

Chapter 5

Culture, Politics, and Society in the History of Psychology in Argentina



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Introduction

In his analysis on the concept of the ‘history of mentalities’, historian Peter Burke has pointed out to the coexistence of several different perspectives. According to Burke, other nearby approaches such as the history of representations or the social imaginary began to replace the concept of the history of mentalities. Similarly, Burke criticized the traditional concept of cultural history, not only because of its focus on elites or its emphasis on tradition, but also because it remains alien to our age, which is centered on multiculturalism and disagreement with the canons and established values of the centers of power (Burke, 1997).

In any case, it would be necessary to define what could be understood by a cultural history of psychology in Argentina. Such a definition would probably be closer to the extended use made of psychology by the large social populations and the different spaces of our vast geography. But with the exception of some isolated studies, such a cultural history still remains unwritten.

Conversely, a social history of psychology in Argentina is more akin to what the different groups interested in historiography have carried out in the last decades (Klappenbach & Jacó-Vilela, 2016). Of course, I could point out that a comprehensive and general history of psychology in Argentina requires addressing different and complex objects of study. We have stated that a history of psychology includes at least five different objects of study: (a) a history of *scientific theories* considered to be psychological; (b) a history of *personalities* that have contributed to the development of psychology; (c) a history of psychological *techniques*, from the history

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of mental tests, the history of techniques in experimental psychology laboratories, and the history of listening and interpretation, to the more vast history of devices such as the so-called analytical device; (d) a history of psychological *practices*, from the history of applied psychology to the various interventions in the most varied fields of the discipline; and (e) a history of psychological *institutions*, meaning not only the history of scientific or professional societies, but also the history of university programs and the history of journals or publishing houses, among others (Klappenbach, 2006).

Of course, these different types of history of psychology require different perspectives of analysis and even the analysis of different documentary or testimonial sources. While a history of psychological theories may be limited to the collection of texts and papers, a history of personalities or institutions requires the collection of correspondence, archival documents, institutional resolutions, catalogues, etc. On the other hand, a history of practices requires the collection and analysis of clinical histories or other types of records of psychological interventions, as well as coverage and advertising in the mass media.

Even when a study of this scope is out of our hands, we cannot ignore the intention of covering at least some of these dimensions in the different historiographic studies produced in Argentina. In other works, a general periodization of psychology in Argentina has been established (Klappenbach, 2006). The merit of the historical periodization is that it provides a conceptual framework for analyzing the most substantive changes in the different moments of the development of psychology in Argentina. But an important limit is that the main characteristics of each period do not usually disappear in the following period nor do they appear suddenly. On the contrary, topics and trends tend to endure, although sometimes in a very limited way, or as a marginal current or in tension with the salient characteristics of the following period, in the same way that the most characteristic traits of each period have also been developed during previous periods. Thus, the picture that we would have to draw for each period is extremely complex, at times contradictory and strongly dynamic, something that seems difficult to convey through the very notion of period (Klappenbach, 2006). In any case, in this chapter we will try to reconstruct the history of Argentinian psychology from its early developments during the latter part of the nineteenth century up to the present day.

The Early Development of Psychology in Argentina (1895–1916)

In 1895 the lawyer Ernesto Weigel Muñoz taught a course in philosophy at the Department of Law and Social Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires, half of which was devoted to psychology (Klappenbach, 1987). The following year, another lawyer, Rodolfo Rivarola, began to teach a course of psychology at the recently created Department of Philosophy and Humanities of the University of Buenos Aires.

It is interesting to note that in the first historiographic studies carried out in the country, psychology that began to flourish in the country in those early years was labeled as experimental psychology (Cortada de Kohan, 1978; Foradori, 1935; Papini, 1976; Tavella, 1957).

Such characterization was based on the fact that experimental psychology laboratories had been organized in the country early on. Already in 1891, Victor Mercante had established in San Juan a Laboratory of Psychophysiology, in which he had made psychophysical measurements in about 500 students. In 1899 Horacio G. Piñero established a Laboratory of Experimental Psychology in the Central National School, and a couple of years later in the Department of Philosophy and Humanities, where he was in charge of teaching psychology (Klappenbach, 1996). A few years later, in 1905, at the National University of La Plata, Víctor Mercante also organized a Laboratory of Experimental Psychology.

However, it is necessary to examine in detail not only what was the meaning of the *experimental* term that qualified those laboratories but also their *objectives* in the intellectual context of Argentina at that time. In February 1903, Horacio Piñero, Professor of Physiology at the Department of Medicine and Professor of Psychology at the Department of Philosophy and Humanities, both at the University of Buenos Aires, gave an address at the Institut Général Psychologique de la Sorbonne, in Paris, his well-known lecture “*La psychologie expérimentale dans la République Argentine*,” which would later be published in French in the *Bulletin of the Institut Général Psychologique* itself, and, always in French, in the *Revista de la Sociedad Médica de Buenos Aires* (Piñero, 1903), in the same year and in several subsequent editions (Klappenbach, 1996).

The publication in French, even for the Argentinean editions, showed the *Frenchization* of the Argentinean cultural elite at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although between 1880 and 1913 60% of all foreign capital was of British origin (Díaz-Alejandro, 1980), nevertheless, in the field of culture France had become a true model, already from the times of the romantic thinkers (Korn, 1936/1983). Precisely in that conference Horacio Piñero had stated that “intellectually, we are in fact French” (Piñero, 1903, p. 404). In the field of literature, both David Viñas and Noé Jitrik analyzed the consecrating value of the trip to Paris (Jitrik, 1982; Viñas, 1964). And since the history of science, the extraordinary similarity between the curriculum of medicine promoted in 1880 at the University of Buenos Aires by Herrera Vegas, who graduated in Paris, and the curriculum of the Department of Medicine of Paris (de Asúa, 1987) has been analyzed:

In general, all the outstanding Argentine [medical] professionals would sooner or later travel to France to improve their skills. In particular, those most responsible for developing the curriculum for FMBA [University of Buenos Aires Medical School], had academic training at FMP [Paris Medical School] ... Almost all the teachers of FMBA between the end and the beginning of the century had been trained in France ... (de Asúa, 1987, p. 97).

In this context, dominated by what Oscar Terán named a *scientific culture* (Terán, 2000), the early reception of the new European psychology mainly was through five channels (Klappenbach, 2006):

1. *The original works of French authors, from Joseph Grasset to Theodule Ribot and Pierre Janet*
2. *The periodicals originating in France, particularly the Revue Philosophique edited by Ribot*
3. *The texts of divulgation by French authors, especially the two famous books by Ribot, Psychologie anglaise contemporaine (Ribot, 1870) and Psychologie allemande contemporaine (Ribot, 1879)*
4. *The French translations of authors from other languages, basically German*
5. *The translations into Spanish of books from other languages, especially those which were published by publisher houses such as Daniel Jorro, la España Moderna, Librería de Fernando Ré, and Sempere y Cía, among others, a question that has been documented and analyzed by Quintana et al. (1998)*

The importance of the French bias in the reception of early psychology in Argentina can be seen in all its dimensions, if we consider that four of these ways of constitution are directly related to France. A clear testimony of this tendency is the reception of Wundtian psychology. In 1894, Binet had recognized the important role of Wundt in the emergence of the so-called new psychology. However, he considered that personalities like Charcot and Ribot had contributed on the same hierarchical level to the development of that psychology:

From fifteen years to this point psychology has entered a new phase. This phase dates approximately from 1878, a doubly important period for psychology, since it is when Wundt, in Germany, opens the first laboratory of experimental psychology, and Charcot, in France, inaugurates his investigations on hypnotism in hysterical women. Around the same time, M. Ribot founded the Revue Philosophique 1906, p. 1; translation is ours).

Two of the most important personalities in early Argentinean psychology, Horacio Piñero (1869–1918) and José Ingenieros (1877–1925), would reiterate, almost without variation, those words of Binet. In fact, in 1902 Piñero started his psychology course at the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities with similar expressions:

Two facts of primary importance definitively point to his directions in 1878: Charcot and his studies on hysteria and hypnotism, and Wundt founding in Leipzig the first Laboratory of Experimental Psychology. If we add to these facts that Ribot founded the Revue Philosophique in that same period, we can say that from this triad emerges: clinical observation, experimental research and scientific popularization. (Piñero, 1902a, p. 117; translation is ours).

For his turn, in 1919, José Ingenieros directly quoted Piñero's words to explain the origins of the new psychology (Ingenieros, 1919b). In short, in Argentina, both Piñero and Ingenieros pointed out that three factors were at the base of the new psychology: clinical observation, experimental research, and scientific divulgation. Within this framework, Wundt represented only an important reference but on the same level as Charcot and Ribot.

Such statement, then, showed that, from that triad as Piñero named it, only the figures of Charcot and Ribot, and more generally the psychology of personality disaggregations originated in France, became the model of the early Argentinean

psychology. Concerning Thèodule Ribot (1839–1916), he was possibly the figure with the greatest impact on early Argentinean psychology as Rodolfo Rivarola recognized. Rodolfo Rivarola (1857–1942) was the first professor in 1896 of the course of psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, later replaced by Horacio Piñero. He also translated into Spanish the *Psicologia per la scuola* from Giuseppe Sergi, one of “the pioneers of Italian psychological science” (Bartolucci & Lombardo, 2012). In 1910 Rivarola pointed out, when he inaugurated the Section of Psychological Sciences of the American International Scientific Congress:

The most decisive document, one could claim, the most famous of this theory [the new Psychology], is the admirable and already classic Introduction that Ribot put in his *Psychologie anglaise contemporaine*. One could say that this work has influenced for more than thirty-five years and still influences all spirits. (Rivarola, 1911, p. 167).

In summary, the psychology that was early constituted in Argentina carried, on the one hand, the *clinical bias* characteristic of French psychology. In fact, in Argentina the Wundtian works were known through French books. For example, Binet’s *Introduction à la Psychologie Expérimentale [Introduction to Experimental Psychology]* included transcriptions of research carried out in the Leipzig Laboratory (Binet, 1894). Similarly, *La psychologie allemande contemporaine [The Contemporary German Psychology]* by Ribot included a long chapter on Wundt (Ribot, 1879). Also the *Revue Philosophique*, which was widely circulated in the country, had included original works by Wundt and many comments on his work.

In short, the French cultural bias permeated the reception of Wundt in this early Argentinean psychology. For this reason, the knowledge of Wundt’s work in Argentina was quite limited. In this sense, it does not seem exaggerated to say that Wundt could also be a very good example of what the historian of ideas Jorge Dotti rightly named, in principle referring to Kant, a *conceptual figure*, in the sense of an eminent name in which the following generations were authorized (Dotti, 1992).

Considering this climate of ideas, it is necessary to clarify two questions. The first is that the objectives of the experimental psychology laboratories installed in Argentina, for example those that Piñero organized early in the country, at the Colegio Nacional Central in 1899 and at the Department of Philosophy and Humanities in 1901, were far from the objectives of the laboratories founded in Germany.

Indeed, it has been pointed out that experimental psychology laboratories in Germany had research and knowledge production purposes, consistent with the purpose of German universities since the von Humboldt reform (Araujo, 2009; Dobson & Bruce, 1972; Klappenbach, 1994). A relevant testimony of this characteristic of the laboratories of experimental psychology was given by the American McKeen Cattell shortly after returning from studying with Wundt in Leipzig, who maintained that the “university laboratories [of experimental psychology] have the same ends as the University itself, the education of students and the advancement of knowledge” (Cattell, 1888, p. 37). More broadly, psychological research in Germany involved epistemological questions as Geuter (1992) has pointed out and was carried out in philosophy chairs (Araujo, 2009; Ash, 1980).

