

# Chapter 3

## The Long Road to the Profession of Psychologist



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**Abstract** Professional concerns have been key in Latin American psychology for several decades. This chapter describes and analyzes the training of psychologists in different countries, their conceptual foundation, the social needs and the developments of the discipline that led to the creation of the career of psychologist, the insertion of the profession in society, and other related matters.

### The Rise of the Profession of Psychologist in Latin America

In his interesting autobiography, Aroldo Rodrigues, a renowned social psychologist from Brazil, makes two statements that may be a good starting point for this chapter. First when referring to his beginnings as a university student in 1952:

“Fifty-four years ago, when I began a four-year course in psychology in Brazil, psychology as a discipline and as a profession was almost nonexistent there. There was no degree in psychology, the profession was not recognized by law, vocational guidance and counseling were provided by educators, and psychotherapy was exclusively practiced by psychiatrists.” (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 105)

Later, he refers to his return to Brazil after having obtained his doctorate from UCLA in the United States by declaring: “Brazilian psychologists were not interested in theory and methodology, but rather in the applications of psychology to improve people’s condition and to solve their social problems” (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 122).

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In fact, some statements of the first quotation could be relativized. At that time, Chile, Colombia, and Guatemala had already organized psychology programs. Nevertheless, even in those countries, the psychology degree had only been created in 1946 and later, and its organization status was still getting underway.

Regarding his second assertion, the situation can be generalized to Latin America as a whole. More than 30 years ago, a classic text pointed out precisely: “In Latin America, psychology places special emphasis on practical problems and assigns great importance to social relevance” (Ardila, 1986, p. 176).

In short, both statements point toward two central factors for the studies on the professionalization of psychology in Latin America. First, the professionalization is a phenomenon that occurred around 1950 and after, a process that in fact also happened in several European countries. And second, the interest in psychology is basically the pursuit of an *applied psychology with social relevance*.

Indeed, as a synthesis of the features of psychology in Latin America, its dependent character has been pointed out, with the human being as the main theme and the importance of applied psychology in particular, with social relevance and political commitment, among other elements (Alarcón, 2002; Ardila, 2004a). For instance, the social psychology of Martin-Baró in El Salvador and also the utopia of *Walden Three* (Ardila, 1979) show the scope to which a behavioral science intertwined with a socialist, humanistic, and behavioral philosophy can aspire with the possibility of being capable of building a society away from the great miseries evidenced by contemporary capitalism, shunning poverty, unemployment, consumerism, hatred, and competition (Ardila, 2004a, 2004b; Dorna, 2003; Klappenbach, 2003).

From the theoretical and technical points of view in the field of psychology, applied psychology would recognize its debt to the work of Piéron, author of the famous *Treaty of Applied Psychology*, and that of Münsterberg. Indeed, at Harvard University and from the archetype of experimental laboratory psychology, Münsterberg would try to classify workers, taking into account the *skills* required. Münsterberg was awarded a doctorate in Leipzig, with Wundt, although he also graduated in medicine in Heidelberg. From 1888 he worked at the University of Freiburg, first as *privatdozent* and from 1891 as assistant professor. In 1892, William James would invite him to Harvard, to direct the Psychology Laboratory.

If Wundt had been concerned to explain to Münsterberg about the errors of sensory perception that occurred during the learning process, after Münsterberg’s move to the United States, he would have been interested in developing an applied psychology directed to the prediction in real situations of certain reactions observed in the laboratory. In this sense, in the relocation from Germany to the United States, psychology would lose its former proximity to philosophy and the problem of knowledge. Instead, it would approach the world of work, education, and health. Psychology abandoned the *celestial space* assigned to science and philosophy and fell into encounters dominated by technology (Samelson, 1977). It distanced itself from the *mandarin* society of academics and university professors and was oriented to the conglomerate of bureaucrats, financiers, and businessmen (Danziger, 1979).

However, it is necessary to emphasize that the applications of psychology, and, with it, the emergence of the psychologist’s profession in Latin America, were not

totally the same as what happened in North America. In the United States, the testing carried out by Lewis Terman, and especially the massive use of the tests during the First World War, impacted society in general. When the United States entered the war in 1917, Robert Yerkes, to whom the federal government had entrusted the task of organizing psychological evaluations of officers and recruits, formed a working group, a team which was able to administer mental tests to more than 1,750,000 people:

“For Robert M. Yerkes (1876-1956), the leader of the team of psychologists who tested 1.7 million United States army recruits, the Great War was a fabulous opportunity to show the value of psychology in the management of human resources” (Reed, 1990, p. 76).

The First World War and the war activities of the psychologists, especially the intelligence testing of the US Army in this war, had given Terman and his colleagues the chance to connect scientific psychology to life, to bring “psychology down from the clouds and [make] it useful to men” (Samelson, 1977, p. 276). In any case, the public acceptance of the psychologist in American society was a process that began in the First World War although it would mature in the following decades. Already in 1922, James McKeen Cattell could express that psychology had been placed on the discipline map in the United States (Samelson, 1979).

Conversely, in Latin America, psychology as a profession would emerge after the Second World War even though psychology as a science expanded here in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also in Europe, applied psychology, initially known as psychotechnics, arose due to the efforts of William Stern and Édouard Claparède and was consolidated after the Second World War (Lunt, Peiró, Poortinga, & Roe, 2015).

Addressing psychology as a profession faces the first challenge, which is the lack of consensus about the concept of the term *profession* (Freidson, 2001). The constitution of the professions is generated from society’s demands in the intertwining of certain technical and specialized knowledge. On the one hand, professionals are part of a sector of society with appropriate and specialized knowledge. As a result, they have been linked to the state bureaucracy, and in fact on numerous occasions, they are part of the superior cadres that professionally and technically administer the state (Frederic, Graciano, & Soprano, 2010) or even work in private companies (Rodríguez & Guillén, 1992). However, in the prototypical exercise, professionals are not part of the state bureaucracy or private administration, but rather they practice their profession independently. They do not receive salaries, rather *fees* (“honorarium”) because of the “honorable connotation that the social role that is being performed has for the community as a whole” (Cultraro, 2010, p. 143). On the other hand, in some countries belonging to a university profession meant guaranteeing a comfortable income and access to the elite groups of society (Adamovsky, 2011).

