Can a pandemic like covid-19 change the history of psychology?

Steven Taylor in 2019 published the book “The Psychology of Pandemics: Preparing for the Next Global Outbreak of Infectious Disease”. This book highlights the Importance of psychological factors and covers a set of Psychological reactions to pandemics, including emotional reactions to threats of harm, loss, and change. Taylor also presents different Personality Traits as factors of emotional vulnerability Cognitive-behavioral models of health anxiety and different cognitive behavioral models of health anxiety. In a very precise way, it presents a scenario of the Social Psychological Factors and how the Social Media modulate the responses of fear and optimism in the general population. Fear is analyzed in their study Coronaphobia (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020).

Taylor concludes in her book that a new generation of studies is required to find ways to improve adherence to vaccination, hygiene, and social distancing programs. In addition to this, interventions that are part of an approach to detecting and treating mental health problems are required.

Faced with the challenges that this pandemic presents to psychology, the International Association of Applied Psychology has created the COVID-19 CORNER (https://iaapsy.org/policies-initiatives/covid-resources/). The IAAP executive committee and member psychologists have compiled internet resources on the pandemic that provide practical help to people and information for professional psychologists. The resources are organize by disciplines, such as Clinical & Counseling Psychology and Health Psychology.

Undoubtedly, this impressive event, on a world scale, will leave a significant mark and will be the object of analysis of the students of the History of Psychology since, apparently, a new chapter of Mental Hygiene and the legislation that regulates the practices of care and control of the population (Urzúa, Vera-Villarroel, Zúñiga & Salas, 2015).

References


This is a very special edition of our Newsletter, because it happens exactly in the middle of a pandemic that brought fear, insecurity, anxiety to all humanity. And, with that, it has made daily activities, work, meetings, communications, change the way it happens. Now, things happen online, through the different tools of the Internet.

Many of us have a good experience with these tools, others not so much. Some, a few, have a certain antipathy and don't go near them. However, one way or another, we are having to adapt to this new reality. How do we get out of it? This is an unanswered question.

Trying to maintain as much "normality" as possible in these unknown times, our congresses have opted for two main strategies: postponement to next year, 2021, or realization on the scheduled dates online. The first option is that of ICP, which has postponed its realization to next year; already the joint meeting of Cheiron and ESHHS will be held online (with the possibility of presenting papers accepted at the 2021 meeting). On the other hand, the IAAP Centennial, as it will occur in December 2020, is maintaining its schedule.

Our Newsletter, no doubt, reflects this moment. We have received few contributions, which seems understandable to us. However, we wanted to launch it to maintain our periodicity of contact with colleagues. And also because we will soon have to take care of the choice of our President-elect - Rubén Ardila, our Past-President and responsible for this election, will make contact with you.

May everyone be safe and stay at home.

Ana Jacó-Vilela
President Division 18 IAAP
Psychology and eugenics in Brazil: Paths of history
Melline Ortega Faggion
Researcher and member of GEPHE - Study and Research Group on Hygiene and Eugenics (Brazil)
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It is frequent that we rebuild the chapters that compose the psychology’s history emphasizing the initiatives of people who contributed to its development as science and profession. Undeniable are the contributions of such figures in the context of this science, however, its history goes back to a complexity of elements and conditions yet to be known. Therefore, the comprehension of psychology’s history demands the study of the many phases that constitutes its theoretical and scientific body.

We highlight that the path of psychological knowledge in Brazil is marked by the participation of the members of the Mental Hygiene Brazilian League (MHBL). The MHBL was founded in 1923 due a doctor’s initiative, Gustavo Riedel (1887-1934), supported by the medical Brazilian’s elite, and aimed a transformation of the country in a modern nation through mental hygiene ideal. The bibliographic production referring to the history of Psychology in Brazil normally mentions to the work developed for this association, however, it does not considerate the League’s initiatives substantial to the constitution of Brazilian psychology.

The study by Figueira and Boarini (2014) demonstrate that productions such as the ones of Manoel Bomfim, Plínio Olinto and Maurício de Medeiros Albuquerque, doctors and League members, presented a significant contribution in the field of psychology. Still in the matter of questions that pervades the diffusion and popularization of the psychological knowledge in Brazil, it is also necessary to recognize the small notoriety between the eugenic ideals and the development of psychology in Brazil. In 1929, the MHBL incorporated in its statute the ideal of eugenics, and such fact is poorly debated in the field of historical studies and lead us to a distance between the ideal of mental hygiene and eugenics during the path of psychology’s development.