In Argentina, on the other hand, Horacio Piñero had made it clear that both the laboratories he founded and the experimental method met the purpose of diffusion and teaching, tending to “complement the teaching of the chair” (Piñero, 1902b, p. 318). In one of his publications, Piñero, based on the Prologue of School Psychological Experiences of Professors Höfler and Vitaseck of Vienna, translated especially from German by Pablo Cárdenas:

Today it is admitted that, when it is possible to experiment with a science, it must be done, especially in the research part, and also in teaching, if it does not want to be left behind (...). Also the teaching of psychology, whatever its extension, in schools, gymnasiums, universities, can make use of experimentation, and in time it will not be able to stop using it. (Höfler, quoted by Piñero, 1902b, p. 319).

Piñero himself pointed out the value of experimentation in teaching in the famous conference he addressed at the *Institut Général Psychologique* in Paris in February 1903, highlighting that there could only be original research, with “seriousness and experimental rigor ... later on (...) when the environment and the prepared public allow it” (Piñero, 1903, p. 416).

The second issue that needs to be clarified is that, in the framework of ideas outlined, the denomination *experimental psychology* in such early Argentinean psychology had little to do with the concept of *experimental psychology* produced in Germany in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, the term *experimental psychology* was directly related to Claude Bernard’s *Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale* [*Introduction to the study of Experimental Medicine*] (Bernard, 1865), a work widely disseminated in the country, and similarly with the medical-psychological studies as they were called by Toulouse et al. (1904) in their work precisely entitled *Technique de Psychologie Expérimentale* [*Experimental Psychology Technique*].

Concerning Claude Bernard, he maintained that experimentation was the culmination of scientific medicine, but he warned that “experimental medicine does not exclude clinical medicine; on the contrary, it only comes after it” (Bernard, 1865, p. 257; translation is ours). In the same line of argument he affirmed that there was “no radical difference in the nature of physiological, pathological and therapeutic phenomena” (Bernard, 1865, p. 338). In this sense, in France, pathological psychology had acquired an experimental status that went beyond the strict framework of the laboratory (Klappenbach, 1996).

Toulouse, Vaschide, and Piéron, on the other hand, considered that there were three major domains and three major methods of psychology: physiological psychology, pathological or morbid psychology, and experimental psychology. Notwithstanding this differentiation and the fact that they recognized that the experimental method was “the true scientific method of psychology” (Toulouse et al., 1904, p. 12; translation is ours), they also affirmed that experimental psychology had its origin in the work of “little-known French doctors or astronomers” (Toulouse et al., 1904, p. 12), although it was impossible for it to develop in France and it emigrated to Germany. And in a coincident direction they maintained that the new psychology had originated “by a reaction against the dominant conception, and

what has been born is a *medical psychology*” (Toulouse et al., 1904, p. 7, the emphasis is ours).

Considering, then, the strong impact of French medical and clinical thought in Argentina at the beginning of the century, in previous works I have characterized early psychology with the denomination of *clinical, experimental, and social psychology* (Klappenbach, 1996, 2006). Thus, in Argentina, next to the institutions focused on *clinical bias* that have been studied, the first hospitals of the colonial period, the orphanage, and the public hospitals (Rossi & Jardon, 2014), it is necessary to underline a *clinical bias* coming also from the objectives and methodology of that early experimental psychology. In fact, in 1916, Horacio Piñero highlighted this clinical or pathological domain when he published a collection of articles produced in the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology that he directed, under the title of *Trabajos de Psicología Normal y Patológica* [*Papers on normal and pathological psychology*] (Piñero, 1916). On his part, José Ingenieros also underlined the clinical domain of that early psychology when he subtitled his book *Histeria y Sugestión* [*Hysteria and Suggestion*], under the name of “Estudios de Psicología clínica” [*Studies in Clinical Psychology*]. And precisely in that work, José Ingenieros considered that the research on disaggregations of the psychism carried out by Janet and Grasset and the conception of the higher psychism and the automatism of the lower psychism of the Montpellier School “is being incorporated into experimental and *clinical psychology*” (Ingenieros, 1904/1919a, p. 311, the emphasis is ours).

In short, early Argentinean psychology showed its proximity to the psychology developed in France, which we can call, following Grasset, the psychology of personality disaggregations.

Likewise, attending to the concerns of Carlos Octavio Bunge, Juan Agustín García, or Ramos Mejía, it is warned that the characterization of clinical and experimental psychology does not cover all the features of the period. So, it would be more correct to refer to a clinical, experimental, and social psychology. Indeed, the support that this early psychology received from the Federal Administration was based on its concern for the issue of crowds, national identity, and penal responsibility of criminals. In a country where, by the turn of the century, approximately one-third of the inhabitants were immigrants, psychology could occupy a central place in a public reform project (Vezzetti, 1996; Vilanova, 2001).

Psychology in the Interwar Years (1916–1941)

In this period, four central features could characterize the main developments in psychology. Firstly, academic psychology experienced a pronounced retreat towards properly philosophical positions, in a double sense: first, in the sense of worrying about establishing the limits of the sensitive forms of experience, and second, if at the beginning of the century the characteristic of psychological phenomena was that they constituted the most heterogeneous and complex processes of the vital functions of the organism from a Spencerian perspective (Ingenieros, 1916), in the

period that we are dealing with, the most important psychological phenomena could not be reduced to their evolutionary origin. Psychological phenomena involved values and reasoning that questioned evolutionary assumptions and placed the human mentality on a differentiated and singular plane (Alberini, 1921). Alejandro Korn stated, “the identification of the psychological fact with the organic is a vulgar superstition” (Korn, 1925/1949, p. 608; translation is ours). In this direction, psychology approached to a reflection on human personality and became almost a *philosophical anthropology*.

Secondly, in spite of the best known characterizations of this period, the intense movement of psychological authors, institutions, and ideas became noticeable.

Thirdly, the relationship with the tradition of the first decades of the century was, at least, ambiguous. That is, on the one hand, the limits of physiological psychology were not left out, but, at the same time, the clinical and pathological tradition, based on physiology, kept a pronounced interest in these years, at least in some authors or publications.

And fourthly, it is possible to identify the first attempts to apply psychology to the field of work, developments that will be characteristic of the following two decades (Carpintero, 2005).

Psychology after the Centennial of the May Revolution (1910) has generally been characterized in negative terms: either the years of the regression or the decadence of the experimental models (Cortada de Kohan, 1978; Papini, 1976, 1978) or the time of the emptiness of psychology as it would have been called by García de Onrubia (Bortnik, 1992; Mangiola, 1988). In such characterizations, considerations of a political-institutional nature seem to play a strong role. In effect, from the 1930 coup d'état onwards, Argentina's political institutions oscillated between the so-called *patriotic fraud* and military interventionism; federal interventions in the provinces were recurrent and degrading practices such as torture or political assassination were initiated (Ciria, 1972; Puiggrós, 1974).

The extreme political right, for its part, which had been directly protected by the Uriburu government, and quite tolerated during the Concordance governments, did not hide its international sympathies with Mussolini or the enemies of the Spanish Republic. On the cultural level, the historian of science José Babini noticed a dogmatism originating in the readings of German philosophy, which was translated into Spanish in the *Revista de Occidente*, of enormous repercussion in the country (Babini, 1967).

However, it should be noted that the reorientation in Argentinean thought had originated long before 1930, and various factors had an impact on the new climate of ideas. For the time being, from the institutional point of view, in addition to the installation of the first government that emerged by universal suffrage in 1916, it is opportune to consider the movement of the University Reform, which canalized the new ideas through the academic space:

The period that we have called the first years of the Department [of Philosophy and Humanities of the University of Buenos Aires], extends, in fact, until 1918, when the university reform begins. From the philosophical point of view, positivism had begun to be discussed in all areas of Argentine culture, starting in 1910. The new generation, that of the

Centennial, brought other preferences than that of 1890 and the one that had continued maintaining its same criteria. The new generation was to be characterized by its idealistic and spiritualistic orientation, its revaluation of philosophy and its essential problems: meta-physical, axiological, gnoseological and epistemological. But its men only began to work in cultural management around 1918. The preceding years were years of preparation and struggle for his ideals (Pró, 1960, p. 77).

Indeed, from the Centennial of the May Revolution, there would be a reorientation of ideas, from a movement in which Bergson and Scheler would be some of the outstanding personalities, and in which the presence of Ortega y Gasset, who visited the country for the first time in 1916 remaining here for 6 months, played a decisive role.

We have addressed Ortega's impact on the country in specific works (Klappenbach, 1999a). According to José Babini, one of his most outstanding contributions is to be sought on the side of his facet as editor or promoter of editions of thinkers of German thought.

Ortega's publishing and editorial bias was in solidarity with his philosophical and intellectual conceptions, which, originating in neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, led him to deepen his knowledge of Brentano, Dilthey, Husserl, and Scheler (Klappenbach, 1999a). From these authors, he elaborated his vitalist conception strongly committed to individual freedom, to life, and to reason (Marías, 1948).

In the field of psychology, although he proposed the coexistence of physiology, psychology, and psychophysiology laboratories (Ortega & Gasset, 1915/1983), he stressed the importance of a psychology of a historical or cultural type. Ortega recognized that Wilhelm Wundt established a domain of psychology that was not physiological and in that direction, the journal that Ortega directed, the *Revista de Occidente*, published several articles of a historical or cultural psychology (Klappenbach, 1999a).

In Argentina, from Korn and Alberini to Francisco Romero, Diego Pró, Hugo Biagini, José Luis Romero, Jorge Dotti, or Mario Bunge, all authors have pointed out the strong impact that Ortega's presence had in the country. Alejandro Korn stressed that he had promoted autonomous intellectual exercise, contributing to the decline of positivist ideas:

The presence of Ortega y Gasset in 1916 was an event for our philosophical culture. Self-taught and dilettantes had the opportunity to hear the word of a master; some woke up from their dogmatic lethargy and many warned for the first time of the existence of a less pedestrian philosophy. From then on, the love of study grew and the empire of positivist doctrines loosened. Ortega y Gasset did not bring us a closed system. He taught us to put the problems on a higher plane, he initiated us into the incipient tendencies, he let us glimpse the possibility of future definitions, he incited us to make an extreme effort. I owe him a lot personally, but I think I can use the plural and say: we all owe him a lot (Korn, 1936/1983, p. 280).

Coriolano Alberini, for his part, agreed with Korn on the debt to Ortega:

In 1916, Don José Ortega y Gasset came to Buenos Aires for the first time. His singular philosophical, artistic and oratorical talent, the novelty of philosophical themes aroused great interest in the small group of philosophers and in the general public. A movement of lively curiosity towards contemporary German philosophy emerged from Ortega's great

resonance. The young Spanish philosopher revealed to us Husserl, Max Scheler and many other German philosophers. He also conducted a seminar on Kant ... All of us who deal with philosophy in Argentina and in Latin America owe him a great deal (Alberini, 1950, p. 73).

Francisco Romero pointed out that Ortega had not only contributed philosophically or intellectually to the generation of new ideas, but also, at the same time as he had founded a Spanish tradition in philosophy, achieved a *spiritual leadership* (Romero, 1957). Jose Luis Romero, on the other hand, stressed that in the face of evolutionism, Ortega emphasized the creative activity of life, from a new perspective based on Husserl and Meinong (Romero, 1965/1998). More distant, in time and in intellectual appreciation, Hugo Biagini (1989) analyzed Ortega's three trips to the country, and their impact on the development of a thought in situation. Jorge Dotti (1992), for his part, underlined the role played by some foreign teachers, from Keiper and Krueger to Chiabra and Ortega y Gasset, in the design of the new studies that consolidated the *professionalization of philosophy*, within the framework of the consolidation of an intellectual field of relative autonomy. Mario Bunge (2001) also highlighted this professionalization of the Argentinean philosophy between the wars, although he was more doubtful that this would have meant an advance.

In any case, Ortega y Gasset's statement, "positivism has died" (Terán, 2000, p. 301), precipitated the constitution of the Colegio Novacentista in 1918 (Pró, 1960). In general, this movement is usually considered one of the foundations of the so-called *anti-positivist reaction*. In the College's own manifesto, reference is made to a "*reaction against the outmoded forms of positivism*" (Colegio Novacentista, 1918, cited by Pró, 1960, p. 84; the emphasis is ours). But it should also be noted that the College pronounced itself in favor of every form of thought that affirms "the substance and hegemonic value of the human personality" (Colegio Novacentista, 1918, cited by Pró, 1960, p. 84).