Despite these difficulties, the use of the word *profession* to designate an occupation based on a university degree is widespread and subject to a heterogeneous set of regulations that come from the peers themselves, from the state (national, provincial, or municipal), and even from supranational entities (European Parliament, Petitions Committee, 2002). In the case of the psychologist’s profession, it has been

subject to different types of regulations since its very origins (Klappenbach, 2000; Viar, 2002). These regulations have been manifested nonetheless in resolutions related to the university education itself and in laws of professional and ethical practices (Ardila, 2004b, 2011).

Of course, practices related to psychology had existed before the profession as such and prior to the formalization of psychology programs. In the past, such practices were in the hands of physicians, educators, lawyers, and even priests. What was modified, then, after the end of the Second World War, was the appearance of a new professional figure: the psychologist who had obtained his/her degree strictly in psychology schools.

## Psychology Programs from Their Origins to the Present Day

The university education of professional psychologists begins toward the middle of the twentieth century in most Latin American countries (Alarcón, 2002; Arias, 2011; Ardila, 1986; Gallegos & Berra, 2015; Klappenbach & Pavesi, 1994; Torre, 1995). However, since the 1930s there have been some attempts to formalize the professional education in psychology, such as the proposal promoted by the Pole Waclaw Radecki in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In fact Radecki, who was hired to head the Experimental Psychology Laboratory of the *Colônia de Psicopatas* (Colony of Psychopaths) of Engenho de Dentro in 1923, was responsible for the transformation of this laboratory into the Psychology Institute from which he made the proposal of initiating the training of psychologists through specialized courses. Unfortunately the course that started in 1932 only lasted a few months, since it was canceled due to various political-institutional problems that ended with the departure of Radecki himself (Centofanti, 1982; Centofanti & Jacó-Vilela, 2007; Domingues, 2007).

A Masters in Psychological Sciences was implemented in Mexico in 1938 in order to provide postgraduate studies for different professionals interested in the psychological discipline. It was developed within the framework of the School of Philosophy and Letters of the National University of Mexico and was the immediate predecessor of the first university education program in psychology at the undergraduate level. In 1945 the former postgraduate psychological specialization was reorganized as a Masters in Psychology, and 2 years later in 1947, the PhD in Philosophy was also awarded, with a distinction in psychology. In the mid-1950s, the School of Philosophy and Letters was restructured academically, giving way to the constitution of the Psychology College, from which the Doctorate in Psychology was formalized in 1956, and a few years later, the first psychology degree was organized at the undergraduate level, beginning in 1959 (Valderrama, 2004).

A similar situation to that of Mexico is noted in the history of psychology training in Puerto Rico beginning in the 1930s, when the specialization of psychology was established as a possible orientation within a more general formation in the educational and social fields within the framework of the University of Puerto Rico. Undoubtedly the geographical proximity with the United States and the background

of diplomatic relations as a free and associated state facilitated that the psychologists' training followed the US development very closely. For that matter, all the debates related to the specialized psychologist education in the United States, which were most fervent in the mid-1940s, were an essential condition for postgraduate training to acquire a relevant role, given that the graduate degree is considered as an enabling requirement to practice the profession (Rivera & Maldonado, 2000); this is a situation that marks a clear difference with the rest of the Latin American countries where the lack of a graduate degree did not represent a limitation for the professional practice. In this regard, it is not by chance that the formation of the Puerto Rico Psychological Association had taken place in 1954, which highlights the professionalized tendency of psychology on the island for those years, in addition to the existence of Puerto Rican professional psychologists who graduated in the United States.

Until then, in most of the countries of the region, psychology was practiced by different professionals such as physicians, lawyers, pedagogues, philosophers, sociologists, etc. These professionals were responsible for accomplishing important psychological activities, both in the field of psychology teaching and in the areas of research and application of psychological knowledge. Consequently, it is not unexpected, especially for the Mexican case, that postgraduate training preceded university undergraduate studies. With the creation of *psychology training programs at the undergraduate level*, a new chapter in the history of psychology in Latin America begins, specifically the history related to the psychologist's *profession*.

The first training programs in psychology were organized within the schools of philosophy, letters, education, or humanities, which evidenced the foundational bias linked to the field of social and human sciences. In several cases, their organization was detached from the activities that were carried out in preexisting psychology institutes, mainly related to psychotechnics, psychological counseling, and professional selection. Logically, the professors in charge of teaching the subjects came from different professional fields, except for a few who already had a specialization in psychology in Europe or the United States. In Table 3.1 one can see the first psychology training programs in the different countries of Latin America.

One of the first undergraduate curricula in psychology was organized at the University of Chile, in 1947, as a special course in psychology. Although it was officially approved in 1946, the activities began 1 year later, within the jurisdiction of the Institute of Psychology, belonging to the Department of Psychology of the then School of Philosophy and Education. Carlos Nassar, Aturo Piga, and Abelardo Iturriaga were some of the pioneers of that first training program in psychology (Parra, 2015). The training included both basic and applied content and covered the four most traditional areas of psychology: educational, clinical, work, and social. A peculiar fact was that during the first years of the program, several students came from other countries such as Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela, Honduras, and Peru (Salas, 2014).

The organization of psychology training in Colombia was initiated by Mercedes Rodrigo, a Spanish emigrant who was hired to make the selection of incoming students to the National University of Colombia starting in 1939. Within the same university, the Psychotechnics Section was created, where Rodrigo exercised the

**Table 3.1** First psychology training program in each country of Latin America

Institution	Country	Year
University of Chile	Chile	1947
National University of Colombia	Colombia	1948
University of San Carlos of Guatemala	Guatemala	1950
Saint Thomas Catholic University of Villanueva	Cuba	1950
Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	1953
University of Litoral (Rosario)	Argentina	1954
National University Mayor of San Marcos	Peru	1955
University of the Republic (Montevideo)	Uruguay	1956
Central University of Venezuela	Venezuela	1956
University of El Salvador	El Salvador	1956
National Autonomous University of Mexico	Mexico	1959
National Autonomous University of Honduras	Honduras	1962
State University of Guayaquil	Ecuador	1963
Catholic University Our Lady of Assumption	Paraguay	1963
University of Panama	Panamá	1965
University of Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	1966
Autonomous University of Dominican Republic	Dominican Republic	1967
National Autonomous University of Nicaragua	Nicaragua	1969
Bolivian Catholic University	Bolivia	1971
University of Costa Rica	Costa Rica	1972
University of Haiti	Haiti	1974

psychological work for which she was hired until 1947 when this Section was transformed into the Institute of Applied Psychology, to formally start teaching professional psychology. The Institute began operating in 1948, and the first students enrolled the following year, concluding their studies and getting their degree in 1952. The institute activities included diverse sections as the study of the child, the examination of university candidates, psychological research, the medical-psychological clinic, and those related to psychology instruction (Ardila, 2013).

