

Memoir: João Claudio Todorov (1941-2021)

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Abstract

Professor João Claudio Todorov was honored in this article published by Psychology & Neuroscience, with temporary open access provided on the website of the American Psychological Association, following his passing on July 6, 2021. The authors were invited by the journal's editorial board to prepare this tribute. The article presents key aspects of his academic trajectory, from personal accounts of his background to the conferral of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa. It highlights his role in the consolidation of Psychology at the University of Brasília, including his contributions as a faculty member, university administrator (serving also as President), and active participant in the organization of scientific associations and editorial boards of journals in the field of Behavior Analysis. His contributions to the Graduate Program in Behavioral Sciences at the Institute of Psychology of the University of Brasília are also discussed, as well as his involvement in shaping research agendas and strategies for scientific dissemination. This account aims to document and disseminate the significance of his work for the development of Behavior Analysis, emphasizing its intersections with other fields of knowledge and its impact on basic, applied, and translational research in Psychology.

Keywords: João Claudio Todorov, choice behavior, functional analysis of laws, evolution of cultural practices.

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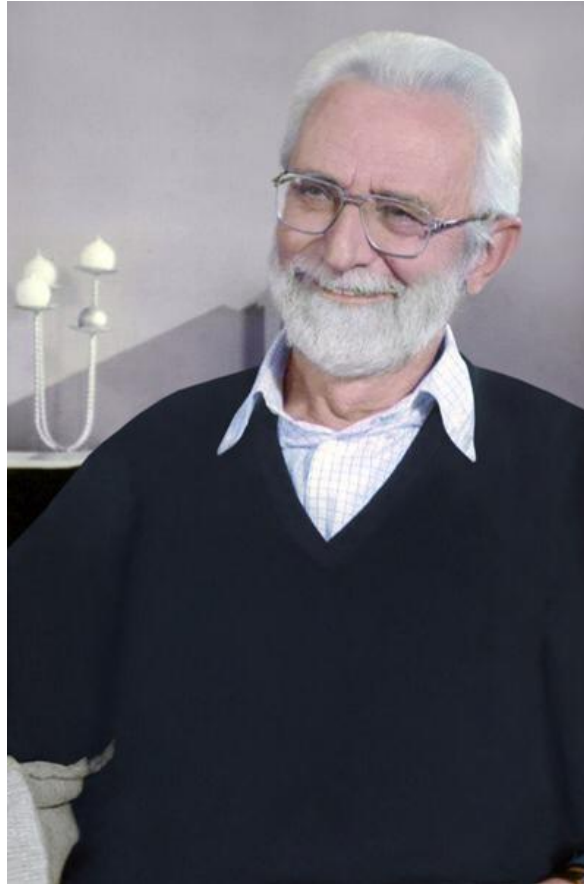
João Claudio Todorov, an exponent of behavior analysis in Latin America, passed away as a result of respiratory problems and complications from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He leaves his wife, two children and six grandchildren behind. We will present an overview of his meaningful contribution to the development of psychology and behavior analysis in Brazil.

João Claudio Todorov was born in Santo Anastácio (São Paulo, Brazil), on June 8, 1941. His parents' story shows trajectories from Bulgaria to the Ukraine and to Brazil. In the 1990s, during an exciting journey supported by the University of Kiev and the National University of Odessa, he visited his outstretched family. Far from the historic capital of Ukraine, Kiev, in the Zagonaica region, João Claudio fondly remembered the traditions of the Slav people as he awaited visitors with bread and salt at the doorsteps of their homes!

Professor Todorov was a model scientist focused on the development and dissemination of behavior analysis, as well as on strengthening science in Brazil. His actions and speeches were aimed at defending democracy and access to quality education. He used to say with a contagious smile that "UnB [University of Brasília] does not leave us!", leaving its mark on continuous academic¹ and administrative participation with its innovations. He highlighted the utmost importance of basic research and the development of applied research, translational research, and intervention work in different contexts of psychologists' professional practice.

