

Psychology in Latin America: A Qualitative Study of Commonalities and Singularities

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ABSTRACT

Psychology in Latin America, its development, and main contributors have not received the attention they deserve among the scientific and professional English-speaking communities. The present study analyzes the contributions to psychology in Latin America made by the recipients of the Interamerican Psychology award in the Spanish or Portuguese category, granted by the Interamerican Society of Psychology. The award, instituted in 1976 and named Rogelio Díaz Guerrero since 2007, recognizes psychologists who have advanced the discipline as a science and profession in the Americas. To date, SIP has granted 26 such awards. This qualitative study identifies commonalities and singularities in the contributions made by the first 26 awardees. The commonalities were organized around three overlapping themes: social responsiveness, intersectionality of psychology and culture, and international engagement. The singularities were systematized into two overlapping themes: development of historically underdeveloped topics, and discipline transformations. Each theme is defined and illustrated accordingly. The commitment to advancing social justice and increasing the relevance of psychology in addressing social issues by the awardees as a whole stands out as an important characteristic of psychology in Latin America.

Keywords

Psychology in Latin America; social issues; social responsiveness; international engagement; culture and psychology

RESUMEN

La psicología en América Latina, su desarrollo y sus principales contribuyentes, no han recibido la atención que merecen entre las comunidades científicas y profesionales de habla inglesa. El presente estudio analiza las contribuciones a la psicología en América Latina de los ganadores del Premio Interamericano de Psicología en la categoría de español o portugués, otorgado por la Sociedad Interamericana de Psicología (SIP). El premio, instituido en 1976 y llamado Rogelio Díaz Guerrero desde 2007, reconoce a los psicólogos que han hecho avanzar la disciplina como ciencia y profesión en las Américas. El presente estudio cualitativo identifica puntos en común y singularidades en las contribuciones realizadas por los primeros 26 galardonados. Los puntos en común se organizaron en torno a tres temas superpuestos: la capacidad de respuesta social, la interseccionalidad de la psicología y la cultura, y el compromiso internacional. Las singularidades se sistematizaron en dos temas superpuestos: desarrollo de temas históricamente subdesarrollados, y transformaciones disciplinarias. El compromiso de promover la justicia social y aumentar la relevancia de la psicología para abordar los problemas sociales, por parte de los premiados en su conjunto, se destaca como una característica importante de la psicología en América Latina.

Palabras Claves

Psicología en América Latina; problemas sociales; capacidad de respuesta social; compromiso internacional; cultura y psicología

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La psicología en Latinoamérica: un estudio cualitativo de aspectos comunes y singularidades

Introduction

Psychology in Latin America has been a vibrant discipline with multiple contributions and meaningful developments (Sánchez-Sosa & Valderrama-Iturbe, 2010). In spite of sizable efforts sustained over several decades to disseminate these contributions and developments, the level of familiarity and understanding of them in the English-speaking psychology world remains quite limited; this is most noticeably in the United States of America (USA), a dominant force of psychological publications in English (Ardila, 2018).

Historically, psychology in the USA has been markedly influenced by contributions from Europe (Pickren, 2009; Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). In more recent decades, USA psychology has influenced psychological developments in Asia (and, to a disproportionately reduced extent, vice versa) due, in part, to the large numbers of psychologists from East Asia that are trained in the USA and to the exportation of psychological publications and assessment tools generated in the USA to East Asian countries (Blowers et al., 2019). Said differently, the exchanges of scientific and professional knowledge in psychology in the USA and in countries where the dominant language of discipline-specific publications is English, have traditionally traversed an East-West corridor. There is a marked need for a long-overdue recognition of a complementary exchange that traverses a North-Central-South corridor, including the Caribbean. This is particularly poignant as it relates to the Americas, though not exclusively, as much of Africa and other majority regions, with their corresponding generation of psychological knowledge, have not been duly recognized and properly integrated.

In the Americas, specifically, and as it is discussed further, later on, fruitful exchanges were envisioned some 70 years ago (i.e., 1951) by the founders of the Interamerican Society of Psychology (Colotla & Urra, 2006). Nonetheless, while initially several Interamerican Congresses were held in the USA (1955 in Austin, Texas; 1964 and 1976, in Miami, Florida), it has been near half a century since the prestigious Congress has been held in the USA, and never in Canada. This is due to a multitude of reasons including, but not limited to, financial considerations, ideological differences, and, at

times, hostile foreign policies towards Latin America and the Caribbean held by some USA administrations, and, sometimes, vice versa.

In an effort to advance North-Central-South exchanges in the Americas, inclusive of the Caribbean, it is relevant to highlight the preeminent organization that has made its mission to foster such exchanges, and to describe the ways in which it has carried this out. Furthermore, it is worth to engage in a content analysis of the accomplishments by psychologists who have been distinguished with the Interamerican Psychology Award, in the Spanish or Portuguese category. This empirical article seeks to highlight and disseminate in English the psychological knowledge generated by psychologists from Latin America (Consoli, Corbella, & Morgan Consoli, 2013; Consoli et al., 2015; Consoli et al., 2017; Consoli et al., 2018; Consoli & Morgan Consoli, 2012; Consoli, Morgan Consoli, & Klappenbach, 2013).

While there have been a number of efforts to disseminate the psychological and related knowledge generated in Latin America among the English-reading scholars and professionals (e.g., Alarcón et al., 2020), providing an exhaustive, complete list is beyond the scope of this article. Nonetheless, arguably among the most readily recognizable leaders of such efforts that figures most prominently is Rubén Ardila, a Colombian experimental psychologist, social scientist, professor, and leader in organized psychology (Consoli et al., 2017; Gallegos, 2017). He has been characterized as “a doyen in the field” by Saths Cooper (2018, p. v), then president of the International Union of Psychological Science. For half a century (see, for example, Ardila, 1968, 1982, 2018), Ardila has been contributing to, reflecting on, and disseminating psychological knowledge generated in Latin America to English reading audiences (Gallegos, 2019). His most recent effort (Ardila, 2018), brought together 20 leading psychologists from Latin America who wrote about cutting-edge knowledge in their respective areas of expertise (Consoli & Pérez-Acosta, 2020; Pérez-Acosta & Consoli, 2020).