In other words, the new movement proposed more of an overcoming of positivism than a reaction: "Such is the character of our positivism: spacious, open and expectant. That is why in those who overcome it there is not a total reaction, but understanding and even utilization" (Farré & Lértora Mendoza, 1981, p. 75). Jose Gaos, for his part, in analyzing the generation of historians of Hispanic American thought contemporary to Leopoldo Zea, one of whose books he commented, had pointed out that this characteristic of remaking history from the past rather than from a strange present, this tendency to overcome in almost Hegelian terms, could have been a common feature of Hispanic American thinkers, who, "instead of getting rid of the past, practice an *Aufhebung* with it" (Gaos, 1950, p. 160).

In that direction, one of the most outstanding personalities of the so-called anti-positivist reaction, Alejandro Korn, felt a high esteem for José Ingenieros, whom he considered the most original philosopher in the country (Romero, 1950). From this perspective, he pointed out that Ingenieros himself, not the Ingenieros of *Principles of Psychology*, but the Ingenieros of *Propositions related to the future of philosophy*, underlined the importance of metaphysics, and thus "dissociate themselves from all positivist contamination" (Korn, 1919/s/f, p. 11). For this reason, Korn reflected that this text of Ingenieros published in 1918 "contributed to dislodge" the

“positivism with routine persistence,” since it constituted “an exponent of the metaphysical reaction that has long been initiated and is now in the process of spreading to the antipodes” (Korn, 1919/s/f, p. 11). And as a conclusion of his most famous work, Korn reaffirmed this movement of overcoming:

We cannot continue with Positivism, exhausted and insufficient, nor can we abandon it. It is necessary, therefore, to *incorporate* it as a subordinate element to a *superior conception* ... (Korn, 1936/1983, p. 305).

In that sense, then, that reaction consisted of a true overcoming, which could not ignore some conquests of positivism. In this regard, the mentors of the Novecentista movement expressed their sympathy with “any philosophy or cultural form that implies *placing limits*—without denying, of course, the value of scientific determinism in its legitimate sphere—on the absolutely mechanical interpretation of the universe, with preference for the *human psyche* and the historical world, and tends, therefore, to define the person in terms of freedom” (Pró, 1960, p. 84; the underlining belongs to us).

Psychological approaches had been characteristic of the early and positivistic psychology. Alejandro Korn had pointed out that “the men of 1890’ followed closely the *psychological phase of positivism*” (Korn, 1936/1983, p. 244; the underlining is mine). For his part, Ricaurte Soler, who discussed the Spencerian affiliation of Argentinean positivism, pointed out that in “Argentina . . . positivism has been a true scientific philosophy, especially a biological philosophy and a *psychological philosophy*” (Soler, 1968, p. 55; emphasis added). Soler pointed out the originality of Argentinean positivism, precisely because of its “anti-mechanistic” and “anti-intellectual” character. The subject is debatable and Soler himself referred to the concept of experience in José Ingenieros, which would be far from an “absolute” or “internal” mechanism, even though he could recognize an “external” mechanism.

In any case, just as Alejandro Korn himself had maintained that the “teaching of psychology calls for a basic reform” (Korn, 1925/1949, p. 612), the first seminar organized by the Colegio Novecentista was that of psychology, “one of the abused courses” (Pró, 1960, p. 87). The seminar was in charge of Coriolano Alberini, who in 1923 became Professor of the Second Course of Psychology in the Department of Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Buenos Aires, replacing Carlos Rodríguez Etchart.

The course that Alberini would start teaching at the Department of Philosophy and Humanities was entirely dedicated to “Bergson’s psychological theories” (Alberini, 1923). Alberini did not maintain an uncritical adherence to Bergson’s ideas; on the contrary, he received a special criticism of the irrational passages of Bergson’s work, such as the theory of intuition. In this sense, he suggested distinguishing between *reason* and *formal reason* of intellectualism, since, evoking Ortega and Scheler, thinking is a way of life (Alberini, 1921). His teaching changed over the years. From 1928 to 1932, he would introduce in a systematic and extensive way the problem of *axiogeny*, which concluded with the problem of psychology and the pathology of values (Alberini, 1928). Finally, after some courses in which he emphasized the problem of personality, from 1938 onwards he focused on a

teaching centered on great systems or authors, from Spencer James and Wundt to Dilthey, Gentile, Krueger, and Spranger. The bibliography to which Alberini referred included some classics such as Wundt, Höffding, and Dumas, and some more recent treatises by Dwelshauers, Luquet, Müller, Messer, or Segond (Alberini, 1942).

Besides his teaching, in his *Introduction to Axiogenia* Alberini exposed his psychology in a more complete way, since axiogenia was considered a part of the higher psychology, the psychology of values (Alberini, 1921). Alberini began by making a striking distinction between the world of nature and the human world. If the natural world was characterized by mechanical constancy and determinism, the human world—and the world of life in general—on the contrary always responds to an end, which is *teleitic*, and therefore the ends that guide that search can be modified. In this sense, values have their origin in the human psyche, and axiogeny, at the same time, is psychogeny. In this sense, he rejected the genetic conception of the psychological facts, according to which organic life was an epiphenomenon of matter and mental life an epiphenomenon, in turn, of the organism. In statements that evoked Aristotelian positions, he emphasized that life and psyche were synonymous, “the psyche is the essence of life itself” (Alberini, 1921, p. 116). And human life, initially biological individuality, was able to transform itself into “self-consciousness, that is, personality.” And if the identity between life and psychism could be admitted, it was also necessary to extend the identification to the evaluation, the tendency to end, that is, the unfolding of the axiological or *vis-estimative* vital impulse.

In short, Alberini proposed a psychology that had two differential features. The first one did not arise from a laboratory research, even if it was supported by many contemporary investigations. The second was that it merged the themes of psychology and philosophy into a single field. Alberini, then, taught psychology and introduction to philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires and metaphysics and gnoseology at the University of La Plata.

In short, from the Centenary, and especially from the 1920s, psychology was again visualized as a discipline of philosophical character, since it was considered that every question of psychology was, *at the same time*, a question of philosophy. What erased the differences between philosophy and psychology was that both were focused on founding the limits of the sensitive experience. Within this framework, and starting from Bergson, Scheler, and above all Ortega, Argentinean psychology from the third decade of the century would be oriented towards increasingly structuralist positions and strongly critical of all forms of naturalism.

It should be noted that the renewal of ideas in the field of psychology was taking place within a context of more comprehensive transformations. In 1918, the University Reform took place, which democratized university life and allowed access to higher education for the middle classes. Within the new climate of ideas, international political events such as the Russian Revolution favored an era of vanguards and utopias, characteristic of what Beatriz Sarlo called a *culture of mixture* (Sarlo, 1988).

In that context, then, and from the theoretical point of view, one of the major works was *Instinct, Perception and Reason* by Enrique Mouchet, subtitled *Contributions to a Vital Psychology*. Mouchet emphasized that his psychology “has

nothing to do with Bergson, nor with Husserl, nor with Heidegger” (Mouchet, 1941, p. 14). On the contrary, Mouchet, reminiscent of José Ingenieros, emphasized the biological status of life psychology: “The life psychologist is the biologist of introspection. This means that his psychology is a biological psychology.” However, he immediately clarified:

our *vital psychology* is not equal -nor by far- to what is commonly understood as *biological psychology*. It turns mental life into a thing, which seems to have concrete and palpable existence and, therefore, measurable. Vital psychology, on the other hand, considers the soul as something living, nothing objective, but purely subjective, although it is exteriorized in somatic and therefore objective manifestations *within certain limits, never totally* (Mouchet, 1941, p. 14).

Mouchet considered that his vital psychology did not have an ontological status, but a *methodological* one, since his system was based on the *feeling of life*, which constituted the “irreducible principle of *objective and subjective knowledge*” (Mouchet, 1941, p. 15) and “the central nucleus of the other modes of sensibility,” including “of all mental life” (Mouchet, 1941, p. 25). In short, in the *feeling of life* rested the foundation of external perception and concepts such as time, space, unity, and causality.

Mouchet’s book was considered one of the 100 most important works in the history of psychology, according to the research carried out by the renowned psychologist Rubén Ardila. Ardila considered that the text integrated “perceptive, instinctive and cognitive factors” in a “highly original” way (Ardila, 1974, p. 201).

Mouchet, who at the same time had a doctorate in philosophy and medicine as recommended by Ribot, was the follower of the clinical and pathological tradition of the early Argentinean psychology (Sanz-Ferramola & Klappenbach, 2000). He recognized his debt to Piñero and above all to Ingenieros, of whom he considered himself a disciple (Mouchet & Palcos, 1925). In this direction, his references to authors like Ribot and Dumas were constant, although also to Marx, Bergson, Scheler, von Uexküll, and Köhler. Such amplitude, on the one hand, was due to an encyclopedic conception that could not be ignored, but, on the other hand, due to an effort of specialization in the different domains of psychology that was not at all negligible, especially when Mouchet addressed his privileged themes: the phenomena of emotion, the perception of obstacles in the blind, and certain psychopathological phenomena such as depersonalization, de-realization, and language disorders.

Alongside Mouchet and Alberini, other personalities from the field of philosophy such as Pucciarelli, Francisco Romero, and Carlos Astrada contributed to the introduction of totalist or gestalt psychologies, both those of the Berlin School and the Second Leipzig School, especially the work of Felix Krüger.

In this complex context, then, far from what might be expected from those dark years in the institutional and political sphere, Argentinean psychology experienced a really striking growth, judging by various indicators.

In fact, in 1930, on Enrique Mouchet’s initiative, the Psychology Society of Buenos Aires was recreated, trying to continue the primitive Psychology Society organized in 1908 by Ingenieros, Piñero, de Veyga, and Mercante, among others

(Kohn Loncarica, 1973). This Society would edit two volumes destined to publish the conferences given in the scientific sessions of the society. In 1933, this publication was called *Boletín de la Sociedad de Psicología de Buenos Aires*. In 1935 it changed its title into *Anales de la Sociedad de Psicología de Buenos Aires* [*Annals of the Buenos Aires Society of Psychology*]. Such change was justified by the director of the publication: “the value and extension of the conferences that were held later, during the years 1933–1934, have required the replacement of the first Bulletin with a publication of greater volume and substance, and that publication is the present *Annals*” (Loudet, 1935, p. 7). Later, in 1945, the Sociedad de Psicología de Buenos Aires published a collective volume, *Trabajos actuales de Psicología Normal y Patológica* [*Current Papers on Normal and Pathological Psychology*], which, from the title, tried to inscribe the work in the same clinical and pathological field of psychology of the beginning of the century (Sociedad de Psicología de Buenos Aires, 1945). In fact, it should be remembered that in 1916, under the title of *Trabajos de Psicología Normal y Patológica* Horacio Piñero gathered a set of articles produced in the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology he directed.

At the end of 1931, the Institute of Psychology was also organized within the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Buenos Aires, on the basis of the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology. Enrique Mouchet was appointed as head of the Laboratory, at that time Professor of the First Course of Psychology at the same university. This Institute comprised nine sections: general psychology, physiological psychology, psychometry, pathological psychology, psychotechnics, psychopedagogy, paranormal psychology, collective and ethnological psychology, and character and criminology. In fact, judging by the designation of the associates in charge of each section, only five of them really worked: general psychology (also called philosophy and psychology or the general psychological doctrines), under Coriolano Alberini; pathological psychology, under Juan Ramón Beltrán; characterology and criminology, under Osvaldo Loudet; psychometry, under José L. Alberti; and physiological psychology, under León Jachesky. The university resolution that created the Institute established that the Institute would have, among other publications, some annals. In fact, the first volume of the *Anales del Instituto de Psicología* [*Annals of the Institute of Psychology*] was published in 1935, the second in 1938, and the third and last in 1941. Mouchet was forced to leave the University after the 1943 *coup d'état* and the *Annals* disappeared from the psychological map (Sanz-Ferramola & Klappenbach, 2000).