In Guatemala, the first training program in psychology was at the San Carlos University of Guatemala, starting in 1950, through the activities that had been fostered by the Spanish psychiatrist Antonio Román Durán, first with the teaching of psychology in the School of Humanities beginning in 1946. After that, he helped with the organization of the Institute of Psychology and Psychological Research in 1947, and finally he proposed to create the Psychology Department in 1949 (Anonymous, 1949; the San Carlos University of Guatemala, 1952). The first curriculum that began in 1950 was planned for 8 semesters and included more than 40 subjects, a foreign language, and a complementary semester for the preparation of a final thesis (Leal Feddek et al., 1975).

The training of psychologists in Cuba had been planned in the early 1950s, at the Catholic University of Santo Tomas de Villanueva and a few years later at the José Martí University (Díaz, 1955). However, the effects of the Cuban Revolution after 1959 triggered an important break with preexisting psychological activities to give

way to a new organization of academic and professional activities on the island. Then, the training in psychology is stabilized years after the Cuban Revolution, when a new curriculum is instituted at the University of Havana, a situation that does not discredit the previous history which was already being forged toward the professionalization of psychology (Gallegos, 2017). Anyway, for Cuban psychology, the formal beginning of the profession of the psychologist begins in 1962 after the revolutionary process, in line with a new sociopolitical and economic organization in the country and based on renewed university objectives, when a revamped psychological training curriculum is put into operation on the island (González, 2000; School of Psychology, 1964; Torre & Calviño, 2000).

Psychology in Argentina was professionalized in the city of Rosario in 1954, when the creation of the Psychology Program was approved within the domain of the School of Philosophy and Letters at the Litoral University. It began to function in 1955, although it was interrupted in September of that same year, to restart definitively with a new curriculum and new professors in 1956 (Ascolani, 1988; Gallegos & Berra, 2016; Gentile, 2003; Klappenbach, 2015). Around the same time, the professional training of psychologists in Peru began when the Psychology Section was organized in 1955. This section was part of the Philosophy and Psychology Institute, which belonged to the School of Letters at the San Marcos National University. Training included studies of general knowledge, several specialized subjects, and preprofessional practices (Alarcón, 2000).

Meanwhile in Uruguay, the transformation of psychology into a profession takes place in 1956 within the Department of Humanities and Sciences at the University of the Republic when a definitive psychology plan is approved, after several failed attempts from the previous decade. In the early 1950s, the Argentinean Horacio Rimoldi was hired to develop diverse psychological research and to design the core of a psychology curriculum, a syllabus however which after several years failed to materialize. Still, outside the university environment, there was already underway a kind of professional psychology training through the efforts made by Waclaw Radecki at the Center for Psychological Studies, founded in 1945. Several courses began to be taught there in 1946 specializing in different areas of psychology and thus giving shape to the Professional School of Psychology, which would then become the Free Psychology School in 1951 (Anonymous, 1950). In a way, it was the continuity of the unfinished project initiated in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s, but Radecki's untimely death in 1953 ended up weakening the entire training project (Pérez Gambini, 1999; Tuana, 1980).

In the decade of the 1950s, several psychology curricula were created in the region. In El Salvador, the establishment of the Psychology Department was approved in 1956, within the School of Humanities of the El Salvador University, and from there the psychology training in that country was institutionalized (Calderón, 2006). Coincidentally, in that same year, the Psychology Section in the School of Philosophy and Letters at the Central University of Venezuela began activities, thus beginning the preparation of Venezuelan psychologists in 1956 (Del Olmo, 1966). And in Mexico, although there had already been a postgraduate psychology program since the 1940s, it was not until the end of the following decade that the vocational training



curriculum began. As a matter of fact, during the 1940s and 1950s, several psychology specialists graduated, with theses referring to various topics such as psychological philosophy, psychophysiology, psychotechnics, professional guidance, etc. Even though one could consider that postgraduate training as an enabling process for the professional practice of psychology there, especially if one takes into account that most of the theses supported were highly psychological, the Mexican psychologists themselves consider the beginning of professional training only when the undergraduate major was inaugurated in 1959, within the Psychology College of the School of Philosophy and Letters (Valderrama, 2004).

As indicated before, professional training in psychology in Brazil was conceived at the beginning of the 1930s, but its real constitution as a university program began in the 1950s. The first academic study got underway at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in the year 1953 (Mancebo, 1999). In the same year, efforts were made to complete a training program in psychology at the University of São Paulo, but it was only officially approved in 1957, although academic activities began the following year (Ramozzi-Chiarottino, 2001). A very important fact when assessing the psychologist's profession in Brazil is the official recognition obtained in 1962 for the entire national territory. Despite the fact that psychologists had been trained since the previous decade, after a long and intense debate, the profession is legalized, and a minimum curriculum is established to regulate psychology training, a situation that places Brazil as one of the first countries of America and the world to achieve official recognition of psychology as a profession (Angelini, 1964/1965).

During the 1960s and 1970s, the historical process of opening training programs in psychology throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region was consolidated. As far as information is available, one of the first teaching programs in psychology was organized in Ecuador at the State University of Guayaquil in 1963 (Ardila, 1986). Also, in the same year in Paraguay, the first psychology degree was implemented at the School of Philosophy and Human Sciences at the Catholic University of Our Lady of the Assumption (Britos, 1999; García, 2003). In Honduras, the creation of the undergraduate degree in General Psychology was approved in 1961, and activities began in 1962 at the University Center for General Studies of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (Donaire, 2002).

