

Possible Geographically Based Behaviorology Associations

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The natural science of behavior needs to be organized formally and independently if it is to emerge fully to take its place at the natural science roundtable and meet the urgent demands of its cultural mission (see Fraley & Ledoux, 1997). So the development of more geographically based behaviorology organizations can be anticipated. This could parallel the rise of, for example, state and regional organizations affiliated with the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA) that share in ABA's important political (coalition-and-advocacy) mission. For example, several cooperative regional behaviorology disciplinary organizations would be possible, perhaps based in different countries or sorted on the basis of members' native languages. These organizations may be composed of new as well as established behaviorological scientists from basic laboratories and applied fields around the world. Purposes would include furthering the cultural mission, science development and support, and general disciplinary organizing for all facets of the independent natural science of behavior.

Those groups could also serve to anchor the discipline in each group's geographic area, with mutual support worldwide. Their existence, by extending formal organizing of this independent natural science discipline, could be vital to the success of behaviorological science and its cultural contributions. Natural scientists of behavior everywhere are well-served by continuing to work toward more complete and formal disciplinary integrity. While disciplinary groups around the globe could address the task of formal organizing, The International Behaviorology Association (TIBA [now ISB]) is itself addressing a more precise and exclusive emphasis on the important mission of maintaining and developing the quality and productivity of the experimental science component of the behaviorology discipline through the medium of a small scientific society (see Vargas, 1996).

Still, behaviorological professionals around the world need organizational structures that support the other facets of their formal independent discipline. These structures could carry out programs of support for the world's increasingly numerous behaviorological scientists and practitioners. Organizational support is needed to consolidate the *independent*, natural science status of their

discipline and thus to promote vigorously their professional activities. The consolidation of behaviorology could redirect—to those professional activities—the energy that is currently directed either to dealing with “survival in disciplinary limbo” (as some experience in “behavior analysis” where disciplinary status is compromised by the competing claims to ownership of that label) or to dealing with “survival in contradiction” (as some experience in psychology, a disciplinary entity that accepts non-natural, mystical events in its explanatory accounts and so is not a natural science). (Why other existing organizations do not fill these needs was comprehensively addressed in Fraley & Ledoux, 1997, Ch. 4.)

The kind of geographically based organizations of behaviorological science professionals mentioned here could well serve those needs. Another chapter in the history of the organizations of and for behaviorologists—as they more formally organize and support the independence of their natural science discipline and so more capably contribute to world behavioral health—is beginning. Behaviorological scientists must have one or more organizations that promote the reality of behaviorological science and scientists worldwide, and that work to establish officially the accouterments of independent disciplinary status including behaviorology's own academic homes and programs. Developments such as these may not make that much difference in the future of behaviorology; the fact of its natural science status may carry enough momentum. Then again, such developments may make all the difference in the world.✻

References

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