Nevertheless, in the three volumes that came out, they published, besides local personalities, some of the most prominent leaders of Latin American psychology, among them Plinio Olinto, Walter Blumenfeld, and Mariano Ibérico. But at the same time, some personalities exiled from Europe and those who were beginning to arrive in the region, such as Emilio Mira y López, Bela Székely, or Heriberto Brugger, also published in the annals. Among the topics addressed by the publication, the persistence of that clinical and pathological orientation, which had characterized Argentinean psychology since the beginning of the century, has been pointed out, as well as the strong weight of works on general psychology, also called philosophy and psychology (Sanz-Ferramola & Klappenbach, 2000).

In addition to the *Anales del Instituto de Psicología*, and the two publications of the Society of Psychology already mentioned, other publications were published in those years, which demonstrate an important movement around the problems and issues of psychology. Among them, we should mention the *Archivos del Laboratorio de Psicología Experimental* [Archives of the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology], of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Buenos Aires, published in 1931. Also the well-known publication was started in Córdoba by Gregorio Bermann, *Psicoterapia*, which published four issues between 1936 and 1937, and the less known one, *Archivos Argentinos de Psicología Normal y Patológica, Terapia Neuro-Mental y Ciencias Afines*, directed by Leopoldo Mata and René Ardití Rocha, which was published in no less than seven issues between 1933 and 1935. Among the related sciences, the publication pointed out paidotechnics, psychotechnics, professional orientation, sexology, penology, and legal and social medicine. One of its directors, Leopoldo Mata, was a psychotechnician and professional orientation graduate and Head of the Laboratory of Psychotechnics applied to Pedagogy at the J. E. Rodó Institute. René Ardití Rocha was Head of Practical Works of the Psychiatric Clinic Chair at the Hospital Nacional de Alienadas, whose holder was Professor Luis Esteves Balado.

Journals from very close fields were also published in those years. In the field of neurology and psychiatry, the first issue of *Revista de Sociedad Argentina de Neurología y Psiquiatría* appeared in 1925. Also *Index de Neurología y Psiquiatría* was edited from 1938 to 1946 (Klappenbach, 2016) and the *Boletín del Instituto Psiquiátrico de la Facultad de Ciencias Médicas de Rosario* in 1929 began to be published under the direction of Lanfranco Ciampi (Elcovich, 2015; Juárez & Rossi, 2016; Molinari, 2014, 2015). In a field also devoted to psychiatry but from a social perspective it is possible to consider the *Revista de la Liga Argentina de Higiene Mental*, which Gonzalo Bosch began to edit in 1930 (Klappenbach, 1999b), and *Anales de Biotipología, Eugenésia y Medicina Social*, which in 1933 began to be directed by Arturo Rossi (Coppa, 2019). There were also very important journals in the field devoted to *child*, not only scientific journals as the *Anales de la Sociedad de Puericultura de Buenos Aires* (Briolotti, 2016), but also the divulgation journal *Hijo Mío*, which began to be published in 1936, under the direction of Arturo León López, Gofreso Grasso, Mariano Barilari, and Leonardo Grasso, and which included as a heading “the journal of parents to guide and educate their children” (Borinsky, 2006; Rustoyburu, 2016).

It should already be stressed that this is a heterogeneous set of publications. While some recognized a clearly scientific or professional status, others were of a divulging nature and were intended for the general public. In any case, this vigorous editorial development corresponded with other indicators that showed the interest of local psychology in the international developments of psychology at the time, similar to what had happened at the beginning of the century.

Among these indicators, it should be noted, in the first place, that during those years internationally renowned personalities such as George Dumas, Wolfgang Kohler, Adolfo Ferrière, and Santín Carlos Rossi visited the country. Secondly, in the Psychological Society of Buenos Aires, George Dumas, Henri Pieron, Pierre

Janet, Paul Sollier, Sante de Sanctis, John Dewey, Edouar Claparède, Hans Driesch, Felix Krueger, and even Sigmund Freud were honorary members. And thirdly, among the corresponding partners abroad of the same company, there were personalities such as Charles Blondel, Levy Brühl, Gregorio Marañón, Augusto Pi y Suñer, Luis Jiménez de Asúa, and Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora (Klappenbach, 2006). In short, this wide circulation of publications, authors, and ideas shows that the empty characterization of psychology does not seem to be sufficiently justified.

One line of development of psychology, still incipient in this period, but which would become central in the following years, was given by the attempts to apply psychology to the field of work. In Argentina, these attempts would arise within the context of three different traditions. One of them would be marked by the tradition of socialist inspiration, in which Alfredo Palacios' studies on fatigue constituted an unavoidable reference (Vezzetti, 1988). The second one, more concerned with the rationalization of the state and the sources of work, could be synthesized in the work of Carlos Jesinghaus. And the third, close to humanist and Catholic developments, could be synthesized in the work of Benjamin Aybar. The interesting thing is that the three traditions would resort to psychology early on, and, in spite of their important ideological differences, would coincide on some issues. Thus, for example, Alfredo Palacios would support the proposal presented by Jesinghaus at the Congress of Labor meeting in Rosario in 1923, to organize an Institute of Professional Orientation (Palacios, 1925).

Psychotechnics and Professional Guidance (1941–1962)

What we have called philosophical psychology or more precisely *psychology as philosophical anthropology* reached a wide development in the university institutions until the mid-1950s. In 1937, the Department of Philosophy was organized at the National University of Tucumán, where Manuel García Morente taught his famous philosophy course (García-Morente, 1938). The book is possibly one of the most prestigious introductions to philosophy written in the Spanish language, partly because the main themes and authors of philosophy are developed and partly, as Pucciarelli and Frondizi (1938) and Julián Marías (1964/2000) emphasized, because of the personal reflection that accompanies each theme, the product of a crucial moment in the life of García Morente (Marías, 1964/2000). García Morente had arrived to Tucumán in Argentina, after a stay in Paris that lasted until March 1937. In Paris and in Argentina García Morente requested the departure from Spain of his daughters, who were still in Madrid, and from whom he had separated in September 1936. At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, in July 1936, García Morente's son-in-law, who was married to one of his daughters, was murdered in Toledo. Likewise, García Morente himself was dismissed from his position as professor and Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy (Marías, 1964/2000). In a letter to Coriolano Alberini, the Spanish thinker related the dramatic circumstances in which he left

Madrid, without a passport and in a “difficult, rapid and almost clandestine way” (Alberini, 1980, p. 32).

Other outstanding personalities such as Eugenio Pucciarelli, Risieri Frondizi, Sánchez Reulet, Rodolfo Mondolfo, Juan Adolfo Vázquez, Diego Pró, Luis Farré, and Manuel Gonzalo Casas, among others, were also professors in the Department of Philosophy at the National University of Tucumán (Pró, 1981). Precisely, Pucciarelli and Risieri Frondizi were in charge of editing the lessons of García-Morente (1938).

In 1939, Eugenio Pucciarelli, a graduate in medicine and philosophy, replaced García Morente in the psychology course. Pucciarelli’s teaching, centered on the main systems of psychology of the time, began with a question about the essence of psychology: whether it was metaphysics or a science, and whether it consisted of speculative knowledge or empirical knowledge. There he developed the paralogisms of reason according to Kant, in which rational psychology was denied to be a scientific entity, and he pointed out the foundations of empirical psychology (Pucciarelli, 1941). Pucciarelli, then, placed psychology in the Wolffian-Kantian tradition, which recognized two differentiated aspects of psychology: a rational psychology and an empirical psychology. Kantian criticism of psychology was also developed by Pucciarelli in his course on gnoseology and metaphysics, which was attended by the same students. There he dealt with the question of the “soul and the paralogisms of rational psychology,” in the context of the impossibility of metaphysics as a science (Pucciarelli, 1941, p. 6). The rest of the psychology course, Pucciarelli assigned to empirical psychology, to the “directions of scientific psychology” (p. 10), where he highlighted three orientations: explanatory, descriptive, and comprehensive direction. The course, then, dealt with the different theories, especially Bergson, Dilthey, and Spranger, the psychology of form, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis in the three directions that were cut out at the time: Freudian, Adlerian, and Jungian. Pucciarelli’s debts to Dilthey would be a constant; in his opinion, Dilthey was “a backward romantic condemned to live in a positivist era hostile to philosophy” (Pucciarelli, 1937, p. 19).

For its part, the National University of Cuyo, created in 1939 (Fontana, 1989), organized 2 years later the Pedagogical Institute in the small city of San Luis. A disciple of Calcagno in La Plata, Juan José Arévalo, who later became internationally renowned as President of Guatemala, was called upon to organize it (Arévalo, 1974). After his departure, the University appointed Plácido Horas, who had graduated as Professor of High School, Normal and Special Education in Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires. He arrived in San Luis in April 1943 to teach an introduction to philosophy course at the Pedagogical Institute of the National University of Cuyo. In 1944 he began teaching the course “Child and Adolescent Psychology” (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo—Universidad Nacional de San Luis, 1943–1983) and from then on he was unanimously recognized as one of the promoters of undergraduate psychology programs in the whole country.

In the same way, also in the most established universities, in Buenos Aires and in La Plata, after the *coup d’état* of 1943, the psychological courses were occupied by personalities coming from the field of philosophy.

However, in contradiction with this cultural climate, the economic and social context did not promote a psychological discipline that was markedly speculative and philosophical. Thus, in parallel, a model of psychological intervention centered on *psychotechnics* and *professional guidance* was developed in the whole country (Klappenbach, 2006).

The development of psychotechnics and professional orientation in Argentina was based on two complementary processes: on the one hand, the advances produced in the field of *applied psychology* and *psychotechnics* in relation to the knowledge of the aptitudes and personality characteristics that made possible the reciprocal adaptation of work to man, as well as in relation to the techniques or personality inventories necessary to successfully establish the diagnosis, leveling, and reorientation of those problems involved. Münsterberg's early work had matured into the organization of the International Psychotechnical Conferences, the first of which was organized by Claparède in Geneva (Trombetta, 1998). In Argentina, two works by Münsterberg translated into Spanish had been circulating since 1911, *La psicología y la vida* and *La psicología y el maestro*, both translated by Domingo Barnés, promoter of psychology applied to the field of education and introducer of Claparède's ideas in Spain (Quintana et al., 1998). Likewise, Alfredo Palacios, in his study on fatigue, showed a broad knowledge of Münsterberg's work on psychology applied to industry, which had been translated by Santos Rubiano, whom he criticized for having remained within the Taylorist tradition (Palacios, 1922/1944).

On the other hand, there are the economic and social conditions that had transformed the political panorama in the country since the end of the 1930s. It has been pointed out that the Second World War had favored an incipient industrial process originally aimed at import substitution (Kosacoff & Azpiazu, 1989) and that it was consolidated towards the industry of consumer goods and intermediate capital goods (Belini, 2009). Such process was accentuated after the military coup of 1943, due to the impulse of the Post-War National Council. In this context, the National Commission for Learning and Professional Orientation was organized in 1945 (Pronko, 2003), within the framework of the transformation of technical education at different levels (Wiñar, 1970). Peronist party, which governed from 1946 to 1955, consolidated this trend. The two Five-Year Plans, in 1947 and 1953, sought at the same time to generate greater production and overcome the distribution crisis (Halperin Donghi, 1983; Waldmann, 1981). According to data collected by Lewis, out of 59,765 industries in existence in 1943, the figure increased to 148,371 in 1954. Similarly, the number of workers increased from 820,470 in 1943 to 1,217,844 in 1954 (Lewis, 1990). In short, between 1930–1935 and 1945–1949, Argentina's industrial production doubled, due to the promotion of credit, control over the exchange rate, and protection (James, 1990). Peronism promoted an "alliance with the small and medium-sized industrial enterprises linked to the market internal and unionized workers emerging from the process of industrial modernization in a virtuous circle of consumption and production" (Fair, 2009, p. 519; translation is ours).