Interamerican Society of Psychology

At the organizational level, the Interamerican Society of Psychology (known as SIP, for its acronym in Spanish, *Sociedad Interamericana de Psicología* www.sipsy.org) is among the most significant promoters of North-Central-South dialogues, exchanges, and collaborations in psychology throughout the Americas, including the Caribbean (Gallegos, 2012b, 2013; Gallegos et al., 2018). SIP is a nonprofit, scientific, and professional organization, serving psychologists in the Americas and

beyond. SIP's purposes include the fostering of scientific and professional collaborations among persons concerned with psychology and related fields while promoting an understanding and appreciation of cultural similarities and differences in the Americas, as well as aiding in the development of psychology as a science and as a profession in all of the countries of the Americas.

SIP was founded on December 17, 1951 by a group of behavioral scientists that were attending the 4th International Congress of Mental Health in Mexico City organized by the World Federation for Mental Health (Ferdman & Van Oss Marin, 1999). SIP's first president was Enrique Eduardo Krapf (a German psychiatrist who emigrated to Argentina in 1934), assisted by Werner Wolff as vice-president (a German born professor of psychology who taught at Bard College in New York from 1942 until 1957), and Oswaldo Robles as Secretary General (a Mexican physician, philosopher, and psychologist who taught at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*) (Gallegos, 2012b, 2013). Other members of the original Board included vice-presidents Jaime Barrios Peña (Guatemala), Carlos Nassar (Chile), and William Line (Canada) as well as treasurer Hernán Vergara (Colombia). Other founding members included Guillermo Dávila, Rogelio Díaz Guerrero, Manuel Falcón (all from Mexico), and José Bustamante (Cuba) (Colotla & Urra, 2006). The international composition of SIP's first Board of Directors and founding members that chose the name "Interamerican" for the newly formed psychological society was indeed, Interamerican. In 1999, SIP was incorporated in Puerto Rico as a nonprofit organization.

Since 1951, SIP has provided different venues to advance dialogues and collaborations within the North-Central-South corridor (inclusive of the Caribbean). As of 2019, SIP had successfully organized 37 Interamerican Congresses of Psychology in 16 different countries. The first congress took place in the Dominican Republic in 1953 and was organized around the theme *Cultures and Values in Psychology* (Angelini, 1979; Gallegos, 2012a). In addition, starting in 2004 with an initiative of then President Héctor Fernández Álvarez, SIP has organized six Regional Congresses in as many countries. It should be noted that these accomplishments could not have materialized without the sustained engagement of the committed officers of SIP's Board of Directors (alternatively referred to as *Mesa Directiva*), and numerous SIP members. There have been national and local non-governmental organizations in the Congresses' host country that made them possible such as *Colegios* and Associations. Furthermore, the support of many organizations played a crucial role in these advancements. For example, universities have

supported SIP's infrastructure, including the *Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras* that hosted SIP's Central Office for many years and now the *Universidad Carlos Albizu*. Finally, the American Psychological Association, particularly the Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP) and the Office of International Affairs, first led by Joan Buchanan, then by Merry Bullock, with the assistance of Sally Leverty, and, since 2016, by Amanda Clinton, have amplified the importance of SIP and its Congresses.

SIP has published the *Revista Interamericana de Psicología* (RIP)/*Interamerican Journal of Psychology* (IJP) continuously since 1967, a particularly noteworthy feat in the Latin American context (for a socio-bibliometric analyses of RIP/IJP's first 50 years see Polanco et al., 2017; for a content analysis of the same period, see Torres Fernández, et al., 2017). It is perhaps the only Journal in the world that accepts and publishes articles in four languages (Spanish, English, Portuguese, French), which are among the main official languages of the Americas. Within its first 50 volumes, RIP/IJP published twelve special issues and ten sections (see, Polanco et al., 2017, p. 319). The editors of RIP/IJP are listed on Table 1; it is worth noting that the first female editor was not appointed until 1998, or 31 years since the start of its publication.

Table 1
Editors of RIP/IJP

Name	Country	Term
Carl F. Hereford	USA	1967-1970
Luiz Natalicio	USA	1970-1975
Horacio Rimoldi	Argentina	1975-1976
Gordon Finley	USA	1977-1982
Luis Laosa	USA	1983-1989
José Miguel Salazar	Venezuela	1990-1998
Irma Serrano-García	Puerto Rico	1998-2003
Silvia Helena Koller	Brazil	2003-2010
Edil Torres Rivera	USA	2011-2019
Fernando Polanco	Argentina	2020-

SIP's commitment to social justice in the form of advancing open-access to the world's scientific literature and knowledge has resulted in making RIP/IJP available online without restrictions (see Open Journal Systems within the Public Knowledge Project at <https://pkp.sfu.ca/ojs>).

SIP Interamerican Psychology Awards

Per SIP's articles of constitution, every other year, a call to submit nominations for the awards is made via SIP's Central Office. The collated nominations are presented to SIP's Board of Directors and this body selects the awardees. Any psychologist in the Americas is eligible for nomination and selection. SIP grants an award in the English or French category and another in the Spanish or Portuguese one (since 2007, the latter award is called the Rogelio Díaz Guerrero Award), to psychologists whose work has advanced psychology as a science and profession in the Americas. Since its inception in 1976, 26 psychologists have received the award in the Spanish or Portuguese category and 22 in the English or French one (see Table 2).