He was awarded the Doctor Honoris Causa title from the University of Brasília, highlighting his contribution to the Brazilian scientific system. In the history of UnB from 1964 to 2017, this title was awarded to scientists, intellectuals, and influential thinkers of that period for their incommensurable impact and outstanding contributions. Among the remarkable women and men, both from Brazil and abroad, one may find General Charles de Gaulle, the first Doctor Honoris Causa at the University of Brasília in 1994, and other thinkers such as Serge Moscovici, Albert Sabin, Oscar Niemeyer, Lúcio Costa, Athos Bulcão, Paulo Freire, and Jorge Amado, including Nobel Prize laureates such as José Saramago and Nelson Mandela, and others with strong ties to the University of Brasília such as Darcy Ribeiro and Carolina Bori.

¹ The reference list that follows is a small sample of a range of research topics throughout different periods of his career.

Figure 1*João Claudio Todorov*

Between 1962 and 1963 he obtained a teaching degree in psychology and a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of São Paulo. In 1969, he obtained a doctorate degree at Arizona State University, with a scholarship awarded by the Organization of American States (OAS), with Stanley Pliskoff as his advisor. In 1963, he joined the group led by Carolina Bori to implement the Psychology undergraduate course at UnB, invited by Darcy Ribeiro. While he pursued his master's degree, he became an instructor (Teaching Assistant) and contributed by preparing and translating papers for the students of the new course. Reviewed by Rodolfo Azzi, his translation of Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior* (1953/1967) was published, and the book is still used to teach behavior analysis in Brazil.

The introduction of behavior analysis in Brazil impacted psychology in several regards. Psychology was recognized as a profession, research laboratories were founded and the training of psychologists, with the militancy of our pioneers, went from being purely professional to scientific. Professional councils and scientific societies were created with the important participation of behavior analysts. The organization of researchers in multi-institutional psychology networks is recognized on the national scene (Todorov & Hanna, 2010, p. 151, our translation).

We must emphasize his meaningful contribution not only to the creation, but also to the strengthening of the Psychology Department at UnB, culminating in its transformation into the current Psychology Institute, with four departments and their respective graduate programs at the master's and doctorate levels.

He taught at national and international institutions: University of Virginia (USA; 1969-1970); University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto campus, as assistant professor (Brazil; 1970-1972); University of Brasília, since 1973; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico; 1977); and the State University of New York (USA; Fulbright Fellow). He taught several generations of behavior analysts who became part in leading teams in Brazilian universities, in scientific associations, in the National Institute of Science and Technology on Behavior, Cognition and Teaching (INCT-ECCE), and in strategic sectors in the country. Through his participation in more than 100 theses examining committees, he promoted the formation of many researchers, including 17 PhDs, 31 Masters, in addition to 24 scientific initiation scholarship holders, integrating undergraduate and graduate studies as a strategy for mutual strengthening.

Since his retirement in the 2000's, he began contributing to other higher education institutions, such as the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás (PUC-GO) and the Higher Education Institute of Brasília (IESB), in Brazil. His

continuous contribution is highlighted at the Department of Basic Psychological Processes (PPB) and the Graduate Program in Behavioral Sciences, both at the University of Brasília.

At UnB, he was President (1993-1997), Vice-President (1985-1989) and Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (1985). Innovations under his management as Dean include the implementation of the Serial Evaluation Program (PAS)² and, as Vice-President, the implementation of evening classes, extremely helpful for working students. He was Head of the Department of Basic Psychological Processes (PPB; 1991-1993) and Director of the Center for Excellence in Tourism (1999-2001).

With a deep commitment to the enhancement of scientific development and its wide dissemination, Todorov successfully coordinated the creation of scientific associations and journals: the Psychology Society of Ribeirão Preto (SPRP; 1971-1991), of which he was the first Vice-President, and which became the Brazilian Society of Psychology (SBP; since 1991); the Brazil chapter of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI); the journal *Psychology: Science and Profession*, of the Federal Council of Psychology, of which he was editor; the Journal *Psychology: Theory and Research* (UnB), of which he was editor; the *Brazilian Journal of Behavior Analysis*, of which he was the first editor and member of the board since 2005. He also collaborated as member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (JEAB), the *Mexican Journal of Behavior Analysis*, *Behavior and Philosophy*, *Acta Comportamental*, and *Psychology: Theory and Research*.