The transformations produced during Peronism consolidated a new urban working class, which required a rapid retraining. In this context, professional guidance

came to constitutional status after the 1949 reform, when it was incorporated in Article 37 which guaranteed the rights of the worker, the family, old age people, and education and culture:

Professional guidance for young people, conceived as a complementary to the action of instructing and educating, it is a function social services that the State protects and promotes through to guide young people to the activities for which have natural aptitudes and capacity, so that the professional choice is in your best interest and in the best interest of society (República Argentina, 1950, p. 23).

In the same direction, the Second Peronist Five-Year Plan set the goal of “directing training and professional guidance,” in the field of education and work. In labor settings, it was established that the social and economic policy of the State should be developed on various bases, including: “The establishment of rational correlations between the worker’s *aptitude* and his occupation in order to obtain the highest rates of productivity and salary” (República Argentina, 1953, p. 83; emphasis added).

The aspirations evidenced by such considerations were related to *collective professional guidance*, which was conceived from a public interest. At the same time, it created conditions for the development of *individual professional guidance*, which would find better conditions for its consolidation along the 1960s under the denomination of *vocational guidance*.

These conditions, in any case, allowed a set of new institutions. Among them was the creation of new university programs: the *Licenciatura en Psicotecnia y Orientación Profesional* (Degree in Psychotechnics and Professional Guidance), which Universidad Nacional de Tucumán organized in 1950, under the direction of Benjamin Aybar (Rossi, 1997). The Assistant’s Program in Psychotechnics in 1953 was organized in Rosario, the University of Litoral, under the direction of Arminda Benitez de Lambruschini (Gentile, 2003). And the Specialization in Psychology was organized at the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in the same year, under the direction of Plácido Horas (Klappenbach, 1995). Such programs were organized at national and public universities, since 1949 totally free. In this respect, they differed from previous experiences, such as the program that since the mid-1920s trained counsellors in psychotechnics and professional guidance at the *Instituto de Psicotecnia y Orientación Profesional* (Institute of Psychotechnics and Professional Guidance), which had been organized by Carlos Jesinghaus (Edelmuth, 1997; Rossi, 1997).

The first of these programs originated at another Institute of Psychotechnics and Professional Guidance, this one at the National University of Tucumán, which was organized and directed by Benjamín Aybar. Aybar’s philosophical, ontological, and anthropological positions were closely related to his interest in psychotechnics and professional guidance. In fact, Aybar stated that education should start from a pre-intellectual tendency that he called *esseedad*, from which it was necessary to respect the “*diversity of aptitudes*” (Aybar, 1954, p. 26). Although Aybar was referring to the educational process, it is clear that, at the same time, she was referring to the

purpose of the process of professional guidance: to find the best occupation for personal fulfillment.

Thus, in Tucumán, professional orientation was supported by two pillars. One of them was of an economic nature, centered on the rationality of the science of work. The other was of an anthropological-philosophical nature, based on the search for personal fulfillment. So, the potential development of aptitudes could correspond, on a psychophysical level, to the development of the freedom of one's own *esseedad*.

The Degree in Psychotechnics and Professional Guidance functioned until 1958 and no less than 20 persons obtained their degree in psychotechnics and professional guidance. The curriculum of that program was not organized by years, but by groups of courses. The "psychological" courses were experimental psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, and psychotechnics and professional guidance. A second group of courses were studied in the Department of Law: political economy, sociography, and labor legislation in connection to social psychology. A third group of courses were studied in the Department of Biochemistry: anatomy and physiology and mental and industrial hygiene (Rossi, 1997).

The transformation of this program into the psychology program came after the First Argentine Congress of Psychology, held in 1954, precisely in Tucumán (Diez, 1999). There, the creation of a psychologist program was recommended in national universities. In the case of Tucumán, "the creation of the psychologist program at the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities of the National University of Tucumán, based on the studies carried out in the program and the teaching staff of psychotechnics, and taking into account the guidelines of the psychologist program previously approved" (Anónimo, 1954b, pp. 508–509).

In San Luis, on the other hand, the National University of Cuyo organized in 1952 the Direction of Educational Psychology and Professional Guidance that depended jointly on the University and the provincial government and was directed by Plácido Alberto Horas. The aims of this Directorate included "advice on the teaching of under-abled children"; "diagnosis and psychopedagogical assistance for wards of the Directorate for Minors"; "examinations and advice on professional guidance and training, both in the study of skills and in the adjustment of personality to work"; "psychotechnical examination of applicants for scholarships offered by the Province"; and "training of technical staff specialized in the above-mentioned tasks" (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo—Provincia de San Luis. Dirección de Psicología Educacional y Orientación Profesional, 1952).

Plácido Horas conceived professional guidance as a meeting point between individual aspirations and conditions—*personality* and *aptitude*—on the one hand, and social needs, on the other. In fact, professional guidance "aspires to the choice of trades and professions in a way that is consistent with one's personality, aptitudes and social environment" (Horas, 1951). In this sense, Horas stated that professional choice depended directly on the type of social structure and the technical means available in a society. For that reason he emphasized the lack of a technical economic-social structuring in the city of San Luis, and, in that sense, "if we compare with an American city similar to ours, we will see the numerical and qualitative differences in the professional preferences" (Horas, 1951, p. 132).

At the same time, Horas based his approach to professional guidance on the work of Spranger, and, to a lesser extent, Charlotte Bühler and Landis. In *The Psychology of Youth*, Spranger had explicitly stated that not only economic factors but also moral ones influenced the adolescent's vocational choice, since that choice constituted a worldview for the young person, a view which Horas would take up again. Likewise, Horas emphasized the need to penetrate children's fantasies about professions, in the "professional dreams," as formulated by Spranger (Horas, 1951). In short, for Plácido Horas, professional guidance was a core problem, which had already been pointed out early on. In fact, one of the aims of the Institute of Pedagogical Research, organized by Horas himself in the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Cuyo, was precisely "to consider the problems of *professional guidance* through its different aspects and according to the needs of the environment" (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo. Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, 1948, p. 23). In other words, in San Luis, professional guidance appeared less related to the field of work and more to that of education, even though the fields may have been closely related.

The professional guidance activities described above, plus all those foreseen by the Educational Psychology and Professional Orientation Directorate, presented the problem of the specialized personnel training. For this purpose, Plácido Horas himself promoted the creation of a "Specialization in Psychology" for which he took into account, among other elements, the background of similar programs in Spain, France, and the United States, the development of psychology in our country, and "the relationships between training in psychology and the objectives of the 2nd Five-Year Plan" (Klappenbach, 1995).

The implementation of the undergraduate psychology program after the First Argentine Congress of Psychology eclipsed the specialization in psychology that had been envisioned by Horas. However, the continuities between both curricular designs are notorious, as well as with the degree in psychotechnics and professional guidance from the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán.

In other words, the curricular developments in psychotechnics and professional guidance would be subsumed in the future psychology programs, which would be organized between 1955 and 1959, although the political and cultural context of the future programs totally changed. In any case, what characterized these projects was the verification that a new type of professional graduate was needed, capable of intervening in the new demands that the field of education and work has placed on it. Thus, for example, at the turn of the century, Horacio Rimoldi, one of the first personalities to obtain a Ph.D. in psychology at an American university, framed the training of psychologists in that country on the basis of the new needs for practical intervention:

The new orientations in education, the problems created by the big industries, the study of minority groups, the mass suggestions created by hundreds of political systems, the sense of guilt or the exaggerated aggressiveness of individuals - alone or in groups -, racial tensions, religious discriminations, the hygiene and therapeutics of mental disorders, the bad adaptations to the environment, the problems connected with the intelligent distribution of civil and military personnel in times of war, the re-adaptation of displaced persons and so

on, have been and continue to be actively studied. In short, it is a question of obtaining the best adaptation of the individual to the environment while respecting the existence of individual differences and certain inalienable rights that belong to each person as a person (Rimoldi, 1950, pp. 87–88).

Although some of the fields imagined by Rimoldi for the practical intervention of the psychologist revealed the imprint of North American psychology, since 1942 Rimoldi had been directing an Institute of Experimental Psychology at the University of Cuyo. At such an institute, for the first time in the country, attempts were made to standardize locally the Raven intelligence test, at the same time as studies on fatigue were carried out (Rimoldi, 1995). In other words, in the sociopolitical context of those years, the search for individual differences was oriented towards improving school performance and the need to provide equal opportunities for all students and to obtain more adequate jobs for workers.

In any case, it should be noted that notwithstanding the strong impetus from the State, the processes involved in psychotechnology and professional orientation allowed readings of different ideological constellations. Like this, confronted with the Taylorist conception, both Claparède in an international level and Alfredo Palacios in Argentina adhered to leftist ideas. For its part, the *Manual de Orientación Profesional*, published in 1947 by another left-wing personality, Emilio Mira y López, reached a wide circulation in the country and in a little less than a year its first edition was sold out. The book constituted a true treatise of psychotechnics and orientation professional, in which Mira y Lopez discussed at the same time theoretical, technical, and institutional issues, from the data that should be considered in formulating the “guidance counsel,” up to the theory of the tests or jobs’ classification according to the skills involved (Mira & López, 1948).

A fundamental issue in this period is that in 1954 the First Argentine Congress of Psychology was organized in Tucumán, with strong support from the State (Dagfal, 2009; Gentile, 1998). There, a Commission in which Plácido Horas, Oscar Oñativia, and Ricardo Moreno, among others, participated recommended the creation of psychology or psychologist programs at national universities, according to the following guidelines:

The First Argentine Congress of Psychology declares the need to create the university program of professional psychologist according to the following conditions I. It shall be established as an autonomous section in the Faculties of a humanistic nature, taking advantage of the already existing institutes and the teaching given in those and other Faculties that may offer their collaboration (Medicine, Law, Economics, etc.); II. The program will include a complete plan of theoretical courses and the appropriate practical intensification in the different specialties of the psychological profession, granting the degrees of Licentatura in Psychology (previous thesis for the Licentatura) and Doctor of Psychology (previous thesis for the Doctorate); III. It will also establish minor programs of assistant psychologists in the various fields of medical therapy, pedagogy, social assistance, industrial organization, and other fields of application to the needs of national and regional order served by the various Argentine universities (Anónimo, 1954a, p. 122).

Under the invocation of that congress, between 1954 and 1964, were organized the first 14 undergraduate psychology programs in the country: 6 in national universities, 6 in private universities, and 2 in provincial university institutions (Klappenbach, 2015) (Table 5.1). However, as noted above, the social and political context had changed in a substantial way. It is not easy to synthesize in a few lines all changes that followed the fall of Peronism in September 1955. But at least it is possible to point out those modifications that directly or indirectly impacted the programs of psychology that was beginning to be organized.