In Brazil, the eugenic ideas reverberated in the beginning of the 20th century; the moment was favorable to its development, because at that time, the country faced an international criticism of its population “racial quality”, due the miscegenation and the precarious conditions in the country. According to Stepan (2005) at this moment, the health of the poorest sections of the population were incorporated to the national question. In this context, who else worried were the doctors and specialists in sanitation, the diseases were analyzed based in a “social and racial” hierarchy. We highlight that supporters of those ideas defended the thesis of the physical, psychic and moral improvement of men. Those ideas gained space after the studies of Francis Galton (1822-1911) in England and, after, reverberated in many countries around the world, including Brazil. The first decades of the 20th century were fruitful to the popularization of eugenics’ ideas in Brazil. This fact coincided with the advance and scientific organization of the psychological knowledge’s, which allows us to think in approximations and even in convergences between the eugenics’ and psychology fields.

In this context, it is possible to localize the historical urge to develop studies and debates by the league’s members. Between the many intellectuals that were member of the MHBL, we highlight the doctor Renato Kehl (1889-1974), figure recognized nationally and internationally as the greatest propagandist of eugenic ideas in Brazil. We note that the study here, in theory, was limited to the period of development of psychological knowledge in Brazil and sought to recognize the conditions and paths that enabled psychology to reach its scientific level. With regard to Brazil, the spread of psychological knowledge allowed the group of intellectuals adhering to the ideas of eugenics to take ownership of its scientific principles and knowledge. In the present study, we analyzed two productions by Renato Kehl (1889-1974), one of the main exponents of eugenics in Brazil. We elected the titles Vulgar Types1, published in 1927, and Psychology of Personality2, published in 1941. In the book Vulgar Types (1927), Kehl presents twenty psycho-critical profiles and characterizes this production as a work aimed to “preventing” and informing the population to avoid contact with dysgenic individuals (not genetically healthy). In this work, the author highlights the relevance of psychology, especially of the psycho-critic for man’s knowledge from the analysis of an individual’s psyche and the structure of personality. The work Psychology of Personality shows that Kehl was based in the precepts from psychology and psychoanalysis to discourse about the process of man’s formation and, above all, to indicate the necessary measures to eugenize the nation. We believe that Kehl comprehended the process of personality development starting from the biological and hereditary optics and that psychology and psychoanalysis were characterized as fields of knowledge and techniques that could contribute to the knowledge of human characteristics and thus improve then.

We noticed that with the goal of promote the Project of “race” improvement, Kehl searched for resources that could offer legitimacy to this idea. For that, we used psychological knowledge, and even concepts from psychoanalysis. In the light of historicity, we observed that the psychological knowledge diffused and
appropriated by the author referred to a Psychology considered scientific by that time, marked by the principles of positivism and experimental physiology of European psychology. Besides, it was present the discussion about the knowledge and evaluation of personality in order to build a “strong nation”. Also, it is possible to highlight that Kehl’s assumptions were based in a biologizing conception of men, therefore, the social relations in the process of human development were clearly secondary. We conclude that Kehl’s assumptions shed light to the contributions of the psychology of those times and allows us to critically reflect about conceptions and discussions that are still present in both scientific and professional of psychology. Frequently, we still find explanations and debates about men and it’s process of development based in biological aspects, and, in many times, apart from structural questions and analysis based in economical, historical and social elements. We believe that the study of the ideas of one of the supporter and promoter of eugenics ideals helps us to tell one of the chapters that composes the history of psychology, besides offering elements to a critical formation.

References

Influence of the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró on the academic production of critical social psychology

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Introduction

When Ignacio Martín-Baró died there was a commotion in the academic world, the shadow of his absence generated a wound of inestimable depth. Maritza Montero showed her shock in a 1993 article in which she stated that social psychology, after Martín-Baró’s death, was at a crossroads (Montero & Dorna, 1993). Maritza Montero’s statement was a prelude to what would happen with critical social psychology in the 90s.

Since 1970 social, critical, political, community and liberation psychology had enjoyed an extraordinary vitality. In the 1980s the works of Silvia Lane, Maritza Montero and Ignacio Martín-Baró became beacons of an energetic and politically committed academic project (Lane, 1981; Montero, 1984; Martín-Baró, 1983). However, the 90s were not very positive for social psychology, the death of Martín-Baró in 1989, followed by the temporary disappearance of the AVEPSO (Venezuelan Association of social psychology) and the suspension of publication of the bulletin Psicología e Sociedade de ABRAPSO (Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Social).

To assess the impact of Martín-Baró's legacy, it is necessary to know the urgent challenges and / or tasks that he himself had outlined a year before he was assassinated. In late 1988, he suggested that there were three urgent tasks for the liberation psychology project: the recovery of historical memory, the de-ideologization of common sense, and the empowerment of popular virtues. He also stated that the psychologist must assume the commitment to anticipate and respond to the basic needs of the people, in addition to contributing to the formation of a new mentality of a national and popular character (Martín-Baró, 2015).