Beyond university administration, he also devoted himself to organizing professional unions (professional associations) for teachers and psychologists. At UnB, he was President of the Association of Instructors (1964-1965) and contributed to the foundation of the Association of Professors of the University of Brasília (ADUnB), of which he was the first president (1978-1980). He played an important role in the creation of the Regional Council of Psychology of the 1st Region (CRP-01), which includes the Federal District, being registered as member number 001. He was President of CRP-01 (1974-1976) and in the late 1990's was Coordinator of the National Program for Education in the Agrarian Reform at PRONERA/INCRA (1998-1999).

Throughout his career, João Claudio received honors for his contributions in different contexts of the academic and scientific field:

- 1979, Centenary Medal of Scientific Psychology, Regional Council of Psychology, 6th Region (CRP-06);
- 1991, Honorary Member, Brazilian Society of Psychology (SBP);
- 1994, Order of Rio Branco – Officer Degree, Ministry of External Relations;
- 2000, Homage by the Brazilian Society of Psychology (SBP);
- 2006, Professor Emeritus at the University of Brasília;
- 2009, Award for the International Dissemination of Behavior Analysis, Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI);
- 2011, Homage by the Brazilian Institute of Neuropsychology and Behavior (IBNeC);
- 2012, Homage by the UnB Graduate Program in Behavioral Sciences, at the 1st Meeting of Behavioral Sciences in Brasília;
- 2012, Award for his entire work, by the Ibero-American Federation of Psychology Associations;
- 2015, Fellow, Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI);
- 2015, Doctor Honoris Causa, IESB;
- 2019, Doctor Honoris Causa, University of Brasília;
- 2020, Distinguished Service to Behavior Analysis of the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis (SABA);
- 2021, Homage by the Brazilian Society of Behavioral Psychology and Medicine (ABPMC).

Todorov developed a significant scientific production, especially in the Experimental Behavior Analysis laboratory, which he created and coordinated at UnB. A total of 179 publications – 141 articles, eight books, and 30 chapters – addressed a wide range of important themes for the advancement of behavior analysis. He was one of the most quoted Brazilian authors in Psychology. Basic operant learning processes, with an emphasis on choice and preference behaviors, escape and avoidance, and reinforcement schedules were investigated in an extensive research agenda since the 1970's. His work in the field of choice behavior, using sophisticated mathematical analyses based on the quantification of the Matching Law (Herrnstein, 1970), have had a significant impact on research in behavioral economics, and is widely used today in areas related to neuroscience.

Complex social phenomena that take place in the natural environment were the subject of studies since the 1990's. From B F Skinner's (1981/1987) model of selection by consequences, beginning in the 1930's, a new concept emerged – with the expansion of behavioral analysis stemming from the contingency of three elements – at the cultural level of selection. In the 1980's, based on the innovative concept of metacontingencies (Glenn, 1986, 1988), Todorov conveyed the usefulness of the concept by conducting functional analyses of laws, which involve a complexity represented by the systems involved, number of agents, and interchange of legal documents (Cabral & Todorov, 2015; Todorov, 1987, 2005; Todorov & Casalecchi, 2021). His interest in social phenomena and his leadership trait were crucial to coordinate behavioral science researchers from different countries who, based on regular scientific meetings, have advanced the

²A means of selecting undergraduate students. The PAS promotes integration between the basic and higher education systems, with evaluations throughout high school. This selection process contributes to improving teaching at all levels.

conceptual and methodological development of the subject. The Think Tank (TT) event was born in Brazil and later extended to other countries: TT1, 2005 in Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil; TT2, 2007 in Oslo, Norway; TT3, 2015 in São Paulo, Brazil; TT4 and TT5, 2016 and 2018, in Denton, United States; TT6, 2019 in Brasília, Brazil; and TT7, 2021 virtual.