Table 5.1 First undergraduate Psychology Programs at Argentine universities (1954–1964)

Foundation date	City	University
1955 (April)	Rosario	National University of Littoral. After 1955 coup d'état it was reorganized in 1956
1956 (March)	Buenos Aires	University del Salvador (originally a Jesuit university)
1956 (April)	Córdoba	National University of Córdoba. Although the initial degree was intended to be Professor and Doctor on Psychology and Pedagogy, the resolution of April 1957 enabled the degree of Graduate (<i>Licenciado</i>) in Psychology and Pedagogy. In December 1958 the two programs were separated
1957 (March)	Buenos Aires	University of Buenos Aires
1958 (February)	San Luis	National University of Cuyo
1958 (November)	La Plata	National University of La Plata
1959 (August)	Tucumán	National University of Tucumán
1956 (August)	Córdoba	Catholic University of Córdoba (Jesuit university). It was closed in 1976 during the military dictatorship and reopened in 2005
1960 (May)	Mar del Plata	National University of Mar del Plata. In 1960 it began as a program of the Institute of Educational Sciences. In 1966 it was incorporated to the Provincial University of Mar del Plata. It was closed in 1976 during the military dictatorship and reopened in 1985 within the National University
1961 (March)	Buenos Aires	Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina. From 1961 to 1969 it was part of the Free Faculty of Psychology, institution annexed to the University
1962 (March)	Buenos Aires	University from the Argentine Social Museum
1963 (March)	Tucumán	Saint Thomas Aquinas University of the North
1963 (August)	Mendoza	School Anthropology Faculty. General Administration of Schools at the Province of Mendoza. It was definitively closed in 1977
1964 (March)	Buenos Aires	John F. Kennedy University of Argentina

Source: Based on Klappenbach (2015) with further modifications by the authors

The Debate on the Psychologists' Role: Between Political Developmentalism, Mental Health, and Dictatorship (1965–1983)

The fall of psychotechnics and professional guidance was parallel to the fall of Peronism by a *coup d'état* in September 1955. For this reason, some comments are necessary on the process of *desperonization* that was experienced in those years. There was no single way of understanding the *desperonization* of politics, society, and culture (Spinelli, 2006). The one that predominated from Aramburu's government proscribed the Peronist party, which began with the Decree 3855 of November 24, 1955 (República Argentina, 1955b), but concluded with the well-known Decree 4161 of March 5, 1956, that came to prohibit the different elements and symbols related to the "deposed regime." Article 1 of the abovementioned decree prohibited throughout the country the use "for the purpose of Peronist ideological affirmation ... of images, symbols, signs, significant expressions, doctrines, articles and artistic works, which claim such character" (República Argentina, 1956b, p. 1). Other expressions of the *desperonization* can be seen in the prohibition of union activity, the revocation of the 1949 constitution, and the creation of multiple investigative commissions at the national, provincial, and even municipal levels. The investigative commissions had the objective of investigating the alleged irregularities of the deposed regime and had broad powers (Ferreya, 2016a). It is estimated that there were no less than 413 commissions throughout the country (Ferreya, 2016b).

In the university setting, the objective of *desperonization* was immediate. On September 30, the Universidad del Litoral (Decree 131/55), the Universidad de Buenos Aires (Decree 133/55), the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Decree 163/55), and the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (Decree 164/55) intervened; on October 4 the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (Decree 275/55); and on November 3 the Instituto Tecnológico del Sur, future Universidad Nacional del Sur (Decree 2432/55). The considerations of the decrees have similarities, with the exception of the one related to the Instituto Tecnológico del Sur. In general, intervention was justified in arguments such as university disorganization, lack of academic freedom, and suppression of university autonomy (República Argentina, 1955c, d, e, f, g). In the case of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, it was also argued the "decline of the faculty by means of appointments in which the capacity and integrity of the teachers gave way, in most cases, to obsession with a denying tyranny of the academic hierarchies" (República Argentina, 1955f, p. 1).

In the same direction, Decree 478 of October 14, 1955, declared *in commission* all university personnel, that is removed all tenure positions, with the objective of "choosing professors in the most responsible and just manner" and considering that "it is an indispensable requirement that there be a faculty that by their knowledge, intellectual probity, and moral and civic integrity is worthy of their high investiture" (República Argentina, 1955a, p. 1).

The decree meant an open questioning of the faculty and teaching assistants and was based on the widespread belief in the low academic level of the professors who had won their positions during Peronism, those who were pejoratively called “*flor de ceibo*” (which is the national flower of Argentina). Detailed studies in recent years have shown the injustice of that belief. The analysis of the trajectory of professors, both in the Department of Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Buenos Aires (Martínez del Sel & Riccono, 2013) and in the Department of Law and Social Sciences of the same university (Cuello, 2014; Martínez del Sel, 2016), reveals that many professors during the years of Peronism exhibited prestigious trajectories and were part of recognized international circuits, as much as the resigned professors who remained outside the university from 1943 to 1955.

The university transformations following the fall of Peronism were completed between November and December 1955. First, Decree 2538 of November 4, 1955, established that the intervenors in the various universities “will proceed to reintegrate into their respective professorships all full, associate, substitute or special professors, and teaching assistants who have resigned or been separated from them for political reasons” (República Argentina, 1955h, p. 1). And secondly, on 23 December 1956 the decree law 6403 established a new legal, academic, and administrative regime for the national universities. This decree has been widely studied because, for the first time since the sanction of the Avellaneda Law in the nineteenth century, in its famous article 28 it established that “private initiative can create free universities that will be able to issue diplomas and qualifying degrees” (República Argentina, 1956a, p. 2). For our topic, it is interesting that this decree made a call for open public competitions but with clear *proscriptions*, specified in two *special* requirements in Article 32:

- (a) Those who have carried out positive and ostensible acts that objectively prove the promotion of totalitarian doctrines adverse to the dignity of free man and the validity of republican institutions shall not be admitted to the contest; (b) Nor shall those be admitted to the competition who, in the performance of a university position, public functions or any other activity, have carried out positive and ostensible acts of solidarity with the dictatorship, which compromise the concept of independence and dignity of the chair (República Argentina, 1956a, p. 2).

What is interesting is the fact that in the university environment the *desperonization* was drastic and somehow managed to involve not only the professors but also the university organization and the curricula. In fact, the programs generated in the years of Peronism were also modified or even eliminated.

We have analyzed that the institutionalization of psychology in Argentina since the creation of the first psychology program (1955) took place in a context of *desperonization*. There was evidence of renewal, expansion, and modernization of higher education, but in a context of a notable absence of democracy or restricted democracy. This process began in 1955 with the *coup d'état* that overthrew the democratic Peronist government and ended in 1966 with the self-described “Argentine Revolution” (Feld, 2015; Suasnábar, 2004). Education reform, especially in higher education, was part of the development policy agenda. At the academic level, this agenda had an impact mainly on two issues: firstly, on the

conceptualization of the university as an institution that should generate knowledge, and therefore should be the axis of the network of organizations, institutions, and groups of science and technology, which was then revitalized by the recent creation of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET) in 1958. In effect, since the 1960s the public university began to be the place of execution of the greatest percentage of the national budget dedicated to science and technology, in research projects, scholarships, and full-time teaching positions that allowed to complement teaching with the production of knowledge (Prego & Estébanez, 2002; Vacarezza, 1998). However, a negative aspect of this development was related to what Diego Hurtado has called the *ideology of systemic integration*: “the university-CONICET system would consolidate an orientation towards basic science sustained by universalist values, which in practice meant the adoption of the research agendas of advanced countries” (Hurtado, 2010, p. 108).

Secondly, developmentalist policies took up the notion that the university was a channel for social mobility and promotion and for the formation of resources for the solution of more general social problems. In Argentina, many academic and scientific groups have advocated scientific policies aimed at solving specific and real problems in the region, particularly poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Vessuri, 2007).

Several of the characteristics of what would progressively be shaped as the *Argentinean psychological culture* are linked to these processes, especially regarding the composition of the student body, their preferences and objectives, and the academic debates developed within the psychology programs as we will analyze later.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to consider a significant set of economic changes following the fall of Peronism. As we have analyzed, psychotechnics and professional guidance received a strong impulse from the economic reforms introduced by Peronism. The fall of Peronism was followed by new economic reorientations. First, since 1956, there has been a decrease in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises in the country and an increase in the average size of the industrial companies. Companies with more than 200 employees, which represented 29% in 1954, reached 40% in 1964 (Lewis, 1990). The greatest growth was also in which became known as “dynamic industries,” that is, industries with a lot of technological development in the field of iron, steel, petrochemical, rubber, mechanical, and automotive instead of “traditional industries” like food, textiles, and tobacco. Both modifications were the result of the increase of foreign investment and increased participation in economy of multinational corporations. It has been analyzed for example that new investment by companies of foreign capital was \$3 million in 1958, which increased to 36 million in 1959, 106 million in 1960, and 188 million in 1961 (Lewis, 1990). A consequence of this process was on the one hand decrease in the number of industrial establishments.

Social theory Social theorists have posed that the greater dependence of foreign investment in peripheral or dependent countries implies a greater dependence on the international economy and this necessarily weakens the power of the federal administration, even if the state continues to intervene in the economy (Faletto, 2014). At

the particular case of the government that overthrew Peronism and its continuation and transformation into the developmental political model, there was a “change within the accumulation model that would change the basis of social support that characterized the internal market model” (Fair, 2009, p. 525). But the most striking thing was the changes produced by the so-called economic modernization. In a classic paper, Celso Furtado has analyzed the changes in cultural patterns and consumption in peripheral or underdeveloped societies produced by modernization:

Unlike developed economies, in which the driving factor is a combined process of new forms of consumption (private and public) and innovation technology, in the underdeveloped economy the two primary factors interacting in depending on the overall conditions of the system, is the imposition of forms of consumption from the outside to the inside which constitutes the main driving factor ... In the conditions of underdevelopment, that process is only fully realized with respect to the group of the population that is integrated in the ‘modern’ ... It is possible, therefore, to prove that the introduction of new consumption patterns among rich groups is the real primary factor (alongside state action) in the “development” of the so-called underdeveloped economies (Furtado, 1971, p. 345).

In the case of Argentina, a number of changes took place promoted by a “modern industry strongly integrated with foreign capital at the center not only of economic life but also of new cultural values” (Portantiero, 1989, p. 20). In this context, Juan Carlos Portantiero pointed out the role of young people from the middle classes, who became a social category. In his analysis, by 1960 it had installed in Argentina an “industrial culture,” the basis of the mass communication similar to that in Europe or the United States, along with the expansion of art and culture in which “psychoanalysis burst on the scene like an avalanche” (Portantiero, 1989, p. 21).

The economic transformations and the new culture of modernity not only promoted the irruption of psychoanalysis like an avalanche. The same movement generated transformations deep in the culture and in everyday life: a *discreet revolution* (Cosse, 2010) which relied on the expansion of psychotherapy that involved a reorientation of subjectivity and intimacy, circulation of the “psychoanalytic vulgate” as Pujol calls it (Pujol, 2007, p. 298), family planning, and separation of sexuality and reproduction favored by the wide spread of the pill (Felitti, 2012; Pujol, 2007):

... the Buenos Aires case was shocking. On the one hand, counted with the lowest average number of live births per women (1.49% versus 2.25% in Rio de Janeiro, 2.97% in Caracas and 3.16% of Bogota) and, in addition, it had the highest percentage of contraceptive users among women married and living together (77.6% vs. 65% in San José, 59.4% in Caracas, 58.1% in Rio de Janeiro and the lowest average in Mexico: 37.4%). Likewise, Buenos Aires was the city where the highest average number of women who had begun their contraceptive practices before first pregnancy (40.2%). These data showed that there was a significant social demand in this respect, in correspondence with the transformations of the gender roles and relationships, sexual morality patterns and family models. Although it was still a ‘discreet revolution’ (Cosse, 2010), the modernization that policy supported and that the spread of psychoanalysis led to the everyday life (Plotkin, 2002) made the case of Buenos Aires special (Felitti, 2012, p. 170).

In a context such as the one described above, psychotechnics and professional were on the side of tradition that it was necessary to replace. The rhetoric of modernity demanded a reorientation also of psychology, something that the new

psychology programs were going to carry out, sustained by that *burst of psychoanalysis* that Portantiero mentioned. The development of psychology from 1960 onwards has been analyzed. Here we would simply like to emphasize some characteristics that delegitimized psychotechnics and professional guidance. Firstly, there is the shift from *professional guidance*, especially *collective*, to the model of *vocational orientation*, from an individual and a clinical approach. The *vocational orientation* approach that began to be cemented in the 1960s and 1970s in Argentina was based on a differentiation between two possible models of vocational guidance: the *actuarial modality* and the *clinical modality*. This distinction implied an explicit questioning of psychotechnics, which, in the classic book of Rodolfo Bohoslavsky, was close to the *Examen de los Ingenios* que Huarte de San Juan wrote in 1575: “This [actuarial] modality is *linked to American psychotechnics* and differential psychology from the beginning of the twentieth century” (Bohoslavsky, 1971/1979, p. 15; italics belong to me).

