Book Reviews

The American Voter. Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. Wiley, New York, 1960. 573 pp. $8.50.

Among the important differences between the social sciences and the natural sciences has been the general backwardness of the former in developing instruments for objective reporting, analysis, and validation of observations. Nothing comparable to the telescope, the thermometer, the barometer, or the microscope has been available to the economist, sociologist, psychologist, or political scientist. Nor have social scientists been able to make very extensive use of the controlled experiment in their research. If this generation of social or behavioral scientists has seemed inordinately preoccupied with problems of methodology and instrumentation, it is because, without better methods for discovering, ordering, and analyzing human nature and conduct, social science must continue to rely largely on prudential, subjective observation or introspection.

Among students of human behavior, the experimental psychologists have been most acutely aware of the need for better research methods. Once they had broken the barrier between *mind* and *body*, they were able to borrow from their biological colleagues instruments for measuring physiological characteristics—blood pressure, neuromuscular tensions, reaction time, and so forth—and to associate these with certain emotional states or behavior traits. Educational and social psychologists, social psychiatrists, social caseworkers, and sociologists have added to their methodological storehouse new instruments and methods—the Skinner box, the depth interview, the case study, and tests of learning, aptitude, attitude, and intelligence. Equally important has been the development of improved sampling procedures and new electronic devices for coding, computing, sorting, tabulating, and analyzing great quantities of empirical data. Armed with these research tools, survey research centers have added new and exciting dimensions to social science research in nearly every field, including the critically important field of political behavior.

The present volume, *The American Voter* (by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan), is an impressive monument to scientific research on American political behavior. It is not a book for the casual reader or for those unfamiliar with such pioneer studies as *The People's Choice* and *Voting* (by Paul Lazarsfeld and his associates) and *The Voter Decides* (by Angus Campbell and his staff at the Survey Research Center). This current study, incidentally, is at least a partial answer to those who have said that, unlike research in the natural sciences, social science research is noncumulative. For the authors of *The American Voter* have built their own edifice on an impressive accumulation of specialized research papers and monographs. The result is not only an invaluable body of new information and insights concerning American voting behavior but, for the behavioral scientist, an indispensable summary and analysis of an important body of scientific literature.

Most important for the student of American politics is the restoration of the *political* dimension to data that hitherto has been treated mainly, if not exclusively, in purely sociological or psychological terms.

Of the five major sections into which the book is divided, three have to do with various political aspects of the topic: "Political Attitudes and the Vote," "The Political Context," and "The Electoral Decision and the Political System." The remaining sections are concerned with the theoretical orientation of the study and with the social and economic context. The latter section deals with the effect of membership in social groupings and the role of social class on voting behavior. It also includes analyses of the economic antecedents of political behavior, agrarian political behavior, the political significance of population movement, and personality factors in voting behavior. Even in these chapters, however, the authors are concerned with sociological and psychological factors only as they have political significance. Political attitudes are analyzed in terms of the voters' perceptions of parties and candidates, partisan choice, voting turnout, the strength of party identification, and partisan regularity in voting for President. Attitudes on public policy and ideology are related to political preferences, the formation of issue concepts, and partisan change.

As a political scientist, I find this *political* orientation refreshing and reassuring. In their preoccupation with group theory and microsociology and with the personality traits or the social and economic status of American voters, political sociologists had forgotten or had minimized the importance of the *political* environment in which voting behavior takes place. It is reassuring, therefore, to find that the authors of *The American Voter*, while not neglecting the influence of groups, personality traits, and social and economic status, seek always to relate these factors to the political process, or to what Bentley called the "process of government." More specifically, they examine in detail the reciprocal effects of election laws, political systems, party organization and strategy, and electoral behavior. Although it will come as no surprise to political scientists and practicing politicians, ballot forms, nominating systems, suffrage qualifications and the like, have important and measurable effects upon voting.

The empirical basis for this profile of the American voter is an accumulation of survey research materials covering national, state, and even local elections from 1948 through 1956. Much of the information and many of the conclusions reached concerning the motivation, participation, and orientation of American voters will be familiar to students of politics, most of whom have always assumed, for example, that voting turnout is related to intensity of political preferences and involvement. This assumption is now supported by empirical evidence. It has also now been established that intensity of partisan preference is a more important factor in turnout than issue or candidate preference, and that the nonpartisan, so-called "independent" voter

is generally the apathetic, disinterested nonvoter.

Where voter preferences for party, candidate, and issues coincide or move in the same direction, turnout will be greatest. Where partisan preferences conflict with issue or candidate preferences—that is, where cross pressures are at work—turnout will decline. Moreover for the rank and file voter, partisan preferences are more likely to affect issue and candidate preferences than are either of the latter significantly to affect partisan preference.

Maurice Duverger has argued that, for most established political parties, organization is more important than ideology. In general, this is true of American parties and of American voters. Clear ideological distinctions are found only among a rather thin layer of the more highly educated voters in both major parties. For the most part, partisan preferences are conditioned by historic and family traditions, by perceptions of group or individual interest, and, of course, by occupation, education, religion, and economic and social status.