Table 2

Recipients of the Interamerican Psychology Award (1976-2019)

Name	Name	Year
Rogelio Díaz Guerrero (Mexico)	Charles Osgood (USA)	1976
Arrigo L. Angelini (Brazil)	Wayne H. Holtzman (USA)	1979
Jacobo Varela (Uruguay)	Harry Triandis (USA)	1981
Rubén Ardila (Colombia)	Herbert C. Kelman (USA)	1983
Aroldo Rodrigues (Brazil)	David Belanger (Canada)	1985
Emilio Ribes (Mexico)	Martin Fishbein (USA)	1987
Carlos Albizu Miranda* (Puerto Rico)	Robert J. Newbrough (USA)	1989
Eduardo Rivera Medina (Puerto Rico)	Joseph Matarazzo (USA)	1991
Fernando Luis González Rey (Cuba)		
Ignacio Martín Baró* (El Salvador)		
José Miguel Salazar (Venezuela)	Sydney Bijou (USA)	1993
Maritza Montero (Venezuela)	Gerardo Marín (USA)	1995
Rolando Díaz-Loving (Mexico)	Florence Denmark (USA)	1997
Héctor Fernández Álvarez (Argentina)	John Berry (Canada)	1999
Silvia Maurer Lane (Brazil)	John Adair (Canada)	2001
Euclides Sánchez (Venezuela)	Barbara Van Oss Marín (USA)	2003
Irma Serrano-García (Puerto Rico)	Robert Sternberg (USA)	2005
Isabel Reyes Lagunes (Mexico)	Alice Eagly (USA)	2007
José Toro Alfonso (Puerto Rico)	Albert Bandura (USA)	2009
Susan Pick (Mexico)	Judith Gibbons (USA)	2011
Wanda Rodríguez Arocho (Puerto Rico)	Janel Gauthier (Canada)	2013
Julio Villegas (Chile)	Andrés J. Consoli (USA)	2015
Ester Wiesenfeld (Venezuela)		
Wilson López-López (Colombia)	Merry Bullock (USA)	2017
Guillermo Bernal (Puerto Rico)	Antonio E. Puente (USA)	
Jorge Grau Ábalos (Cuba)		2019

* Posthumous. Source: Interamerican Society of Psychology

In light of the critical mass of awardees (26), the sizable span of years (43 years, 1976-2019), and on occasion of SIP's 70th year anniversary, it seemed opportune to engage in an intentional analysis of the recipients' work for the specific purpose of discerning possible patterns while sizing and appreciating the various contributions to and

by psychology in Latin America made by these individuals, as well as by this group as a whole. Echoing the vision of Uruguayan Joaquín Torres García, expressed in his famous 1943 painting titled *América Invertida* (www.torresgarcia.org.uy), where he questioned the status quo by putting forth a different representation of South America, this project seeks to visualize the contributions to psychology by psychologists from Latin America, with the aim to challenge existing hegemonies. Accordingly, the research questions (RQs) guiding this study were two. RQ1 reads: what are the *common*, shared areas of contribution to psychology in Latin America by the first, 26 SIP awardees? RQ2 reads: what are the *unique*, singular areas of contribution to psychology in Latin America by these awardees?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study are the first 26 recipients of the Interamerican Psychology award in the Spanish or Portuguese category. While typically the Board selects a single individual, there have been four occasions thus far when more than one individual was selected (1987, 1991, 2015, 2019). It should be noted that, when more than one recipient of the award was selected, it was to signify that both awardees were equally deserving of the award rather than due to collaboration among recipients. The award typically has been bestowed to living psychologists yet on two occasions the award was conferred posthumously (Albizu Miranda, Martín Baró).

Research paradigm

The current study was grounded in a social constructivist research paradigm which is guided by the philosophical notion that meaning is co-constructed between the researchers in their interactions with the study subject. Accordingly, meaning co-construction and personal involvement impact the object/subject of study, the development of the RQs, the methodology chosen, the materials selected, the analyses, and the final product.

Procedure

A qualitative method was utilized in this study to identify commonalities and singularities among the 26 recipients of the SIP award. Over the last decade, the authors have gathered data about each of the awardees, including and when available, curriculum vitae (CVs), biographies (some done by the awardees, some by others), presentations, and interviews. We also searched multiple databases, including PsycINFO, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), the Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal (Redalyc), the Servicio de Difusión de Alertas (DialNet), and WorldCat, for publications and related materials. To facilitate the archival of the materials we utilized a cloud-based repository (i.e., Box), constructed comparable and distinct profiles for each awardee using a commercial spreadsheet program (i.e., Microsoft Excel), and developed narratives for each awardee over time. These narratives were constructed in pairs (two authors per narratives). Additional collaborators have participated in this process in the past (for a comprehensive list of collaborators as well as an acknowledgment of others who contributed pertinent materials, see Consoli, Corbella, & Morgan Consoli, 2013; Consoli et al., 2015; Consoli et al., 2017; Consoli et al., 2018; Consoli & Morgan Consoli, 2012; Consoli, Morgan Consoli, & Klappenbach, 2013). The profiles and narratives were examined by the first four authors using Braun and Clarke's (2006) stepwise process known as thematic analysis, a well-established and frequently used tool that is congruent with the RQs and research paradigm. The purpose was to identify commonalities and singularities across the profiles and narratives of participants' scientific contributions and achievements. Researchers extracted codes and created relevant categories to generate themes. Congruent with the iterative process that characterizes qualitative analyses, including thematic analysis, the codes, categories, and themes in this project evolved over time in an effort to provide a meaningful interpretation of the data, all the while striving for maximum consensus and maintaining rigor. The last two authors served as external auditors to the research process and outcome. Both auditors exceeded the usual criteria of expertise with respect to knowledge on the subject matter and of methodology employed. In accordance with the latest Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS) for qualitative projects, the findings and their discussion are presented together (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 94; Levitt, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