Bearing in mind the importance given to the postgraduate degree in Puerto Rico in order to practice the psychology profession, several authors coincide in pointing out that the academic formation was definitively legitimized from the year 1966, when a master's degree was formalized at the University of Puerto Rico, and another master's degree offered the following year at the Psychological Institute of Puerto Rico, later renamed Carlos Albizu University (Boulon & Roca de Torres, 2016; Roca de Torres, 1999). The beginning of psychology training in Costa Rica takes place in 1966, when a baccalaureate (undergraduate) shared with other disciplines is instituted, but the professional character of psychology will come with the establishment of the Degree in Psychology, in 1972, within the framework of the Human Sciences School at the University of Costa Rica (Campos, Pérez, & Rosabal, 1990; Cordero, Dormond, & Flores, 2003; Thomas, 1975). Likewise, the formation of the



Dominican psychologist was instituted with the creation of the Psychology Department in the Humanities School of the Autonomous University of the Dominican Republic, in 1967 (Rodríguez, 2000; Zaiter, 2013).

In Nicaragua, psychology began in 1969 as a special academic minor within the undergraduate Science of Education program, but it was quickly transformed into a Psychology Degree with full autonomy, starting in 1971 within the realm of the Humanities School at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua. It should be remembered that a few years earlier, the Central American University of Nicaragua had organized a Psycho-pedagogical program, which later evolved into an undergraduate Psychology degree (Whitford, 1985). Likewise, in Bolivia, the Psychology Department of the Bolivian Catholic University was founded in 1971, thus beginning the academic training of psychologists in that country (Aguilar, 1983). Finally, the formation of psychologists in Haiti began in 1974 at the University of Haiti (Ardila, 1986).

In general, it is possible to affirm that the foundation of psychology programs happened in the most important Latin American population areas, where the progressive modernization of societies and the consequent industrial development added to the extensive psychological tradition and the growing demands of higher education and created favorable conditions for the implementation of a new profession. However, the organization of new studies in psychology was so decisive that its impact was reflected in the creation of programs in many smaller countries, which shows a quite heterogeneous genesis in the foundation of the first psychology training programs in the region. The majority of the psychology studies were organized in the capitals of the countries, except in specific cases where they were organized outside the central orbit. A global characteristic refers to the organization of programs within the most important universities of the respective countries, generally of a public and state nature. It has also been found that in many cases the first initiatives arose in private and religious institutions, as in Brazil, Cuba, Paraguay, and Bolivia.

It has been widely documented that from the 1960s and 1970s, a progressive institutional consolidation of psychology in Latin America began, both in its academic milieu, with the exponential creation of new psychology training programs in the most important cities of the countries, and in its professional sphere, with the creation of professional associations, the establishment of ethical and deontological norms, and the enacting of professional laws that enable the certified practice of the psychologist, with the consequent social recognition of the psychological profession.

More recently, the emergence of new universities from the 1990s throughout the continent precipitated the organization of many new psychology programs, a phenomenon that is not only Latin American. However, it has been pointed out that the modern university had been constituted along with the nation-states, but with the process of globalization, and with it the decline of nation-states, the *raison d'être* of universities was reconsidered (Kwiek, 2000). In Latin America, the expansion and organization of new universities responded partly to the growth of university enrollment that reached nearly 30% of the population in countries such as Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay (Holm-Nielsen, Thorn, Brunner, & Balán, 2005).

**Table 3.2** Enrollment in higher education (2003–2011) ECLAC data

Country	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Argentina	64.9	65.4	64.0	67.1	66.7	68.7	71.3	74.8	78.6
Belize	16.0	15.5	16.0	17.0	18.2	19.3	22.9	22.6	22.9
Bolivia	39.6	39.6	...	...	37.7	...	...	...	...
Chile	42.7	42.7	47.7	46.5	52.1	54.9	59.0	65.9	70.5
Colombia	...	27.5	29.9	31.9	33.0	35.4	37.0	39.0	42.7
Costa Rica	...	25.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	44.5
Cuba	32.6	53.5	61.9	86.2	89.2	91.2	91.0	95.0	80.3
Ecuador	...	...	...	...	...	38.9	...	...	...
El Salvador	20.7	21.1	21.2	21.2	22.0	22.6	23.0	23.4	24.5
Guatemala	...	...	...	...	17.9	...	...	...	...
Honduras	17.0	17.1	...	...	...	18.8	...	20.6	...
Mexico	21.9	22.8	23.3	23.8	24.4	25.1	25.7	26.7	27.7
Nicaragua	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Panama	44.0	43.1	41.9	42.9	43.0	43.1	43.0	43.9	41.8
Paraguay	24.5	24.8	25.4	...	28.7	34.0	36.6	34.5	...
Peru	31.5	33.3	33.3	34.6	...	...	...	40.6	...
Puerto Rico	...	...	...	...	71.7	77.9	81.3	86.3	86.5
Uruguay	41.1	42.4	45.3	46.0	63.7	64.6	63.2	63.2	...
Venezuela	39.6	41.5	...	...	...	78.1	77.9	...	...
Latin America and Caribbean	27.5	28.9	30.6	33.3	35.2	38.1	39.2	40.9	42.3

Source: ECLAC (2015). *Statistical Yearbook of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Downloaded from [http://interwp.cepal.org/anuario\\_estadistico/anuario\\_2015/es/index.asp](http://interwp.cepal.org/anuario_estadistico/anuario_2015/es/index.asp)

ECLAC (*United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean* (Table 3.2)) has been able to verify this increment in enrollment between 2003 and 2011. Even though the situation is very uneven throughout the region, in countries such as Argentina, Cuba, Chile, and Puerto Rico, between 70 and 86% of the population that finishes the secondary studies has access to university education (ECLAC, 2015).