In the third Brazilian edition, in 2019, the National Conference of Behavioral Psychology and Public Policy³ was held, which brought together behavior analysts from several Brazilian states, as well as from the United States and Norway. The researchers interacted with high-impact managers from the National School of Public Administration, the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Federal Court of Accounts, Government Macro Evaluation. Think Tank 7, held in 2021, shortly before his death, brought together eminent Brazilian and foreign researchers, and Todorov joined discussions regarding a future research agenda. This group has significant impact on the scientific production and development of researchers. Think Tank achievements include the first conference in the field of culture in 2020, ABAI's Culturo-Behavior Science Conference and the launch of ABAI's Culturo-Behavior Science Verified Course Sequence. The CBS-VCS is a driving force in the qualification of researchers in this field, based on graduate courses.

João Claudio's extensive didactic and formative work on behavior analysis is worth highlighting and has been used as basic bibliography in most psychology courses in Brazil. The book published by Institute Walden4 (Todorov, 2012) is a compilation of several of these works and reflects the author's integrative approach to psychology.

This scientist's commitment to democracy, social progress, the struggle for public education, and university autonomy are reflected in 150 newspaper articles⁴, with multidisciplinary partnerships, in addition to recurrent publications in newspapers from different states (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, Tocantins, Pará, Piauí, Paraná, and Rio Grande do Sul). A wide variety of topics were addressed in these articles: (1) science and university in different contexts (universities and Mercosur, university autonomy, university models, funding of higher education, university and research, interaction between university and community, university and the worker, PAS and the university-high school binomial, UnB's technologic park, science and technology in the Federal District, Brazil, the Federal District's Science and Technology Museum); (2) graduate studies (CAPES 45 years, evaluation of graduate programs); (3) education and training (rethinking training; graduation and dropouts; literacy, a project's complete cycle; the importance of teaching arts; the deconstitutionalization of education); (4) health (the Unified Health System, SUS, and the federal manager; constitutional reform and the SUS; National Health Conference; health services and the university); and (5) other topics of equal relevance (e.g., democracy, women's rights, violence, national development projects, telescopes in the Amazon, fuel quality, flaws in public bids and budgets, peace in traffic). Todorov (1987) issued warnings to the 558 constituents who drafted, within a 20-month period, the new Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, enacted in 1988.

In the "How to know what we're running away from?" collection, Todorov (2016b) selected texts that disseminated behavior analysis throughout social media, aimed at stimulating new students.

They decided I should have a blog and a website. We were already well into the first decade of the third millennium and my alumni decided it was high time they modernized me. ... The *jctodorov.blogspot.com.pt* blog completes Facebook. ... Having the blog made me aware of the importance of informing the public about behavior analysis. ... One of the posts, "How to Recognize a Behavior Analyst", reached 9,676 hits (in January 12, 2017). Certainly, it was the good acceptance of the blog that made my profile on FB quickly reach the limit of 5,000 "friends", and the "fan page" reach a total of 9,034 likes and 8,931 followers. I posted 98 texts within six years, some shorter, some longer, some with references, as if they were articles in scientific journals, others just a message, or a reflection, or a rant. ... I tried to avoid technical language when writing or speaking to the general public. I hope I have been able to give the reader an overview of what behavior analysis is by using easy and sometimes humorous language (Todorov, 2016, pp. 4-5, our translation).

We have lost a great scientist, teacher and promoter of the development and dissemination of science in Brazil. What soothes us is the legacy of his work for the next generations of researchers who fight for less social inequality in Brazil and greater preservation of the country's biodiversity and cultural heritage. We hope it strengthens our universities and national scientific associations. That it strengthens behavior analysis and psychology.

Declaration of conflict of interest

Os autores declaram que não há conflito de interesses relativos à publicação deste artigo.

Contribution of each author

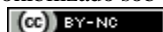
Certificamos que todos os autores participaram suficientemente do trabalho para tornar pública sua responsabilidade pelo conteúdo. A contribuição de cada autor pode ser atribuída como se segue: Todos os autores contribuíram igualmente na elaboração do texto.

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⁴ 130 out of 150 articles were published in *Correio Braziliense*, which is one of the 20 most read daily newspapers in Brazil (Biroli, 2009).

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