Of the 26 recipients, 19 were males and seven were females. The average age of recipients at the time of receiving the award was 57 (SD = 8.85). The age of the youngest recipient was 41 (Ardila), and the oldest, 71 (Villegas). The frequency distribution by age in decades was as follows: 5 (age 41-49), 11 (age 50-59), 7 (age 60-69), 3 (age 70 or more). It seems fair to characterize the award as one that is bestowed upon relatively senior psychologists, similar to a recognition for career or life-time achievement and contributions. In the few instances where the recipient may be considered somewhat early in their career to be regarded as such, it is worth noting that all such recipients went on to formidable careers characterized by remarkable, overall achievement and contributions to the field. For example, the four youngest recipients of the Award, Ardila (age 41 at the time of the award), González Rey (42), Díaz-Loving (43), and Ribes Iñesta (43), all have gone on or went on to make quite noticeable contributions even among the distinguished group of awardees. It should be noted that the only other awardee in the 41-49 age-bracket, Martín Baró (47), received the award posthumously.

With respect to sex, the first recipient was a male who received the award in 1976 and so were the next 10 recipients. The first female recipient was bestowed the award in 1995, or 19 years since the institution of the award (1976-1995). Since 1995, the numbers indicate a more balanced distribution, with eight male recipients and seven females over the course of 24 years (1995-2019). Congruent with typical processes in professional awards in the Americas, SIP's Board of Directors does not disseminate a list of nominees. Moreover, consistent with the nature of the award, there is no list of runner ups or finalists. Therefore, further considerations on the possible role of the sex of the awardees are difficult to arrive at. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the sex composition of the profession of psychology in Latin America and the extent to which the awardees mirror or not that composition. Even so, one must keep in mind that the awardees' pool spans 43 years and therefore, any considerations would need to take into account the changes of the make-up of psychologists by sex in Latin America over time. Additionally, socio-cultural changes that have occurred within the field and region during this time span has likely also influenced both the demographics of psychologists in Latin America as well as an increase likelihood of women receiving long-overdue recognition. This matter alone deserves attention beyond what this article can accomplish, particularly since one would need to limit the reference and comparison points even further, considering that almost

all awardees earned a doctoral degree in psychology or closely related fields, and this level of education is not required to become a psychologist in the vast majority of countries in the Americas.

While sex and age at the time of the bestowing of the award are the only two sociodemographic variables we were able to collect with a larger degree of certainty, there are numerous other dimensions that were not available to us. For example, we did not have systematic access to information such as awardees' socioeconomic status, gender identity, racial or ethnic identification, among others.

Of the 26 recipients, 24 received a doctoral degree, one a master's degree (Varela), and another a licenciatura together with other advanced studies (Villegas). With respect to discipline, 24 earned their highest degree in psychology, one in sociology (Montero), and another in civil engineering (Varela). Ten of the awardees received their highest degree at a university in the USA (Albizu Miranda, Ardila, Bernal, Díaz Guerrero, Díaz-Loving, Martín Baró, Rivera Medina, Rodrigues, Serrano-García, Varela), two in England (Pick, Salazar), two in the USSR (now Russia, González Rey, Grau Ábalo), one in France (Montero), one in Spain (López-López), while the remaining 10 earned their highest degree in various countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

With respect to employment, for almost all awardees (25 out of 26) their primary, full-time employment setting was the academy. One awardee's primary employment setting was the clinical realm (Fernández Álvarez), with the academy as this awardee's second employment setting. Nonetheless, all awardees were actively involved in teaching, research, training, mentoring, and many involved in service delivery, be that clinical, supervision, consultation, or intervention. Remarkably, awardees who focused on research achieved the highest research category in their respective countries of origin. A sizable number of recipients (approximately 40%) occupied important positions as academic administrators during a noticeable portion of their careers. Many awardees engaged in editorial work, even founding journals such as the *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología* and *Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana* (Ardila), the *Revista Mexicana de Análisis de la Conducta* (Ribes Iñesta), *Revista Argentina de Clínica Psicológica* (Fernández Álvarez), and *Universitas Psychologica* (López-López). Furthermore, two awardees edited SIP's RIP/IJP (Salazar, Serrano-García).

It is particularly noteworthy the sizable contributions that the awardees as a group have made towards the advancement of an organized psychology throughout Latin America and beyond. Be as founders of organizations or as presidents of national and

international associations, the awardees stand out in their engagement with the science and profession of psychology in its organized expression. While an exhaustive list of contributions towards an organized psychology is beyond the reach of this article, we provide some illustrative examples here. With respect to founders of institutions or organizations, demonstrative examples include the Puerto Rican Psychological Institute (later the Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies, now the Universidad Carlos Albizu, www.albizu.edu; Albizu Miranda, together with Norman Matlin), the Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población – IMIFAP – Yo Quiero/Yo Puedo (<http://yoquieroyopuedo.org.mx>, Pick), and Aiglé (<https://aigle.org.ar>; Fernández Álvarez, 2015). Examples of leadership positions include the inaugural presidency of the Conselho Federal de Psicologia in Brazil (Angelini), the presidency of the International Society of Political Psychology (Montero), the Secretary General post of the the Asociación Latinoamericana de Psicología Social (ALAPSO, Villegas), the chairing of APA's Committee on International Relations in Psychology (Rodríguez Arocho), the creation of the Fundación para el Avance de la Ciencia Psicológica (Ardila), and the cofounding of the Federación Iberoamericana de Asociaciones de Psicología (López-López).