The situation is also irregular in terms of students attending public or private universities. In 2002, in countries such as Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, between 40 and 75% of university students attended private universities. While in Argentina, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Ecuador, that percentage ranged from 20 to 30%; in Bolivia, Panama, and Uruguay, it was less than 10%; and in Cuba everyone enrolled attended public universities (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2005). According to data from the “Information System of Educational Trends in Latin America (SITEAL), a UNESCO program, while in Argentina, Honduras, and Mexico in 2006, more than 70% of students in the higher education system attended public universities, in Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, this proportion is practically inverted (Pereyra, 2008) (Table 3.3). On the one hand, the phenomenon has precipitated a struggle between greater democratization for access to higher education and knowledge and on the other hand a significant “marketization” of higher education (Juarros & Naidorf, 2007).

**Table 3.3** Distribution of enrollment in public and private higher education in 12 countries of Latin America (Urban areas) 2006

Country	Public	Private
Argentina	77.2	22.8
Bolivia	64.8	35.2
Brazil	25.8	74.2
Colombia	34.9	65.1
Chile	0.0 ( <i>sic</i> )	100.00
Ecuador	56.7	43.3
El Salvador	36.6	63.4
Guatemala	53.4	46.6
Honduras	75.5	24.5
Mexico	70.3	29.7
Nicaragua	33.6	66.4
Paraguay	41.2	58.8
Total	45.4	54.6

Source: SITEAL, reproduced in Pereyra, 2008

How has this reality affected the psychology programs? Even though it is not possible to know the exact percentage of studies or psychology programs in the new universities, the expansion of the higher education system in the region has been observed in the particular case of psychology programs:

“These processes, typical of Latin American institutions but not foreign to those of the developed countries, promoted the increase and diversification of the offer facing the enrollment increase, in contexts of progressive economic adjustment” (di Doménico & Piacente, 2003, p. 35).

“In the last twenty years, the cadre of psychologists in the region has been multiplying exponentially. In many countries the number of universities that teach undergraduate studies greatly increased” (Fernández-Alvarez, 2003, p. 13).

It has been pointed out even in Peru that the “demand for pursuing a career in psychology has been increasing in recent years. The professional psychology program is included in the ranking of the most demanded area of study in the university system” (Zanabria-Moreno, 2015, p. 28).

Indeed, it has been verified that the increase in the number of psychology degrees in Latin America has been on an upward curve in recent decades. There recently were 396 programs in Brazil, although the latest data raise the figure to 475 (Jacó-Vilela, 2015). There are more than 290 in Mexico, 139 in Chile, and 127 in Colombia, totaling almost 1300 psychology programs in the region. It can be seen in Table 3.4 that the data come from studies that in many cases are already several years old. In that sense, as has already been confirmed in Brazil, it is possible to have still more psychology programs.

By the same token, there has been an equivalent growth of graduate studies. In almost all the countries of the region, there are well-established masters or doctoral programs, and many of them are accredited.

**Table 3.4** Current number of psychology programs

Country	Quantity of Degree Programs	Sources
Argentina	71	Klappenbach (2015)
Bolivia	27	Schulmeyer (2015)
Brazil	396	Lisboa and Gonçalves-Barbosa (2009)
Chile	139	Urzúa, Vera-Villaruel, Zuñiga, and Salas (2016)
Colombia	127	Observatory of Higher Education in Psychology in Colombia (2017)
Costa Rica	37	Villalobos-Pérez, Jungue, Monge-Salazar, and Vargas-Fallas (2015)
Cuba	3	R. Corral-Russo, personal communication, July 4, 2017
Ecuador	25	Balarezo and Velástegui (2014)
El Salvador	11	Government of El Salvador (2017)
Guatemala	11	Cárcamo-Duarte & Escobar-Martínez (2015)
Haiti	2	Ortiz-Torres (2013)
Honduras	3	Branney (2017)
Mexico	290	Valdez-Caraveo & Tamargo-Rivero (2015)
Nicaragua	11	Saballos-Ramírez (2017)
Panama	10	Matus (2011)
Paraguay	20	Coppari (2009)
Peru	45	Arias (2014)
Puerto Rico	32	Ortiz-Torres 2013
Dominican Republic	14	Rodríguez-Arias (2010); Zaiter (2013)
Uruguay	3	L. Leopold, personal communication, December 12, 2017
Venezuela	8	Canga & Yáber-Oltra (2015)
Total	1288	

The first reservation that these figures raise is whether there are sufficient trained professors for such a large number of programs, in addition to the adequate infrastructure. Concern about the *quality* of teaching is a recurring theme in the region even when the ambiguity of the concept is highlighted (Doherty, 2005) or even when it has been emphasized that “there is no consensus on the notion of *quality*” (Dias Sobrinho, 2006, p. 282). In the case of studies or psychology programs, the difficulty of defining what is meant by *quality* has also been observed: “The need to specify the definition of this term referring to psychological training in particular cannot be ignored .... The concept of *quality* is historical, and therefore ever changing” (di Doménico & Piacente, 2011, p. 8). And specifically:

“The continued enrollment growth in psychology through the offer of new training programs is a generalized phenomenon that becomes a problem when it is linked to the quality of the programs offered and the job incorporation of the new psychologists” (Moyano-Díaz & Ramos-Alvarado, 2013, p. 30).

In any case, the problem of university psychology education quality has generated a particular interest in the processes of self-evaluation and accreditation. It is

interesting that even from very different ideological, theoretical, and technical perspectives, evaluation and accreditation have appeared as one of the guarantees to meet that extraordinary increase of the institutions that award psychology diplomas. The renowned specialist from Brazil, Denise Leite, recognized at least two models of university evaluation. One of them followed a policy of *control* in the framework of neoliberal ideas; the other pursued a *counter-hegemonic* prototype tending to promote *democratic responsibility* (Leite, 2003).

In some countries the evaluation and accreditation processes are already very advanced. In Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba, the accreditation of degree programs is compulsory. In contrast, in Chile and Mexico, official approval processes are mandatory for medicine and pedagogy programs, but not for psychology. On the other hand, only Brazil and Cuba have established the obligatory nature for the postgraduate programs. And in Colombia, even though the accreditation is still voluntary, the evaluation and accreditation system has been consolidated, and the Colombian Association of Psychology Faculties (Ascofapsi) has generated an “Observatory of the Quality of Colombian Higher Education in Psychology” with the objective of obtaining reliable data to improve the training quality (see <http://observatorio.ascofapsi.org.co>).

