious change would have required a much

more technical book that would have been considerably less accessible to a broad spectrum of behavioral and social scientists.

What one looks for and finds disappointingly absent among the many conclusions are theoretical propositions that unify and conceptually organize significant parts of the behavioral sciences. This lacuna does not represent an omission on the part of the authors, but is rather testimony to the present state of the behavioral sciences. I would like to emphasize, however, that it is too easy to claim that the natural sciences, particularly physics and chemistry, are clearly different in this respect. Even in physics the relation between theory and general empirical findings is complex and not easily schematized. A man who wants to design efficient television antennas, for example, would not be much helped by a formulation and explanation of Maxwell's fundamental equations for electromagnetic phenomena. A great deal of additional development, involving a large number of experimental results, would be needed to get to his particular design problem. I do not mean to suggest by this example that we yet have anything comparable to Maxwell's theory in the behavioral sciences. It is rather to argue that as theory does develop—and it seems to me there are some definite signs of encouragement in the last decade—the relation of theory to empirical fact in any domain of the behavioral sciences will not be simple. In view of what seems to be the almost inevitable statistical nature of the theories we can hope to have in the near future—they will at least be thoroughly probabilistic in their relation to data—it does not seem likely that anything as relatively elementary as classical physics will emerge.

Although it may seem premature, in my own judgment a companion volume surveying the most acceptable systematic theories current in the various parts of the behavioral sciences would be an attractive addition to the very useful work of Berelson and Steiner.

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