One is struck by the strength of party loyalties in the United States, loyalties which yield only slowly to upward or downward social mobility. Even the much heralded move to the suburbs, according to *The American Voter,* is not likely to produce any dramatic reorientation of partisan preferences. If the denizens of suburbia and exurbia are more Republican than their compatriots in the central city, this is mainly owing to the outward migration of Republicans from the central city and not to any extensive conversion of Democrats by the suburban environment. Suburbanites were Republicans before they became suburbanites. The suburban trend, moreover, is more than offset by the migration of rural voters with low-levels of income, education, and status into the city where they swell the ranks of an expanding Democratic party. On balance, it is the Democrats who have profited most from the growth and internal migration of the American people, not only from rural to urban areas, but also from East to West and South to North. Today the Democrats comprise a clear and impressive majority of the voters.

What significance this may have for the Presidential election of 1960, the authors do not say. But for those who read between the lines, a Democratic victory would seem to be highly probable. How else can one interpret the following statements: (i) "in both 1952 and 1956 the number of people who called themselves Democrats outnumbered those who identified themselves as Republicans . . ." (ii) "for the most part those Democrats and Independents who voted for Eisenhower . . . preferred the man but not the party. . . . Three out of five in 1952 and three out of four in 1956 were not willing to support the Republican slate even though they voted for its Presidential candidate . . ." (iii) "Without Eisenhower's name at the top of their ticket in 1954, the Republicans could not hold either house of Congress." (And, although the authors' data do not extend to the 1958 election, the results in that year, even more than in 1954, confirm the overwhelming preference of the American voter for the Democratic party.)

Only by interpreting 1952 and 1956 as *realigning* elections (as were those of 1860, 1896, and 1932) could one attribute the Eisenhower victories to a shift in political preference from the Democratic to the Republican party. A more reasonable interpretation, in view of the Congressional, gubernatorial, and state legislative elections of 1952, 1954, 1956, and 1958, would view the Eisenhower victories not as *realigning* but as *deviating* elections. "The Eisenhower elections," say the authors, "did not presage a critical realignment of partisan attachments. They did not seriously threaten the prevailing Democratic majority, and the factors that made them possible seem not to have been of a long-term character."

It is possible, of course, that the pattern of party preferences at the Congressional and state levels bears no relation to the pattern of party preferences at the Presidential level. If this were true, then a Republican presidential candidate, even one lacking the charismatic qualities of General Eisenhower, might confidently expect to win in 1960. Moreover, special events (a Korean War, a Far Eastern crisis, a sudden change in the business cycle, and so forth), which are impossible to predict, might well produce another Presidential election *deviating* from the *normal* or Congressional pattern of party preference. But the authors of *The American Voter* wisely avoid entanglement in the hazardous business of political prediction or forecasting. Their emphasis throughout is on trying to understand, through scientific anaylsis, what has occurred, not on predicting what may or must occur in the future.

Although there are strong overtones of radical behaviorism and determinism in this study, the authors reject any simplistic interpretation of voting behavior, made in terms solely of Newton's first law. To be sure, they speak frequently and, I believe, too confidently of the major *causes* of the voters' political participation and preferences, and their basic theoretical posture is in terms of what they describe as a "Funnel of Causality." But this funnel of causality is a far cry from the simple stimulus-response (S-R) formula of the radical behaviorists. It embraces not only the familiar theory of a psychopolitical field but strives to take account of historical, institutional, and conceptual factors too often neglected by behavioral scientists. The authors recognize the difficulty of distinguishing cause and effect, a relation that may as well be symmetrical as asymmetrical. The concept of causality used in *The American Voter* is limited to "uniformities of sequence observed in time past, which may be expected in the absence of exogenous factors to hold in the future."

Since this is a study not of billiards or ballistics but of the voting behavior of human beings, the authors focus their attention not only on those items in the voter's environment which may impinge upon him in the process of voting but also and mainly upon the way the voter perceives these items and their relation to his final decision. "By casting a vote, the individual acts toward a political world whose objects he perceives and evaluates in some fashion. . . . As a result, measuring perceptions and evaluations of the elements of politics is a first charge on our energies in the explanation of the voting act." It is, in short, the "cognitive map of national politics held by the American electorate . . ." that is the major concern of the authors of *The American Voter.*

By thus emphasizing the importance of cognition and evaluation in the voting process, the behavioral scientists at the Survey Research Center have taken a long step toward the recognition, one might say the restoration, of at least some element of rationality in voting behavior. In doing so, they point again and again to the importance of communication and education in the politics of democracy. What is here called the "cognitive map of national politics" is one aspect of what Rebecca West once described as the "Face of

the Age." Too frequently the voter's "cognitive map of national politics" is a compound of myth and metaphor resulting from inadequate, inaccurate, or even deliberately deceptive reports which are gathered from gossip and rumor filtered through imagination, wishful thinking, and fantasy. As Rebecca West has said, "If people do not have the face of the age set clear before them, they begin to imagine it; and fantasy, if not disciplined by intellect and kept in faith with reality, . . . dwells among the wishes and fears of childhood and so sees life either as simply answering any prayer or as endlessly emitting nightmare monsters from a womb-like cave." In Freudian terms, when the ego function is starved or tranquilized, political behavior degenerates into an expression of mass anxieties, fears, and hates which turn to some *totemic* father image for relief.