## Professional Organizations

The growth of psychology programs throughout the region has produced at the same time a steady organization of national, regional, and international congresses, the creation of numerous scientific journals with good criteria of editorial quality, the publication of multiple psychological productions, and the emergence of specialized publishers in the discipline. All that professional headway has been parallel to the sustained financing—not without difficulty—of psychological research, the strengthening of postgraduate training, and the consolidation and diversification of research and professional psychology practice (Alarcón, 2002; Alonso & Eagly, 1999; Ardila, 1978, 1986; di Doménico & Vilanova, 1999; Gallegos, 2010, 2016; Rodríguez & Sánchez, 1999; Toro & Villegas, 2001; Torre, 1995; Vilanova & Di Doménico, 1999; Villegas, Marassi & Toro, 2003a, 2003b).

In the first half of the twentieth century, at a time of “psychology without psychologists,” the first psychology association in the region was the Argentine Society of Psychology, which was organized on November 27, 1908, by the impetus of the most outstanding representatives of psychology of the time: José Ingenieros, Horacio Piñero, Francisco de Veyga, and Víctor Mercante, among others. As has been highlighted from a gender perspective, that society was made up of “39 men and 1 woman,” alluding to Clotilde Guillén (Ostrovsky, 2008). The objective of that society was “the study of this science and the diffusion and practical application of its principles” (Sociedad de Psicología (Argentine Society of Psychology), 1909, p. 351).

The Society consisted of four sections: normal psychology, abnormal psychology, pedagogical psychology, and social psychology. Its purpose was exclusively *scientific*. The assumption has been put forward that “the objective has been to found a Psychology Academy” (Kohn Loncarica, 1973, p. 924).

Around 1913 that Society of Psychology essentially ceased to exist. However, in 1930, Enrique Mouchet reorganized it under the name of the Buenos Aires Society of Psychology. The aims of this society were to “strengthen ties, conduct scientific research, create a more conducive environment for the cultivation of psychology, promote scientific congresses of the specialty, publish a yearbook and organize public events to disseminate knowledge” (Buenos Aires Society of Psychology, 1933, p. 7).

Societies of this nature also existed in other countries of the region, although they were generally organized later (Ardila, 1986).

The organization of psychology programs significantly modified the type of associations, and then the organizations of psychologists began to become more common than those of psychology (Table 3.5).

Similar to national or local organizations, Latin American, inter-American, and Ibero-American societies were also organized. Of great importance here, it is worth mentioning the Interamerican Society of Psychology (SIP), formed in 1951; the Latin American Association of Analysis, Behavior Modification and Behavioral Cognitive Therapy (ALAMOC) organized in Colombia in 1975; and the Latin American Association of Social Psychology (ALAPSO) in that same year. Then, in the twenty-first century, other organizations emerged that grouped together associations and not just individual psychologists, for example, the Ibero-American Federation of Psychological Associations (FIAP) was organized in 2002 in Bogota, Colombia, during the III Ibero-American Psychology Congress, the first to be held in Latin America. Also, the Latin American Union of Psychological Entities (ULAPSI) came into existence in the same year in Puebla, Mexico. ULAPSI has made explicit its objectives of psychology’s social commitment in the Puebla Declaration: “For a united Latin America, for a psychology characterized by *social commitment with Latin American peoples*” (ULAPSI, 2002).

Both FIAP and ULAPSI have organized their own congresses. FIAP is holding its XI Ibero-American Congress in Cordoba, Argentina in 2018. ULAPSI organized its I Congress in Sao Paulo in 2005 and the last, the VI Congress in Buenos Aires, in 2016. In the case of SIP, it organized its I Congress in Santo Domingo in 1953 and, the most recent one, the 36th Congress in Merida, Mexico, in 2017.

Societies or networks have also been organized by psychology areas, such as the Ibero-Latin American Network of Political Psychology, the Iberoamerican Network of Researchers on History of Psychology (RIPeHP), the Latin American Association of Health Psychology (ALAPSA), the Latin American Association of Legal and Forensic Psychology (ALPJJF), the Ibero-American Network of National Associations of Legal and Forensic Psychology (RedPsiJu), among the main ones. All this undertaking reveals the consolidation and internationalization of psychology in the region.



**Table 3.5** Main psychology organizations in Latin America

Country	Main psychology organizations
Argentina	1. Federation of Argentinian Psychologists (FePRA) (1977)
	2. Argentine Association of Behavioral Sciences (AACC) (1987)*
	3. Association for the Advancement of Psychological Science (AACPS) (2005)
	4. Argentine Association for the Study of Psychodiagnostics (ADEIP) (1988)
	5. Argentine Association of Forensic Psychologists (APFRA) (1989)
	6. Association of Academic Organizations of Psychology (AUPSI) (1991)
	7. Organization of Academic Associations of Psychology of Private Universities (UVAPsi), (1999)
Bolivia	1. Collegium of Bolivian Psychologists, La Paz (1976)
	2. Collegium of Psychologists in Santa Cruz (2004)
	3. Collegium of Psychologists of Cochabamba (1995)
	4. Bolivian Society of Scientific Psychology (1983)
Brazil	1. Federal Council of Psychology (CFP) (1971, 1977)
	2. Brazilian Society of Psychology (SBP) (1971/1991)*
	3. National Association for Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology/ (ANPEPP) – (1983)
	4. Brazilian Association of Social Psychology (ABRAPSO) (1980)
	5. Brazilian Society of Work and Organizational Psychology (SBPOT) (2001)
Chile	1. Chilean Psychologists Association (1968)
	2. Chilean Society of Clinical Psychology (1979)
	3. Chilean Association of Legal and Forensic Psychology (2006)
	4. Network of Psychology Schools of the Consortium of Public Universities
	5. National Association of Educational Psychologists (ANPsE) (2008)
	6. Chilean Society of Scientific Psychology (SCP) (2011)
Colombia	1. Colombian Collegium of Psychologists (COLPSIC) (2006)*
	2. Colombian Society of Psychology (SOCOPSI) (1978)
	3. Colombian Association of Psychology Faculties (ASCOFAPSI) (1986)
Costa Rica	Association of Psychology Professionals in Costa Rica (CPPCR) (1978)
Cuba	1. Cuban Society of Psychology, (1981)*
	2. Cuban Society of Health Psychology (SCPS) (1972)
Ecuador	1. Ecuadorian Federation of Clinical Psychologists (1979)
	2. Ecuadorian Association of Psychologists (2000)
El Salvador	El Salvador Psychological Association (1964) Association of Psychologists of the East (2004) Association of Psychologists of the West (2013)
Guatemala	1. Guatemalan Psychological Association/(AGP) (1996)*
	2. Guatemala Collegium of Psychologists (2000)
Haití	Haitian Association of Psychology (AHPsy) (2009)
Honduras	Honduras Collegium of Psychologists (1982)