Method

The results were obtained from a bibliometric analysis applied to academic production that have cited the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró on at least one occasion and that are housed in the Dialnet, Redalyc, Scopus and WoS databases (Core Collection and Scielo). It was found that n = 2360 articles, books, book chapters have cited at least one work by Martín-Baró. The corpus of analysis was identified thanks to a search restricted to the fields: title, Abstract, keywords and references. The academic production was distributed as follows in the databases: DIALNET (n = 256), Redalyc (n = 722), Scopus (n = 1056) and WoS (n = 326). Then a historical-bibliometric analysis was carried out with the CRExplorer tools (version 1.9) to determine the most cited works by Martín-Baró in the academic production studied. The citations of the 130 works that are housed in the digital archive of the Central American University "José Simeón Cañas" (UCM) were also reviewed in order to determine the amount and nature of their impact.

Results

The 90% of the works that have cited Martín Baró’s work on at least one occasion are by the United States and Europe, while 10% of the works are by Latin American authors. Through the CRExplorer, 4 peaks were identified that correspond to the years of publication of the most influential works by Martín-Baró, namely: (1983, 1986, 1989, 1994). The year 1983 corresponds to the work “Hacia una psicología de la liberación” with 352 references, in 1986 the article "Towards a psychology of liberation" with 120 references. The 1989 and 1994 works with the highest number of citations are written in English: "Political violence and war as causes of psychosocial trauma in El Salvador" (1989) with 153 references and "Writings for a liberation psychology" published...
Some works from the 1970s, for example, "¿Quién es el pueblo?: reflexiones para una definición del concepto de pueblo?" (1974), “Elementos de conscientización socio-política en los currícula de las universidades” (1974) or “La verdad de la mentira” (1979) have not been cited. In the 1980s, texts such as “Estacazo imperial abuso y mentira en Granada” (1983), “¿Escuela o prisión? La organización social de un centro de orientación en El Salvador (1982), among others, do not have any appointments either.

Conclusion

The little reception or partial reading of Latin American psychologists of the work of Martín-Baró, becomes superficial and conventional interpretations of his legacy, for example, the concept of liberation can only be understood, if its theoretical antecedents are known. His early works, even from his philosophical works in 1963 that point out that liberation is a traumatic experience, "rupture of the existential balance, loss of ties and confrontations with a very different reality than expected", contrary to some studies that they place a synonym for the word empowerment or make a positive interpretation of the concept.

This study showed that the work of Martín Baró has been partially and limitedly studied in his last books and articles between 1983 and 1994. His work is distributed according to the digital archive of the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, in 11 published books and 130 manuscripts that take up topics of philosophy, ethics, psychology, sociology, politics, religion, among others. Despite his considerable and extensive work, it is striking that only 4 works from his last stage have been cited considerably, while other works of equal investigative relevance have not been cited.

The work of liberation psychology can enter a trivialization stage if the work of Martín-Baró is not carefully reviewed. It is not simply a matter of entering into a discussion about whether the work has been better or worse read, or whether there is a more accurate reading, but the importance of returning to his work in the dark and troubled times of Latin America in which the deideologizing task takes on unusual importance. I wonder with this work if the liberation psychology project failed and ended up becoming a social palliative, as Ignacio Martín-Baró feared.

References


The Chilean Society for the History of Psychology
(Sociedad chilena de Historia de la Psicología)

On Wednesday, January 29, 2020, at 11:00 in the notary 50 of the city of Santiago de Chile, the official constitution of the Chilean Society for the History of Psychology (SoCHiPs). The society of history of psychology has played a significant role for the advancement of the history of psychology in Chile and the recruitment of new generations interested in history. The Society has the presence of great academics such as Mariano Ruperthuz (current president), Gonzalo Salas (its former president), Maria Ines Winkler, Pablo Norambuena among others.

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Ángela María Estrada-Mesa  
(1951-2020)

Professor Ángela María Estrada was one of the first Colombian psychologists who took psychology out of its apolitism to put it on the rails of history in Colombia. She was a pioneer in studies of psychosocial intervention in Colombia and the reparation of victims of the armed conflict and gender studies in Colombia during the 1990s (Estrada-Mesa, 1997). 

Professor Estrada's studies are framed in constructionist social psychology, and her greatest contribution was to demonstrate the debt that Latin American critical studies had with the category of gender and its confluence with cultural ethnography and other disciplines of the social sciences (Estrada-Mesa & Báez-Silva, 2009). She was a political activist and from psychology led a front that supported the Yes of the implementation of the agreements with the end of the armed conflict with the FARC.