No review can do justice to this volume. It represents a major contribution to the literature of American politics. Moreover by restoring *politics* to the study of voting behavior, it should help to bridge the gap that, unfortunately, seemed to be developing between political and behavioral science.

Eagle-eyed "old school" readers of *The American Voter* can, of course, find plenty to criticize. They can, for example, question whether so elaborate an apparatus is necessary to "prove" the most obvious of political truisms or clichés. Surely, they might say, it is no great scientific revelation to learn that "whenever a group holds distinctive beliefs about some issue, then within the group a differentiation appears between members according to the strength of their group identification." Or that "group cohesiveness is one determinant of the influence a group can wield over its membership." Or, again, that "a lower-class grouping comes to have significance as an entity because there is an upper-class grouping that is perceived as opposed to it." When told that "people do not as a rule come to choose . . . [their] occupations in order to implement prior political involvement," most readers may well ask, "whoever said they did?" Nor will they gasp in astonishment to learn that voters in "high status" occupations are less "worried" economically than "blue-collar workers." Or that "members of farm organizations . . . tend to be more politically involved than non-members . . ." Or that "various social categories are differentiated in their behavior because they receive different stimuli." Or that "the more meaning an individual can find in the flow of political events, the more likely it is that these events will maintain his interest."

The "old school" critic may also complain about the somewhat turgid style of writing that the authors employ and the polysyllabism to which they seem addicted. But these faults are minor ones when set against the rich harvest of knowledge and insight that awaits the careful reader of this book.

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Handbook of Aging and the Individual. Psychological and biological aspects. James E. Birren, Ed. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1959. xii + 939 pp. $12.50.

One of the difficult problems confronting research workers in the field of gerontology is the lack of source materials that bring together the experimental studies published in a wide range of scientific journals. This book makes a valuable contribution toward resolving the problem, at least with respect to psychological research.

This volume is the first of three handbooks to stem from grants provided by the National Institutes of Health to the University of Michigan; the university, in turn, acted as the administrative center for a "multi-university sponsored training program for university personnel in the field of social gerontology." In the words of the editor, "The purpose was to prepare a handbook which would be an authoritative technical summary of the scientific and professional literature on the individual or behavioral aspects of human aging with supporting information from infra-human species. . . . It is primarily intended for use by graduate students and professional scientific specialists as a reference work." A total of 30 authors prepared chapters of the book.

There are four main divisions of the volume: "Foundations of research on aging"; "Biological bases of aging"; "Aging in environmental settings"; and "Psychological characteristics of aging." As must be true of any volume with multiple authors, there is a wide range in the degree of excellence of the various chapters.

The limitations of space will not permit detailed examination of individual chapters, but comments will be made about selected areas. In the first section Birren outlines the general principles of research on aging, describing research in the field as "the systematic inquiry into the regularities in the structures and functions of living organisms as they move forward in time in the latter part of the life span." Actually, most of the observational data reported in the volume deal with comparison of differences between young and old organisms, and very few indicate progressional changes during adult life. The chapter concludes with a research-evaluation outline which formalizes the critical issues in experimental design. Birren made a unique departure in choosing a pair of philosophers, Maria Reichenbach and Ruth Anna Mathers, to deal with the general scientific philosophy of time. Landahl develops mathematical models of survival curves, mortality, population growth, tissue regeneration, as well as psychological processes such as conditioning and other functions of the central nervous system.

The major emphasis of the section, "Biological bases of aging," is on the morphological, biochemical, and physiological changes in the nervous system. The biology of senescence in lower forms of animals is presented by Lansing, and the genetic aspects of aging in human beings are discussed by Kallman and Jarvik. Although no one can deny the importance of the nervous system in determining behavior, the influence of the internal environment on the functioning of the cells of the nervous system is not adequately stressed. Other organ systems, essential for maintaining the adequacy of the internal environment (heart, lungs, blood vessels, and kidney), are not considered. Although many organs of the body (including muscles, glands, and even the brain) can fail to function for varying periods of time without threat to our existence, even temporary failure of the heart, the respiratory system, or the kidneys can terminate life. Consequently, it is imperative that students of behavior be cognizant of some of the basic physiological changes that occur with advancing age in these vital organs. It seems that at least one chapter should have been devoted to this general topic.

The content of Part 3, "Aging in environmental settings," is difficult to appraise critically in terms of the rationale of the organization. Individual chapters deal with such diverse topics