A sizable number of awardees (11 out of the 26 awardees or approximately 42%) occupied the presidency of SIP (ordered chronologically: Díaz Guerrero, Angelini, Ardila, Rodrigues, Reyes Lagunes – the first female president of SIP after 32 years since its founding and following 18 male presidents, Salazar, Sánchez, Pick, Fernández Álvarez, Díaz-Loving, Toro Alfonso). It is difficult to derive meaning from the sizable proportion of awardees who were presidents beyond speculations. Considering that the award honors not only scientific contributions but also leadership and service, and that SIP is one of the preeminent organizations in the region, the noted proportion could be understood within such context.

Beyond receiving SIP's Interamerican Psychology Award and in addition to numerous national awards, the group as a whole earned many other noticeable awards granted by many of the world's most well-known organizations. As previously stated with respect to contributions towards an organized psychology, an exhaustive list of recognitions is beyond the scope of this article. Nonetheless, illustrative examples include the Rubén Ardila Award for Scientific Investigation in Psychology (Díaz-Loving, Wiesenfeld); the Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Society of Behavioral Medicine (Grau Ábalos); the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Education and

Training (Serrano-García) and the Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology (Ardila, Fernández Álvarez; the only other Latin American psychologist to have received this award at the moment is María Cristina Richaud), all from the American Psychological Association; the Distinguished Professional Career Award by the National Latinx Psychological Association (Toro Alfonso), the Sigmund Freud award from the World Council for Psychotherapy (Fernández Álvarez); and the Distinguished Professional Contributions Award by the International Association of Applied Psychology (Pick). Finally, we would like to highlight three other important, additional recognitions including the first psychologist in Venezuela to receive the National Scientist Award (Social Sciences and Humanities category) granted by the National Council on Science and Technology (Salazar), the first Latin American psychologist to earn the most prestigious award in psychotherapy research, the senior career award granted by the International Society for Psychotherapy Research (Fernández Álvarez), and the recipient of the award by the Sociedad Española de Psicología in two occasions (Ardila).

In an effort to arrive at an overall profile of awardees at the time of receiving the award we sought to determine the total number of publications when the award was granted as well as since. Unfortunately, securing the information at the time of receiving the award proved to be practically impossible as databases were found not to be reliable sources of information and securing awardees' CVs at the time of the award became clearly unfeasible over time. Furthermore, CVs, as currently utilized in psychology are a relatively new phenomenon and not fully adopted, let alone standardized throughout the Americas. In all, judging by the most recent CVs available, combined with information from multiple databases, we conservatively estimate that the 26 awardees contributed well over 4,000 publications, including journal articles, book chapters, and books. With respect to books alone, we estimate that they collectively published close to 300 tomes. It is worth noting that several of the awardees wrote well-established and highly-adopted textbooks (e.g., Ardila, 2001; González Rey, 2000; Montero, 2004, 2006; Rodrigues et al., 2012), significantly extending the influence of their writings.

In regard to overall impact, the use of tools such as indexes also proved to be an unreliable endeavor. While private companies such as Google, with its increasingly dominant system known as Google Scholar, have put forth numerical ways of estimating and comparing impact (e.g., number of citations, h-index, i10-index), we found such systems not helpful for multiple reasons. Among the most prominent reasons, it is worth

mentioning the fact that many of such companies rely on individuals creating their own accounts and updating their profiles regularly. Some databases populate citations relying on algorithms and proxies (i.e., names, previous coauthors), yet the accuracy of such data entry rely, much of the time, on the individual taking the time to correct the sizable number of errors. Moreover, most of these databases have been developed in English, at least initially, and their numerous formats are not friendly to authors with more than one last name (e.g., 14 of the 26 awardees use two last names when publishing, some with and some without a hyphen) nor to names with characters frequently found in Spanish or Portuguese (e.g., accents). Of note, the advent of an open researcher and contributor identifier such as ORCID (www.orcid.org) can aid with some of these difficulties yet even ORCID requires researchers to take the initiative of obtaining their ID, albeit free. To complicate matters further, the awards span 43 years, including most given prior to the development of these companies, let alone their products. Finally, several awardees have passed, some for several decades (for example, Albizu Miranda passed in 1984), making the reliance on individuals to establish accounts and correct errors in their profiles simply unfeasible, except through the work of volunteers.

We sought to determine the primary areas within psychology by the awardees' scholarly focus, yet the diversity of interests embodied by each of the awardees made the task challenging. At times it seemed unfair as the best characterization would be one that acknowledges each awardees' remarkable breadth of interests. With those caveats in mind, it can be tentatively asserted that, based on frequency count alone, the top, primary area of psychology addressed by awardees was Social Psychology (8). The second area was Community Social Psychology (Montero, 1998) (8), with some areas that could be arguably and, in this count, are included within this partial total, such as Political Psychology - 3, Community Environmental Psychology - 2, and Socio-Historical Critical Psychology - 2; the overall inclusion is not so much on disciplinary grounds but on awardees' declared focus on those two areas simultaneously. The remaining primary areas included Educational Psychology (3), Health Psychology (3), Clinical Psychology (3), and Experimental Psychology (2). As indicated, this categorization does not do justice to the complexity of the academic, scholarly, and professional work done by the awardees, yet it serves an initial approximation to their work. What stands out in this initial approximation and as it relates to a profile of awardees is the sizable presence of the social domain, within a discipline that has been amply dominated by and associated with clinical practice throughout Latin America, including the Caribbean.

Commonalities

With respect to the first research question, that is, the possible identification of *common* (i.e., shared) areas of contribution by the awardees, the thematic analysis resulted in three main, interrelated themes. The first theme was labeled *social responsiveness*. This theme sought to capture the awardees' social concern yet it also underscores awardees' commitment to communities through their socially engaged scholarship.