The abovementioned displacement generated, in the second place, the disappearance of psychotechnics, considered as a whole as a Taylorist expression, and its replacement by the *psychodiagnostic process*, individually and psychoanalytically oriented. The well-known book edited by Siquier de Ocampo, García Arzeno, and collaborators began, once again, with a veiled questioning of psychotechnics:

The conception of the psychodiagnostic process, such as we postulated in this book, it's relatively new. Traditionally it has been considered 'from the outside' as a situation where the psychologist administers a test to someone and in those terms formulate the derivation ... In this way the psychologist has functioned as someone who learned to best administer a test (de Ocampo & García-Arzeno, 1974/1976, p. 13).

And a third and less analyzed characteristic has been the abandonment of the French psychological matrix, focusing on the study of observable and operable behaviour, which Dagfal (2002) called *conduite à la française*. This matrix, which should not be confused with behaviorism, was replaced by a psychoanalytic approach, focused on making conscious the unconscious, which ultimately can only be contrasted in the individual psychoanalytic experience.

In short, the decisive change between psychotechnics and professional guidance, or even among the recommendations of that congress of psychology held in Tucumán and the new undergraduate programs that began to be implemented, was supported in a new graduate profile which had the *clinic* as its core objective and *psychoanalysis* as the basis of all the practices in psychology. So, by clinic, one did not understand a branch of psychology; on the contrary, the *clinic was the foundation of all psychology*. Psychology, then, abandoned its place in the world of administration's planning and found its best development as a *liberal profession*, at the service of the individuality of the subjects.

The modification of the profile took place in a few years and still when it was the result of a collective process involving actively the then students of psychology of the University of Buenos Aires; this can be attributed to José Bleger, the most precise justification of the same:

Clinical psychology is always the most direct and appropriate access to the behavior of humans beings and their personalities. So far, Experimental Psychology is tributary to it. When Experimental Psychology is 'liberated' from the clinical attitude and from the clinical method, what happens is that the psychologist stops studying human beings for study the technique he employs. This is very especially with *psycho-technicians* who end up studying the test through humans instead of studying humans through the test (Bleger, 1964, p. 179; italics belong to me).

Once again it can be seen that the new graduate profile came to displace psychotechnics and professional guidance. In some opportunities it has been characterized as Argentinean psychology prior to the organization of psychology programs in terms of a *vacuum* of psychology that was finally filled by psychoanalysis. In fact, and based on what we have analyzed thus far, it does not seem exaggerated to say that, contrary to that image of the *emptiness* or *vacuum* of psychology that psychoanalysis allegedly came to fill, that what really took place was an *emptying* out of psychology developed before the *avalanche of psychoanalysis*. This *emptying out* required the denial of the scientific foundations of psychology, a task Bleger had already undertaken, very explicitly in the first class of the psychoanalysis course at the Universidad del Litoral in 1959:

Applied psychoanalysis has a vast field, as well as psychology in general. The psychologist is the one working in the specific field of interpersonal relations in any activity or task of man. Psychology is a *trade*, a task that can be enriched by the applied psychoanalysis. There are no phenomena to which should be applied or that are exclusive to psychoanalysis or of a psychoanalytic approaching, as opposed to other phenomena that would be unique to other systems of schools in psychology (Bleger, 1959/1962, pp. 56–57; translation and emphasis are ours).

Such an emptying transformed psychology in a *trade*. In other words, *psychology was no longer a science*; it has become a *trade*, a task: "The training of the psychologist requires the handling of psychology not as a humanistic knowledge but as a *trade*" (Bleger, 1962, p. 57; emphasis added). It is clear then that this trade required a knowledge on which to base the practitioner or trader. Of course, that knowledge was psychoanalysis. It must also be noted that, in addition, the scope of psychoanalysis was enlarged as to encompass general psychology. That is, psychoanalysis could be applied to all human phenomena. That characteristic of psychoanalysis justified that in the new undergraduate psychology programs it was not necessary to teach other theories or schools. From the moment the psychoanalysis becomes the only referential scheme in psychology, the overlap between psychology and psychoanalysis becomes complete. In Argentina, in those years psychology and psychoanalysis were the same.

All of these changes, political, economic, cultural, academic, and theoretical, had an impact on psychology programs in various ways. At the sociocultural level, two phenomena should be highlighted: on the one hand, the increase in enrolment in universities. In fact, since the time of the Peronist project, the emphasis on *democratizing* the university and making it accessible to the middle and lower classes had made university education a core element of social promotion and mobility (Mangone & Warley, 1984). By the mid-1960s, developmentalist policy had led to a sustained and progressive increase in student enrolment. Consider what was said at the end of the previous section; between 1955 and 1964, 14 new undergraduate

psychology programs were created (Klappenbach, 2015). A report at the end of the 1960s estimated that almost 2800 psychology students already existed in the psychology degree program at the University of Buenos Aires, almost 1200 were added to the undergraduate program at the National University of Córdoba, 700 at the University of Litoral, 700 at the National University of La Plata, 360 at the National University of Tucumán, and 245 at the National University of Cuyo (Chaparro, 1969). Therefore, by the end of the decade almost 6000 students were aspiring to obtain their degree in psychology: 650% more than the number registered only 10 years earlier, in 1958 (García, 1983).

The democratization of university studies in a climate of clear social dynamism and accelerated transformation of more general institutions impacted the sociodemographic characteristics of psychology programs. A typical Argentinean phenomenon was the *feminization* of both undergraduate psychology programs and the early professional field. During the first years of psychology as an university career in Argentina, more than two-thirds of the students and graduates were women. This phenomenon intensified towards the mid-1960s, to the point where, in conjunction with other “service-oriented” or assistance-based university programs such as nursing or social work, “psychology has been perceived as an essentially female profession” (Plotkin, 2002, p. 146). In this sense, almost all the graduates of the first cohorts of psychologists between 1961 and 1969 had been women (Litvinoff & Gomel, 1975). Rubén Ardila described the *average psychologist* (the statistical ‘*modal figure*’) in the Argentina of the mid-1970s:

[The average psychologist] was a woman, under the age of 31, married and with two children. Her husband is a psychologist or a physician. She studied at the University of Buenos Aires from 5 to 6 and a half years [...] She works in clinical psychology and more specifically conducting psychoanalytic psychotherapy with neurotic patients. [...] This person started working at an institution without receiving any remuneration; she did it to acquire practice that she does not acquire in the university [...] This person reads only Spanish-written journal, especially the Argentinian publications. At the present time she is under psychoanalytic treatment in order to satisfy the requirements of didactic analysis for training psychoanalysts (Ardila, 1979, p. 83).

The core of this profile remained untouched in the following decades. Between the early and mid-1980s, 74% of the students in the psychology undergraduate program at the University of Buenos Aires, the most populated university in the country, were women (Plotkin, 2002). Similar percentages were observed in the programs of universities such as the National University of San Luis (Horas et al., 1977) and the National University of Mar del Plata (Vilanova, 1987).

However, a new shift occurred as a consequence of the 1966 *coup d'état* led by the self-proclaimed *Argentine Revolution*. Culturally as well as politically, the Revolution drastically turned towards anti-communist, economically liberal, and conservative, if not outright reactionary ideologies. In this context, the university was seen as a left-wing ideological focus which ran counter to the *de facto* government. As a result, the government adopted a strong interventionist policy towards the universities, thus violating the principle of autonomy which regulated the institutions and guaranteed academic autonomy. The *de facto* government advanced by

dismissing professors, removing and replacing university authorities, and physically invading classroom spaces. On July 29, 1966, the infamous episode known as the *Night of the Long Sticks* took place, even attaining international visibility (Langer, 1966). It consisted of the forced removal and consequent physical repression of students and professors from various departments of the University of Buenos Aires by the Federal Police (Bianculli & Taroncher, 2018).

In addition to the professors who were dismissed or expelled, other instructors and university authorities resigned or were forcibly exiled. This had a decisive impact on university psychology programs. For example, among the professors who were dismissed or replaced by assistants in the programs at universities in Buenos Aires, La Plata, and Rosario were José Itzinghson, Juan Azcoaga, Telma Reca, Nicolas Tabella, Jaime Bernstein, Luisa de Ocampo, José Bleger, León Ostrov, David Liberman, and Fernando Ulloa, among many others (Moyano, 2010).

The progressive limitation of the highly dynamic and critical activities of the university institution affected the Argentinian psychological culture in very concrete ways. For example, at the end of the 1960s one of the first reports on the teaching of the discipline noted, among other things, the scarcity of scholarships granted to students and the scarce research activity in psychology programs (Chaparro, 1969). In addition, very few scholarship holders or psychologists could choose to undertake training or research stays abroad. According to a survey carried out by one psychology professor at the University of Buenos Aires who had also been a founding member of the program the funds for psychological research in Argentina came mainly from CONICET, and to a lesser extent from either the Ministry of Education or specific American foundations (Cortada de Kohan, 1978). Indeed, it has been noted that due to the limited subsidies and grants for scientific research in psychology, at academic psychology departments and formal institutes “those who researched would do so for their own interest and as a ‘collaboration’” (Piñeda, 2010).

Another milestone immediately following the *Night of the Long Sticks* was the sanction, in 1967, of the Law 17132, on the legal practice of medicine, which had an important effect on psychology’s professional field (República Argentina, 1967). In a chronological sense, the law itself was the product of numerous collective debates within medical circles regarding the professions that could legitimately intervene in the clinical field. And these debates included, of course, psychologists as an emerging professional group.

As it has been previously documented (Borinsky, 2002; Klappenbach, 2000) and as it was analyzed above, the core debate that shaped the first graduates of psychology programs from the 1960s onwards was a debate not about *psychology as a science* but about the *psychologist as a practitioner*: in other words, about the graduate’s *professional role*, the limits of his or her competence, and his or her involvement in the discipline’s several areas of professional work. Early on both the psychoanalytic predominance in the programs from 1958 onwards and the strongly clinical orientation of the programs oriented students towards the field of mental health (Cortada de Kohan, 1978; Dagfal, 2009, 2018; Plotkin, 2002). However, this orientation took place in a field that was not yet defined, around a new professional figure without clear profiles or boundaries, and in a context which was being constantly reshaped by graduates themselves. In the terms of Klappenbach (2006), “the

novelty of the profession, the ambiguities in the university training of young psychologists, as well as the amplitude of applications of the new discipline, made its field of action imprecise" (p. 140). In fact, as late as 1975, it was noted that when speaking of the *role of the psychologist* "we are referring to a concept about which there is no consensus but which, on the contrary, can be the object of very divergent definitions" (Litvinoff & Gomel, 1975, p. 36).

Between 1960 and approximately 1975, on the one hand psychologists perceived themselves as *psychoanalysts*, and conceived psychoanalysis as the only psychological approach that both guaranteed the scientificity of the discipline and grounded psychology's diverse professional fields – these fields being defined as applied psychoanalysis (Estudiantes Delegados & Docentes, 1973; Grego & Kaumann, 1973; Harari, 1975; Malfé, 1983). On the other hand, and in the context of Argentina's accelerated process of sociocultural mutation, psychologists tended to perceive themselves and be perceived by other professions as *assisting agents of change* (García, 1983), driven by psychoanalytic tenets and assumptions (Bleger, 1966; Danis, 1969; Danis et al., 1970). In all these debates about the *role of the psychologist*, both psychoanalysis as a clinical theory and the psychologists' incidence in the mental health field were strongly defining elements.

