

Formal Request to Change the name of the Psychology SIG of the System Dynamics Society

From David Lounsbury (david.lounsbury@einstein.yu.edu) and Pascal Gambardella (pascalgambardella@gmail.com), Co-chairs, Psychology SIG

As co-chairs of the Psychology SIG of the System Dynamics Society, we formally request to change the name of our Special Interest Group (SIG) from "Psychology SIG" to "Psychology and Human Behavior SIG." We discuss our reasons in this email and list the Society SIG members who have co-signed this request.

Our request to change the SIG's name comes from members' observations that psychology, as a primary domain focus, describes only a fraction of what we actually discuss, critique, and support. This is evidenced in the workshops and presentations that the SIG has organized and supported. Last year we gave a workshop on how to use psychological and sociological variables in models. Material for this workshop came from a broad spectrum of disciplines that, in fact, went beyond the disciplines of psychology and sociology to include reference to the fields of health behavior, education, political science, history and other humanities (see <http://sigs.systemdynamics.org/psychology/>). For example, this past year we invited Dana Polojarvi (Professor of Humanities at Maine Maritime Academy) to be the SIG guest speaker at our annual meeting (in Delft). Dr. Polojarvi discussed how he has integrated system dynamics modeling into a course on the epistemology of history. There was such enthusiasm about his efforts that the SIG has organized a special working group to further explore and support his efforts to teach humanities courses with systems thinking and modeling. Current members of this working group include Dana Polojarvi, John Hayward, Sophie Rich, David Lounsbury, and Pascal Gambardella.

Moreover, we have observed that, through Pascal Gambardella's efforts as Human Behavior Thread Co-Chair, papers submitted to the Society's current "Human Behavior" thread largely overlap with work in the domain of psychology or other social sciences. Yet, there is no clear home for Society members who are producing this work. We think the logical venue for such members would be our current SIG and, in fact, we see authors of these works among our current membership. Changing the name to "Psychology and Human Behavior" would, we think, be way to more effectively extend reach and engage a greater number of Society members who may not currently affiliate with a SIG.

Human Behavior refers to the full range of physical and emotional behaviors that humans engage in; biologically, socially, intellectually, etc. and are influenced by culture, attitudes, emotions, values, ethics, authority, rapport, persuasion, coercion and/or genetics. However, we underscore that we want to keep "Psychology" in the name because it permeates the work of our SIG. It also provides continuity from the old to the new name.

Lastly, we want to point out that, although it not the major focus of our SIG, from a systemic point of view a model has a target problem or territory (what it is a model of), a domain of applicability (where it works well), a motivation for creating it, a language it is expressed in, a modeler who creates it, and its stakeholders or audience. We want to be the SIG that considers the psychology of the modeler as well as

psychological models. We assert that this is an important and often overlooked component in modeling. Abraham Maslow recognized its importance for scientists, who create models of our world. In his book *The Psychology of Science*, he argued that the scientist is an explorer of the unknown, and that the principles and laws of the explorer differ from the role of documenting the final results of a scientific enquiry, since the tasks are different. Those “principles and laws of the explorer” affect the modeling process and, ultimately, the key values and assumptions, or cognitive biases that impact the modeling process and the resultant model. As system thinkers we want to at least have the option of considering all aspects of the system, including the modeler.

We emailed all our SIG members about this change and received positive responses. The following ten current SIG members (copied on this email), who are also Society members, have agreed to add their names to this formal request:

Becky Reese, Dana Polojarvi, Deborah E Polk , Eric Muller-Borle Jerome Dixon, John Hayward

Ralph Levine (Emeritus Chair, Psychology SIG), William Grace, David Lounsbury, and Pascal Gambardella,

Thank you for your consideration.

David & Pascal, Co-chairs, Psychology SIG

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