(continued)

**Table 3.5** (continued)

Country	Main psychology organizations
Mexico	1. Mexican Psychological Association (1950)*
	2. National Council for Teaching and Research in Psychology (1971)
	3. Mexican Society for Behavior Analysis (SMAC) (1976)
	4. National Collegium of Psychologists (CoNaPsi) (1976)
	5. Mexican Association of Social Psychology (AMEPSO) (1983)
Nicaragua	Nicaraguan Association for the Development of Psychology (ANDEPSI) (2016)
Panamá	Panamanian Association of Psychologists (1965)
Paraguay	Paraguayan Society of Psychology (SPPs) (1966)
Peru	1. Peruvian Society of Psychology (1954–1979)
	2. Psychologists' Collegium of Peru (1980)
Puerto Rico	Psychology Association of Puerto Rico (1954)
República Dominicana	1. Dominican Psychology Association (1976, 2000)
	2. Collegium of Dominican Psychologists (2001)
	3. Dominican Association of Psychology Students (ASOEPI) (1996)
Uruguay	Psychologists' Coordinator of Uruguay (1987)
Venezuela	1. The Federation of Venezuelan Psychologists (1978)
	2. Collegium of Venezuelan Psychologists (1961)
	3. Venezuelan Association of Social Psychology AVEPSO (1979)

\*International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS)

## Scientific Publications

The first psychology journal in the region, *Psychology Annals*, was published in Buenos Aires in 1908. It was put out by the Argentine Society of Psychology, and only three volumes were published, in 1909, 1911, and 1914. A similar fate befell the *Institute of Psychology Annals*, directed by Enrique Mouchet, which likewise came out merely three times, in 1935, 1938, and 1941.

Thirty years ago, an already classic text summarized the main difficulties of scientific journals in the region:

“The psychology journals of the continent have been founded without due planning and lack a correlation with one another. Most deal with topics of general psychology, which cover experimental, theoretical, professional and scientific subjects. There is a lot of overlap among them. Also, international standards for the selection and evaluation of articles are not always maintained. Their level is quite uneven ... The delay in deliveries is excessively long, the scientific level is not as lofty as desired and the distribution is very poor. Few Latin American journals reach *Psychological Abstracts*, and *Current Contents*. ... Added to this is the language problem: essays written in Spanish or Portuguese do not attract enough attention from the international scientific community, and for this reason many important research themes do not receive the treatment they deserve” (Ardila, 1986, p. 64).

Even though some of these limitations may remain, in the last 30 years, the situation has changed. Initiatives such as *Latindex*, *SciELO*, or *Redalyc* have focused precisely on the recovery of “lost science” and on improving the visibility of regional

publications. Furthermore, the *Open Access* initiative has also promoted greater visibility of journals in the region. And although Spanish and Portuguese editions continue to occupy a marginal place in *mainstream psychology*, many Latin American serial publications have incorporated international standards for the evaluation of articles, and the characteristics of digital publications have overcome many of the difficulties related to circulation and distribution gone through by printed bulletins.

Indeed, it can be verified that in *PsycINFO* (the database that has replaced *Psychological Abstracts*), it is possible to find 42 Latin American journals. Without counting the one on psychiatry and health, and another one that has its formal address in Spain (*Iberoamerican Journal of Diagnostic and Psychological Evaluation*), a total of 40 publications are indexed in the main psychology database. It can be seen in Table 3.6 that just over two thirds of the total (27 journals, 67.5%) were incorporated after the publication of Ruben Ardila's, 1986 book. The figure is still small, but the progress is significant compared to the situation of 30 years ago.

In addition, the evaluation criteria to admit publications on either *SciELO* or *Redalyc* platforms (or *Lilacs*) are compatible with the *PsycINFO* criteria and even those of *Web of Science* or *Scopus*.

Nevertheless, in almost all the countries of the region, there are publications that respond to international standards. Moreover, it has been recognized that one of the most prestigious international journals, the *Latin-American Journal of Psychology* (*Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología/RLP*), has been a model for other publications in relation to international standards (Gutiérrez, Pérez-Acosta, & Plata-Caviedes, 2009). Likewise, the *RLP* was one of the only two Latin American journals indexed in *Redalyc* that included more than 50% of articles in collaboration with authors from at least two different institutions (López-López, Silva, García-Cepero, Aguilar-Bustamante, & Aguado-López, 2011). The *RLP* has even achieved the highest "Internationality Index" of all the journals analyzed.

Taking into account the results of the analysis, the *Latin-American Psychology Journal* (*RLP*) is indeed a very international periodical. Moreover, it is the most international journal of all the publications that have been evaluated (Zych & Buela-Casal, 2009, p. 409).

However, this achievement does not guarantee the visibility of publications, and therefore a consequent "loss of knowledge" of Latin American scientific production may still occur (Gibbs, 1995). In 2010, only seven Latin American journals were indexed in the *Journal Science Reports* of the *Web of Science*, namely, *Psychology: Reflection and Criticism* (*Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*), *Argentine Journal of Clinical Psychology* (*Revista Argentina de Clínica Psicológica*), *Latin-American Journal of Psychology* (*Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*), *Latin American Journal of Fundamental Psychopathology* (*Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatología Fundamental*), *Mexican Journal of Psychology* (*Revista Mexicana de Psicología*), *Psychological Therapy* (*Terapia Psicológica*), and *Universitas Psychologica* (Olivas-Ávila, Musi-Lechuga, Quevedo-Blasco, & Luna-Hernández, 2012).