On the one hand, the theme denotes awardees' interest in not only discerning current state of affairs, even exposing the status quo (building on Freire's critical consciousness), but to address it through transformative scholarship or praxis (e.g., Montero, 2010; Sánchez, 1998; Wiesenfeld & Sánchez, 2002; Wiesenfeld et al., 2014). Awardees' social responsiveness is characterized by not only documenting the ostensive inequities of their contexts but their collective interest in advancing a better world (e.g., Varela, 1977). As Ardila put it, "many psychologists in our America believe, like Marx, that we have dedicated too much time to study the world and the time has come to change it" (Ardila, 1986, pg. 184).

On the other hand, this theme underscores a keen understanding of the mutuality between the individual and society by awardees. While much of traditional western psychology has emphasized the singularity of the individual, psychology in Latin America, as characterized by the commonalities of these awardees' scholarship and as reflected by this theme in particular, actually emphasizes a reciprocal interaction (e.g., Martín Baró, 1996; Rodríguez Arocho, 2011).

The second theme was labeled *the intersectionality of psychology and culture*. The theme was born out of a shared feature in awardees' scholarship, one that underscores not only the impossibility, even futility of understanding the individual without their cultural context but also the dangers of seeking to do so (i.e., a decontextualized analysis). A remarkable example of the importance of culture in psychology is the subtitle added to a later edition of Díaz Guerrero's famous book, *Psychology of the Mexican 2* (2002), a subtitle that reads *Bajo las Garras de la Cultura* [Under the Claws of Culture]. In fact, awardees' work placed culture among the very top dimensions when the context in which human behavior takes place is properly considered (e.g., Reyes Lagunes & Poortinga, 1987). Awardees minded and contributed to a systematic understanding of the *subject* (rather than the *object*) in psychology (e.g., González Rey, 2003), a person that must be appreciated as a cultural being in order to be sized and understood (Alarcón et al., 2020).

The work produced by the awardees addressed cultural comparisons within and across nations in a remarkable set of efforts to advance culture as a human phenomenon that inextricably has shaped and given meaning to the *subject* in psychology, and vice versa. Their work has been visionary and highly congruent with contemporary views of the interdependent relationship between self and culture. As three well-known cross-cultural psychologists wrote, "when all of psychology finally takes into account the effects of culture on human behavior (and vice versa), terms like cross-cultural and cultural psychology will become unnecessary" because of their redundancy (Segall et al., 1998, p. 1101). The *oeuvre* of the awardees has fastened such time in Latin America and beyond.

The third and final theme was labeled *international engagement*. While the theme is not surprising among a group of professionals selected by SIP, a disciplinary society formed on the grounds of working towards inter and transnational collaborations in the Americas, the depths to which awardees took their international engagement is remarkable and a major commonality across awardees. The fruitful transnational collaborations resulted in many scientific developments as well as in the tangible advancement of organized psychology focused on regional knowledge, strengths, and needs. Some illustrative examples, among others, include the establishment of ALAPSO where many leading figures of Latin American social psychology constructed a meaningful place of belonging, one that was responsive to the matters identified in the prior two themes, as well as the Asociación Latinoamericana de Análisis y Modificación de la Conducta (ALAMOC, www.alamoc-web.org, currently the Asociación Latinoamericana de Análisis, Modificación de la Conducta y Terapia Cognitiva Conductual), founded by Ardila in 1975, and led by another awardee, López-López, for several years.

It is worth noting that the international engagement actively partaken in by the awardees was not an exclusively professional activity. In fact, international engagement was particularly and poignantly salient at a personal level. An exemplary quote comes from one of the awardees (Fernández Álvarez), who considered international engagement "oxygen" and expressed it in the following words "when the dictatorship took over (Argentina)... the air was not breathable... it came to us that the way to survive was to sustain contacts with overseas" (Consoli, Corbella, & Morgan Consoli, 2013, p. 40). He went on to describe how the international exchanges with another awardee, Rubén Ardila, as well as Hans Eysenck, both of whom Fernández Álvarez invited to keynote at the First

Argentine Congress of Psychotherapy, were particularly and personally influential. In another personal example, Villegas wrote eloquently about his dire need to go into exile, in the midst of the military dictatorship in Chile, his home country. His contacts with colleagues in other countries resulted in him embarking with his family with the goal to reach Mexico. Villegas and his family stopped over in Venezuela, invited by another recipient, Salazar, while awaiting proper paperwork to go on to Mexico. Salazar offered Villegas employment at the *Universidad Central de Venezuela* (Villegas, 2012, in particular pages 297-299). Villegas and his family remained in Venezuela for several years before returning to Chile. In another example, the extensive international engagement that characterized the life of González Rey led him to build a place for himself and his family when “for political reasons he was prevented from returning to Cuba, as he wished” (Goulart, 2020, p. 1176). The three examples illustrate the words spoken by Martín Baró when contrasting the paradigm that has characterized academic psychology in the USA, known as “publish or perish,” while in Latin America it has been “publish and perish,” with authors’ very own lives being at risk, not just their academic lives. Most poignantly, Martín Baró was assassinated in El Salvador in 1989, together with five other priests, their caretaker, and her daughter, while at the university campus, by a military squad.

In all, the congruence between the top three commonalities and SIP’s mission and the opportunities that SIP has generated in its first 70 years of existence is striking. The work of the 26 awardees is indeed and remarkably Interamerican in its foci. Accordingly, it does seem particularly fitting the selection of these awardees by SIP’s Board.