In such a context, there was a notable reluctance by some physicians, especially psychiatrists, to admit psychologists as professional peers. During those years there were numerous symposia, thematic panels, and congresses that discussed this precise issue (Klappenbach, 2006). Of course, this was not an original Argentinian problem. From the 1920s to the 1960s, similar *quarrels* between psychologists and psychiatrists over psychotherapeutic practice had taken place in the United States (Buchanan, 2003). In Argentina, the Law 17132 put an end to the complaint, at least on a legal level. In its 9th chapter, the psychologist was defined as an assistant to the psychiatrist (República Argentina, 1967). The law established that the psychologist could not practice psychotherapy or psychoanalysis or prescribe psychotropic drugs, and that he/she could only work in the medical field under strict subordination or supervision by a physician specialized in psychiatry. As a result, psychologists continued to be integrated in public mental health institutions (hospitals, hospices, psychiatric services, etc.), although under the direction of psychiatrists, most of them psychoanalysts (Borinsky, 2002). At the same time, the Law could not impede psychologists from practicing psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in the private clinic (Avelluto, 1983; Litvinoff & Gomel, 1975).

From the 1970s onwards, the region witnessed a gradual exhaustion and failure of the developmentalist political project. With it, the perceived place of the university as a central agent in the production of the scientific-technical infrastructure for local technological development changed radically. What at the social and political level had been the basis of Argentina's institutional modernization was practically dismantled during the self-proclaimed National Reorganization Process initiated by a new military *coup d'état*, this time in March 1976. The general scientific and technological policy adopted by the region from the 1970s onwards abandoned the developmentalist ideals, be them economic, political or social. On the contrary, the idea of the development of local, original, autonomous and relevant productive forces was "defeated," in terms of Vessuri (2007), by the local representatives of

external interests, by an economic model based on growth without social equity, and by the authoritarian regimes whose scientific policies, except for specific cases, mostly accentuated the peripheral, dependent, and replicative place of Argentina in the international system of science and technology.

As far as the university institution is concerned, by the mid-1970s, the economic and social policies implemented by the last dictatorship in Argentina led, among other things, to a drastic decrease in student enrolment in public universities and an increase in enrolment in private universities and nonuniversity institutions. It also led to the closure of programs and even universities and the virtual interruption of scarce research activity, which strengthened the professional bias of the Argentinean university programs (Bekerman, 2009; Buchbinder & Marquina, 2008). To this was added a shortage of postgraduate training, and a general lack of both a minimum base for research activities and science and technology policy instruments that would sustain an environment favorable for scientific and technological development (Hurtado, 2010; Vessuri, 2007).

In this context, psychology degrees were part of the program of “de-ideologization” and political persecution by the military regime. The kidnapping, torture, and disappearance of psychologists were accompanied by a withdrawal to private activities that excluded public forums, such as academic ones. University professors were dismissed and expelled, enrollment of new students in various psychology programs was cancelled, and some programs such as those in Mar del Plata and La Plata were eventually “closed”. According to several primary accounts, the government coordinated an “emptying out” of the programs which proved to be successful (García, 1983).

Democratic Transition and Institutional Normalization of Psychology in the Context of the Crises and Changes in Argentinian Higher Education (1984–2009)

As we have analyzed, the last dictatorship intervened and strongly affected the institutional order of public space, especially that of higher education institutions. With the progressive decline of the dictatorship, especially after the Falklands War in 1982, the various university sectors (especially the students) began to regain public spaces and organize demonstrations, gaining visibility and resuming a process that had been restrained in 1976.

Thus, once the dictatorship ended and democracy was recovered in 1983, a gradual process of normalization of public life in its various forms was undertaken. After the recovery of democracy, enrolment in higher university education expanded significantly. In the advanced stages of democracy, a new higher education law was passed that established accreditation and certification processes for university programs and established incentives for scientific productivity for university professors (Rodríguez-Gómez, 2003).

However, this occurred in a context of structural national economic changes in response to regional crises. During the 1980s, Latin America witnessed a period of low development economies, framed by international crises such as the world oil crisis (Martínez-Boom, 2004), which led, among other things, to a scarcity of budgetary resources in almost all areas of government. This led to the original model of modernization being replaced by another one that, under the same concept, prioritized the market, competitiveness, financial capital, and economic deregulation. Argentina was paradigmatic of this process during the 1990s.

These changes spilled over both the country's social structure and dynamics and the public system of education, science, and technology. At the educational level, for example, the regional crises were interpreted by various university and government agents as indicating the need for structural reforms, such as the reduction of public investment, the lowering of wages, the liberalization of the economy, and the privatization of public enterprises (García-Teske, 2008). This resulted in adjustment policies, where education was redefined as a service or a merchandise, favoring the emergence of private higher education institutions (García-Teske, 2008).

As a result, the education system was seen as a mechanism for personal and collective investment, in the context of the macrocultural changes introduced by the process of globalization. Hence, issues related to the educational system were perceived as problems in the context of economic debates, and in the terms of profitability, supply and demand. The approval of the Higher Education Law 24521 in 1995 was a milestone in the advance of the regulatory centralization of the state. Internally, the Law was a reaction to some of the arguments that circulated during the 1980s and 1990s, most of which lacked contrastable empirical data, regarding the supposed deterioration in the quality and level of training of graduates, the low performance in terms of the percentage of graduates and the real length of academic programs, the scarce development of self-sustainable institutions, and the poor articulation between universities and the demands of the productive sector, among others.

Both the new law itself and the National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU by its Spanish acronym), which the same law created caused conflicts and resistance among university actors, particularly in students (represented mainly by the student centers of public universities) and to a lesser extent in professors. The new law introduced mandatory accreditation processes for those undergraduate programs which trained professionals "whose practice could compromise the public interest by directly endangering the health, safety, rights, property or education of the inhabitants" (República Argentina, 1995, p. 3). These undergraduate programs were to be accredited by CONEAU and had to meet three requirements established by the Ministry of Education: (a) a minimum number of class hours; (b) a basic curricular set of contents; and (c) a basic track of practical training (República Argentina, 1995). A very large number of students and professors rejected the new law because they considered that the evaluation and accreditation processes answered to standards that came from outside the own university and thus violated university autonomy. Such a criticism was countered by official statements which argued that the universities still had broad powers such as dictating

their own legal frameworks, defining their governing bodies, creating careers, establishing new programs and formulating and developing curricula (Sanchez-Martinez, 2002). Within this framework, new mechanisms were introduced for evaluation and accreditation purposes. Once again these mechanisms, which involved institutional evaluations, the accreditation of undergraduate and graduate programs, the formulation of new title regimes, and a general attempt to establish a 'culture of evaluation' in the Argentinian university, were heavily derided by students and professors alike.

Since the early 1990s Argentinian and Latin American psychologists have established regional forums to discuss university-related issues, including undergraduate training and eventual accreditation of programs. A clear example were the Integrative Meetings of Mercosur Psychologists, held between 1994 and 2001 in several countries of the Southern Cone (Di Doménico, 1999). Among other things, these forums declared the need to collectively review psychology undergraduate programs and eventually submit them to some kind of "quality control" process, especially in the context of the poor conditions of Argentinian university psychology education by the late 1980s. At the same time, the evaluation and accreditation of programs by the State was seen as a way of confronting a phenomenon typical of the neoliberal policies of Argentina in the 1990s: the proliferation of programs in private universities, with the ensuing "diaspora of academic degrees" (Molina, 2004). Thus, the evaluation of programs within the framework of the Law of 1995 was seen as a viable strategy to address these issues.

Between 2001 and 2003, three national bodies requested psychology to be included in the list of careers to be evaluated and accredited by the State under the legal system described above (Di Doménico & Piacente, 2003; Klappenbach, 2003). These bodies were the Federación de Psicólogos de la República Argentina (the Federation of Psychologists of the Argentinian Republic, FePRA), the Asociación de Unidades Académicas de Psicología (the Association of Psychology Academic Departments, AUAPsi) which brought together representatives of the psychology programs at public universities, and the Unidad de Vinculación Académica de Psicología de Universidades de Gestión Privada (the Vinculation Unit for Psychology at Private Universities, UVAPsi). In accordance with the law, the Council of Universities recommended the inclusion of psychology programs among those regulated by the State, and in 2004 the Ministry of Education emitted the respective resolution (Ministerio de Educación and Ciencia y Tecnología, 2004). This opened a new process in which FePRA, AUAPsi, and UVAPsi worked out the standards and criteria for the evaluation of programs through the mechanisms stipulated by the Higher Education Law; standards which were finally approved by the Ministry of Education in 2009 (Ministerio de Educación, 2009).

Challenges During the New Millennium: Accreditation of Psychology Programs and the Mental Health Field Issue (2009-2020)

In making a critical assessment of more than three decades of science policy in the region, by the turn of the millennium it was admitted that these policies had led to a disconnection between scientific and technological institutions on the one hand and the rest of the social sectors on the other. It was also argued that such policy had led to the disarticulation between science and technology policies and other public policies, and to “a higher education system that provides a training which is not linked to the professional profiles emerging from the accelerated scientific and technological change” (Albornoz, 2002, p. 15). Such disconnection was further reflected by a change in the ethos of the university as an institution, which slowly abandoned its focus on controversy, communication, and scholarly criticism of knowledge (Mollis, 2006).

The new millennium finds Argentinian psychology facing numerous challenges. The high dynamism of these challenges, as well as our temporal proximity to this period and the scarce literature on the topic, forces us to be cautious. We will then focus on two questions that we believe are central to recent and contemporary Argentinian psychology.

Firstly, the accreditation processes were launched around 2009, after 6 years of joint work between public and private psychology associations in designing the evaluation processes' standards and criteria. On the one hand, these processes have continued to arouse deep resistance among students and professors, which criticize the external imposition of an evaluation that would violate university autonomy. Students and professors often identify evaluation processes with foreign interventions in the national territory (Fierro, 2018). In some cases, this resistance has led to systematic student mobilizations and even to the peaceful takeover of university buildings in the context of protests against the law of higher education and the CONEAU as a whole. On the other hand, by August 2014, only 28 of the 70 psychology courses had been accredited, and of these 28, only 6 universities had been accredited for 6 years (Klappenbach, 2015). Two years later, by March 2017, 52 psychology degrees had been accredited by CONEAU (Piñeda & Klappenbach, 2018). This implies that numerous careers have been accredited with the minimum requirements stipulated by law, and through evaluations that have clearly recognized numerous deficiencies and weaknesses amidst the current status of local psychology education. Finally, this ties in with the fact that the curricular revisions prompted by these negative assessments and which had been undertaken at the beginning of the 2010s, do not seem to have greatly modified the chronic characteristics of psychology education in the country. This is especially true in regards to the scarce updating of the programs, their professional emphasis, and the monotheoretical predominance of psychoanalysis (Di Doménico & Piacente, 2011; Vázquez-Ferrero, 2016).

Secondly, there has been a revitalization of the debate on the role of the psychologist in the field of mental health. Although the clinical field has historically attracted most vocations among graduates, the last two decades have seen a shift in the issue, in part due to the significant legal and human rights changes that have taken place at the national level. In fact, if in the 1960s and 1970s psychologists tried to practice their profession in the field of mental health, understood as a sub-field of medicine, since the turn of the millennium psychologists have begun to claim a place in mental health system understood as a basic and fundamental right of citizenship. This has also found its foundation in the new National Mental Health Law passed in 2012, which situates the issue of human rights as one of the fundamental pillars in the field of mental health.

A detailed analysis of the Law exceeds this space. Suffice it to say that, among other things, the Law defines mental health as a basic right of citizens, which extends the scope of action and the relevance of areas and disciplines such as psychology, which affect the psychological and behavioral well-being of individuals. At the same time, the Law promotes alternative forms of treatment to psychiatric hospitalization, thus favoring the tasks that psychologists perform in comparison to their psychiatric colleagues. Finally, the Law favors interdisciplinary work and allows psychologists to hold positions of leadership and management of mental health services and institutions.

This has implied an important material and symbolic “advance” in psychologists’ claims for professional autonomy and expert intervention. However, the impact of the Law and the disciplinary debates it favored once again place the clinical field at the center of the scene. Thus, in line with Argentina’s historical overdependence on clinical psychology, the contemporary focus on the National Mental Health Law further relegates other equally relevant and pressing issues, such as the structural weakness of scientific research in psychology in Argentina and the fragile scientific status of undergraduate and graduate psychology education in general.

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