The language issue of the publications undoubtedly biases the circulation and visibility of the same, as already pointed out in another definitive work by Rubén

**Table 3.6** Indexed Latin American journals in *PsycINFO*

	Journals	Country	Starting year	Year of entry in <i>PsycINFO</i>
1.	<i>Acta Colombiana de Psicología</i>	Colombia	2001	2006
2.	<i>Acta Comportamental</i>	Mexico	1993	1993
3.	<i>Acta Psiquiátrica y Psicológica de América Latina</i>	Argentina	1954	1964
4.	<i>Actualidades En Psicología</i>	Costa Rica	1985	2011
5.	<i>Arquivos</i>	Brazil		
6.	<i>Avaliação Psicológica</i>	Brazil	2002	2017
7.	<i>Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana</i>	Colombia	1982	1982
8.	<i>Estudos de Psicologia</i>	Brazil	1983	2001
9.	<i>Interdisciplinaria: Revista de Psicología y Ciencias Afines</i>	Argentina	1980	1983
10.	<i>Paideia</i>	Brazil	1991	2003
11.	<i>Psychologia: Avances de la Disciplina</i>	Colombia	2007	2013
12.	<i>Psico</i>	Brazil	1971	1980
13.	<i>Psicologia Clinica</i>	Brazil	1986	2000
14.	<i>Psicologia em Estudo</i>	Brazil	1996	2002
15.	<i>Psicologia: Reflexão e Critica</i>	Brazil	1986	1997
16.	<i>Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa</i>	Brazil	1985	1985
17.	<i>Psicologia: Teoria e Pratica</i>	Brazil	1999	1999
18.	<i>Psicologia Desde el Caribe</i>	Colombia	1985	2010
19.	<i>Psicologia Iberoamericana</i>	Mexico	1988	2010
20.	<i>Psicologia y Salud</i>	Mexico	1987	2007
21.	<i>Psicoperspectivas: Individuo y Sociedad</i>	Chile	2002	2010
22.	<i>Psiquis</i>	Mexico	1992	2013
23.	<i>Psykhe</i>	Chile	1992	1995
24.	<i>Revista Argentina de Clínica Psicológica</i>	Argentina	1992	1992
25.	<i>Revista Brasileira de Orientação Profissional</i>	Brazil	2003	2013
26.	<i>Revista Brasileira de Psicanálise</i>	Brazil	1928	1976
27.	<i>Revista Chilena de Psicoanálisis</i>	Chile	1979	1992
28.	<i>Revista Colombiana de Psicología</i>	Colombia	1992	2011
29.	<i>Revista da Psicanálise da Sppa</i>	Brazil	1993	2003
30.	<i>Revista de Psicología</i>	Peru	1983	1994
31.	<i>Revista Interamericana de Psicología</i>	Puerto Rico	1967	1967
32.	<i>Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología</i>	Colombia	1969	1969
33.	<i>Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatología Fundamental</i>	Brazil	2008	2013
34.	<i>Revista Mexicana de Análisis de la Conducta</i>	Mexico	1975	1975
35.	<i>Revista Mexicana de Psicología</i>	Mexico	1984	1984

(continued)

**Table 3.6** (continued)

	Journals	Country	Starting year	Year of entry in <i>PsycINFO</i>
36.	<i>Revista Psicologia Organizações e Trabalho</i>	Brazil	2001	2015
37.	<i>Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología</i>	Puerto Rico	1983	2008
38.	<i>Salud Mental</i>	Mexico	1978	1980
39.	<i>Terapia Psicológica</i>	Chile	1982	1982
40.	<i>Universitas Psicologica</i>	Colombia	2002	2003

Ardila (1982). An inquiry by Louttit, then editor of the *Psychological Abstracts*, showed the decline of French and German and the growth of the English language after the Second World War (Louttit, 1957).

A study in the late twentieth century analyzed the percentage of international representation of psychology articles in scientific publications according to two variables, the country of origin and the year, ordering the data of the latter variable into five major periods: 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, and 1994 (Bauserman, 1997). While in 1975, articles from the United States represented almost 70% of all psychology articles (69.5%), this percentage began to decrease significantly (65.8% in 1980, 64.1% in 1985, and 54.7% in 1990), then dropping to slightly more than half (53.9%) in 1994. At the same time, the production originating in Western Europe (especially in England, Holland, Spain, and Italy) was beginning to grow, from 15.4% in 1975 to almost one fourth of the articles in 1994 (24.0%); in Japan, from 1.2% in 1975 to 2.2% in 1994; in Israel, from 0.8% in 1975 to 1.4% in 1994; in Australia-New Zealand, from 1.9% to 3.4% in 1994; and in Latin America to a lesser extent, from 1.0% in 1975 to 1.2% in 1994, having reached 1.5% in 1985 and 1990. The provisional data for 1996 indicated that although production from the United States had improved slightly compared to 1994 (57.7%), that of Western Europe as a whole had reached 30.1%.

However, an analysis considering the publication language of the articles confirmed the trend of a striking *consolidation of English*, from 87.4% in 1975 to 92.8% in 1994. The differences between both percentages (depending on the variable being the language or the country of origin) can be explained for two reasons. On the one hand, researchers from non-English speaking countries increasingly publish in English in international journals. On the other hand, scientific publications from non-English speaking countries are also increasingly incorporating English as a possible language for the presentation of articles.

In any case, an analysis in the *SciELO*, *Redalyc*, and *Scopus* databases that goes beyond psychology shows “a general trend of increase in the three sources and for almost all countries” (Miguel, 2011, p 195). This study also revealed the countries with the highest production of scientific publications in the aforementioned databases: Brazil (384 publications), Mexico (215), Colombia (181), Chile (120), Argentina (110), Venezuela (109), Cuba (51), Costa Rica (24), and Peru (20) (Miguel, 2011).

It is possible to say that the visibility of Latin American psychology publications has increased significantly since the implementation of the *open-access* system (Cardoso-Sampaio & Zoqui Paulovic-Sabadini, 2012).

In conclusion, after 70 years of the inauguration in Chile of the first psychology training program, the profession of psychology has been consolidated as evidenced by different indicators. Even though there are still many challenges to face, psychology in the region has generated practices and constituted organizations and publications in different psychology specialties.

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