Marcia Worrell  
(1956-2020)

Born in the UK in 1956, graduated from the University of Reading with a degree in psychology. She did her doctorate at the Open University, her research topic was about on child abuse and neglect. Marcia Worrell was a very important to black feminist psychology her research was in the area higher education through the qualitative methodology where she holds a prestigious HEA grant to examine partnership pedagogies. “Professor Worrell conducted her PhD research into child abuse and neglect, and she spent much of her career championing the rights of survivors. Her work has always combined academic precision with a strong commitment to social justice and challenging inequalities” (BPS, Obituary, Professor Marcia Worrell, april 20, 2020). “Marcia was an educational innovator, initiating and putting into practice students-as-partners learning approaches even before these were fully recognised as excellent practice in the HE sector”. (POWES and Friends Tribute, Professor Marcia Worrell, April 20, 2020).

Isabel Reyes Lagunes  
(1942-2020)

Professor Reyes-Lagunes obtained a Bachelor's Degree in 1965 and a Doctorate in Social Psychology in 1982 from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM); He completed his postdoctoral studies at the University of Texas. She was a professor emeritus at UNAM, an institution to which she belonged for more than 50 uninterrupted years. His research area was cultural social psychology and his contributions were especially in the field of ethnopsychometry, that is, innovation in culturally relevant psychometric methods, which are distributed in more than 70 book chapters, 60 scientific articles, among others. Professor Germán Álvarez Díaz de León (2008) -a professor at UNAM affirmed that Professor Reyes Lagunes stood out for being “filiative, natural and purposeful leader".
The German philosopher and psychologist Max Dessoir (1867-1947) published in 1902 a book called “Geschichte der neueren deutschen Psychologic” in Germany, ten years later, was translated to English. The book represented an intention of genealogy of the nascent discipline, but compared to other works on the history of early psychology did not begin with the experimental or empirical psychology like a Baldwin’s History of Psychology (1913) or first volume of G.S. Brett’s trilogy of history of psychology (1912). Also the Dessoir’s book did not a lineal account or “stage to stage” history of psychology, on the contrary, it parts from the thesis that “the history of psychology in the truly sense cannot be written by merely taking into account the earlier stages of the present scientific psychology” (p.13).

Dessoir affirmed that study of soul or psychology -in different moments of human knowledge- ever shows a continuous conflict between two tendencies: metaphysical and scientific conception of soul, “the double refrain with which the history of our science begins, continues throughout all its changes” (p. 254). For that reason both the Ancient conception of the life of the soul and the Psychology of the nineteenth century shows the same conflict between three conceptions of soul life.

In the last chapter called “The founding of modern psychology”, the author divided the history in three principal movements: French psychology, English psychology and German psychology. The modern French psychology begins with Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714-1780) that founded a conception that passed into a physiological and materialist psychology, his thesis was “le cerveau digere en quelque sorte les impressions, . . . il fait organiquement la secretion de la pense” (the brain somehow digests impressions, . . . he organically secretes thought) (p. . In English psychology, the most prominent figure was William James, “James opposed like not a few of his predecessors the construction of the soul out of numerous conscious or unconscious units” (p. 239). The last one was the German, the psychological studies since about 1850 established by Herbartian, Steinthal and Lazarusz doctrines. The Steinthal and Lazarus had as a principal thesis of “the race-mind is a real force and brings about processes such as language, there can be a kind of explanatory psychology of historical life”. The last refinement of German psychology was made by Fechner that “took the conviction that body and soul are two modes of appearance of the same fundamental being”.

This book starts from a strong but necessary premise, by pointing out that Latin American psychology has been mostly isolated from the international psychological community. From this perspective, the work, edited by Rubén Ardila, aspires to fill the information gap that usually exists towards the psychology made in Latin America.

Throughout its 11 chapters the book proceeds to show the various lines of work and achievements of Latin American psychology, while studying it’s historical development and the path to professionalization. Thus, lines such as developmental psychology, educational, community and clinical psychology, among others, are shown as the crucible of a science that has only grown since its inception, forging various research centers and journals with the help of multiple PhDs programs and specializations that never stop asking about the human condition and the social events that occur throughout the world; also this work propose a precise discussion of Latin American psychology in relation to its present and future.

Psychology in Latin America is practically unknown to the international psychological community. The intention of this book is to play a role in overcoming his information gap. Latin American psychology as a science and as a profession has been isolated from international development during the larger part of its history. Psychology in Latin America is a discipline with many active research centers, university training programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, journals, practical applications, professional developments, social impact, and original work carried out in many of the countries of the region. (Ardila, 2018, Preface, p. vii).

This book stands as an indispensable document to understand everything that Latin American psychology can offer to international psychology.
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- **Psychological Online Documents Classics - Universität Bonn**  

- **International Association of Applied Psychology**  

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- **Psychology Museum at the School of Psychology at The University of Sydney**  

- **The British Society for the History of Science**  
  [www.bshs.org.uk](http://www.bshs.org.uk)

- **Laboratório de História e Memória da Psicologia – Clio-Psyché**

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