Singularities

The second research question focused on identifying the *unique* (i.e., singular) ways that awardees contributed psychology in Latin America. The findings resulted in two themes. The first theme was labeled the *development of historically underdeveloped topics*. This theme captured awardees’ dedication to contributing knowledge within areas that had been previously unaddressed or only partially addressed by psychology in Latin America and, at times, even society (e.g., sex, gender, interpersonal violence, delinquency, learning). In other words, awardees unique contributions not only helped to expand the field’s understanding of the many areas that had gone unacknowledged, they also served to raise awareness how they influenced and impacted diverse and minoritized populations. Examples of the topics that were uniquely expanded upon by awardees

included the promotion and affirmation of sexual health behavior (Pick et al., 2003), the exploration and understanding of masculinity (Toro Alfonso, 2008; Rivera Medina, 1992), the documenting and redressing of domestic violence (Toro Alfonso, 2005), the identification of the cultural underpinnings of couples relationships and dynamics (Díaz-Loving & Robles Montijo, 2009; Díaz-Loving et al., 1995), the involvement of psychology in public policy (Sánchez, 2004; Montero, 2010; Serrano-García, 2013), the responsibility of *compromiso social* (social commitment) and social transformation (Lane, 2002), the appreciation of the plight of migrants in educational contexts (Rivera Medina, 1984), the exploration of multiple identities (regional, national, supranational; Salazar, 1983), the addressing of delinquency (Ribes Iñesta & Bandura, 1976), the studying and evaluation of cognitive processes (Rodríguez-Arocho, 2007), the questioning of violence and the advancement of peace processes (López-López et al., 2012; López-López & Sabucedo, 2007), and many more.

By addressing traditionally underdeveloped topics across several areas of investigation, awardees were able to better understand the cultural and contextual nuances that were often ignored in psychological research. To elaborate further on some examples: Pick's work on sex health education for children, adolescents, and parents has emphasized empowerment by teaching communication, decision-making, and assertiveness, while disseminating information related to sexuality, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases in culturally congruent ways (e.g., Pick et al., 2010). Similarly, Toro Alfonso's work focused on domestic violence in Puerto Rican gay couples has led to a better understanding of the influence that family role models have in future violence in intimate partner relationships, addictive behaviors, and risky behavior that may result in HIV infection in gay men (e.g., Toro Alfonso & Rodriguez-Madera, 2004). Serrano-García's work has addressed the role that psychologists can play in creating systemic change through advocacy (e.g., Serrano-García & Lugo-Hernández, 2016). Montero has advanced the field of political psychology, starting with editing one of the first books in Latin America on the subject (Montero, 1987). She has argued that social transformation is integral to the goal of community psychology and has analyzed the complexities involved in citizen engagement and its development. The central processes involved include consciousness rising, control, power, politicization, self-determination, commitment, and community social identity (Montero, 2006). Most recently, another awardee (López-López) has furthered the dissemination in English of political psychology in Latin America (see for example, Zuñiga & López-López, 2021).

The second theme was labeled *discipline transformations* and refers to awardees' unique contributions at theoretical and practical levels that resulted in major developments of psychology in Latin America and beyond. These contributions align with social justice principles, values, and advocacy, while advancing culturally sensitive practices and integrative training. We offer several examples that illustrate this theme. Díaz Guerrero developed what he initially called the "historic-bio-psycho-social-cultural theory of human comportment," and later "ethnopsychology." The construct was further elaborated by Reyes Lagunes and taken to the realm of "ethnopsychometrics" (2011). His work has been crucial in generating culturally grounded knowledge. Martín Baró has been widely recognized for pioneering liberation psychology (Kelman, 1995; Lykes, 2012; Martín Baró, 1994) and exposing the oppressive sociopolitical conditions in which marginalized communities exist. Wiesenfeld has been among the first to combine community social psychology and environmental psychology to create community environmental psychology. Drawing upon the inhumane treatment her family faced during the European holocaust, Wiesenfeld's work has highlighted the importance for psychology to consider the environment at large (Wiesenfeld, 1996). She has researched basic human needs within the framework of environmental rights (e.g., air and water quality, sewage systems), as well as poverty in housing communities, and the psychological impact of homelessness after experiencing home loss. Weisenfeld has underscored the importance of the history of a community in order for individuals to increase their sense of identity and belonging.

Varela is known, among other matters, for coining the term "social technology" which he defined as "the activity that leads to the design of solutions to social problems by means of combinations of findings derived from different areas of the social sciences" (Varela, 1975, p. 160). His contribution highlighted the value in better understanding the solutions that were attainable to create changes in society, rather than solely focusing on analyzing them in theory, and using this concept to redress issues such as crime, bureaucracy, and racial conflict. Indeed, the terminology and concepts developed by some of the awardees mentioned here have been foundational to advancing psychology in Latin America. González Rey articulated an innovative way of understanding subjectivity in cultural, social, and historical terms and put forth what he termed qualitative epistemology accompanied by a corresponding research methodology, a constructive-interpretative one (González Rey & Martínez, 2017). Ardila proposed the Experimental Synthesis of Behavior, based on the Skinnerian Experimental Analysis of Behavior,

which articulates several psychological approaches to address the complexity of human behavior and unify psychology (Ardila, 1988).

Beyond the development of psychological constructs and in line with making training more culturally responsive and integrative, awardees such as Albizu Miranda acknowledged the shortage of mental health professionals that were available to respond to the needs of Puerto Rican individuals. To address these shortcomings, he focused on the development of culturally sensitive training for mental health trainees and professionals. Bernal has concerned himself with the development and evaluation of Evidence Based Practices such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy for ethno-cultural groups, particularly for youth living with depression. His framework of cultural adaptation has advanced psychological training that is culturally congruent and language relevant (Bernal & Adames, 2017)

Limitations

While some limitations have been identified previously, there are a number of additional matters that made this project noticeably difficult. When granting the award, SIP does not make an official statement of the grounds on which the recipient has been selected (known as an “award citation”) beyond the standard assertion that the selected psychologist has advanced psychology as a science and profession in the Americas, and has done so in meritorious ways, making the awardee deserving. Moreover, while awardees are invited to deliver a presentation at an Interamerican Congress, there is no centralized record of those addresses. A systematic search of the limited conference programs available at SIP’s website yielded only a few abstracts by some of the recipients. Finally, while SIP student awardees may submit a paper for peer-review evaluation and editorial consideration by RIP/IJP as part of the award recognition, RIP/IJP does not have a similar, peer-review mechanism for the possible publication of an article by the recipients of the Interamerican Psychologist award. Our search through each issue and volume of RIP/IJP since the inception of the award and done by year and author did not find articles by awardees as part of the bestowing of the award.

The focus of this study has been limited to the knowledge generated by psychologists that have been recognized by the Interamerican Society of Psychology in the form of granting them what is arguably the most prestigious award among psychologists in Latin America. Inevitably, the sifting applied by the process of nomination and selection is something to consider as a limitation of the study, in its

attempt at capturing an understanding, albeit partial, of psychology in Latin America. Relatedly, the sheer volume of publications generated by the 26 awardees, estimated at well over 4,000, certainly taxed the authors and ran into some fundamental limitations. Additionally, there are other organizations in Latin America and beyond that can serve as sources to identify accomplished psychologists in the region (e.g., since 2002, the Federación Iberoamericana de Agrupaciones y Colegios de Psicólogos or FIAP, www.fiapsi.org; also, since 2002, the União Latino-Americana de Entidades de Psicología, www.ulapsi.org; and, since 2012, the Asociación Latinoamericana para la Formación y Enseñanza de la Psicología, ALFEPSI, www.alfepsi.org).

There is a more recent development of organized psychology in the Caribbean that started in 2013 and is known as the Caribbean Alliance of National Psychological Associations (www.canpanet.org). A recent publication in English features knowledge and organizing efforts from this region (Roopnarine & Chadee, 2016). To the extent that some of the countries included in the Caribbean Alliance represent a widely diverse language landscape besides Spanish or Portuguese, and the fact that SIP grants an award in the English or French category, the difficulties of drawing lines for the two existing categories is duly recognized.

Recommendations

In going forward, it would be particularly relevant to engage in a similar process as the one done here yet this time studying and analyzing the recipients of SIP's Interamerican Psychology Award for the English or French category. One pertinent consideration would be to develop a comparable research article yet in Spanish or Portuguese, a reversal similar to the one engaged on here, to further the access and utilization of knowledge in multiple languages. The latter is highly congruent with the principles that led to the founding of SIP and furthers its current relevancy.

We respect to SIP's processes, we would like to recommend that the granting of the award be accompanied by a citation where the rationale for selecting the awardee is articulated, followed by a brief biography co-constructed with the awardee and/or nominators, and a list of selected bibliography. It would be particularly helpful if the biography were to indicate some of the wanting demographics discussed previously, such as recipients' race/ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic background. We further recommend that SIP works closely with the Congress organizers and the awardees to record the awardees presentations delivered during a SIP congress to make them available

beyond the congress. Moreover, we recommend that SIP's Board considers adopting a similar mechanism that it uses with student awards, one where awardees are encouraged to submit a manuscript based on their respective Congress presentation for consideration by RIP/IJP's peer-review process. Relevant illustrations of some of these recommendations are the respective citations, biographies, and selected references disseminated by the American Psychological Association when it grants its most prestigious awards. We selected the following examples as they are most pertinent to this article due to the fact that they are about psychologists who also receive the Interamerican Psychologist award in the Spanish or Portuguese category. Among the top awards granted by the American Psychological Association (i.e., Association-wide awards), there is the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training. As previously mentioned, it was awarded to Serrano-García and, in 2005, the American Psychological Association published the respective award citation, biography, and selected references (American Psychological Association, 2005). Another example is the Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology; it was granted to Ardila in 2007 (American Psychological Association, 2007) and to Fernández Álvarez in 2016 (American Psychological Association, 2016). In the case of these two, their peer-reviewed articles appeared in the respective year volume of the *American Psychologist* (Ardila, 2007; Fernández Álvarez et al., 2016). Lastly, we would like to encourage SIP's Board to examine the proportion of awardees that have occupied its presidency and to reflect on that in an effort to derive meaning from it, if any, and beyond the ones indicated previously.

Finally, we would like to encourage SIP to consider instituting additional awards, this time to recognize the work of teams, collectives, or groups. The increasing complexities of the issues addressed by psychologists and the welcomed, evermore common modality of collaboration among researchers and professionals to tackle the sizable challenges faced by humanity, make relevant the institution of such awards. In fact, the Rubén Ardila Award serves as a model example of this approach where, starting in 2019, two distinct categories of awards are granted, one to an individual and another to a research team.

Conclusion

Awardees have been remarkable pioneers who have devoted their clinical, research, and academic careers to helping advance the field of psychology in Latin

America and beyond. For those who have passed or retired, their knowledge and legacy live on through psychological concepts, terminology, and theory, as well as through training programs at the local, national, regional, and international levels. As Ardila (2011) indicated, psychologists must guard themselves against becoming desensitized to the pain and suffering that exists in many societies, and focus on eradicating poverty, inequality, discrimination, and violence that continue to harm the lives of many individuals, families, and groups. Indeed, awardees' contributions have been foundational and relentless in helping to improve the life of members in society by using psychological knowledge to advance social justice in psychology in Latin America and beyond.

In closing, this article has sought to further materialize the utopia envisioned by SIP founders, one where colleagues from different countries in the Americas can interact as learning partners, recognizing and making use of the unique contributions made by psychologists throughout the continent. The modest way in which we have sought to contribute to materialize such utopia here has been by providing a systematic analysis in English of the unique and shared contributions made by the distinguished group of psychologists who received SIP's Interamerican Psychology award in the Spanish or Portuguese category.

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