

Sixty years of the Inter American Society of Psychology (SIP): Origins and development

Abstract

This work presents a historical overview of the Inter American Society of Psychology, which was founded on December 17th, 1951, in Mexico City. In the first place the historical circumstances of the foundation period are presented, the people that made this organization possible and the state of psychology in the American continent at that time. Secondly, the most important activities that the Inter American Society of Psychology have developed during its sixty years of history are mentioned, such as the publication of books and scientific journals, the formation of several task forces and the Inter American Congresses of Psychology, among others. Basically, the purpose of this work is to review the history of the Inter American Society of Psychology through the recovery of various documentary sources.

Key words: Inter American Society of Psychology / Americas / Psychology / History.

Introduction

The Inter American Society of Psychology (Sociedad Interamericana de Psicología, SIP) constitution date was December 17th of 1951, in Mexico City, when a group of professionals planned to generate an institution with the aim of strengthening the academic, scientific and professional bounds among psychologists from the American continent (Angelini, 1979; Alarcón, 2004; Ardila, 1972, 1986).

SIP activities have been highlighted in different opportunities (Angelini, 1979; Ardila, 1986; Ferdman, 2000; Villegas, 2004). Likewise, various papers have inquired into the historical content of its activities and its main figures (Colotla & Urra, 2006; Gallegos, 2011, 2012; Klappenbach, 2004). All these references demonstrate the importance of SIP in the development of Inter American psychology.

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3 On the basis of these productions and other primary and secondary documentary
4 sources, this paper has two objectives. On one hand, the objective of describing the context of
5 creation of SIP, its prominent figures and the state of psychology around the middle of the
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10 20th century. On the other hand, to mention the most important activities that SIP has carried
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12 out during its 60 years of history.

13 14 **SIP foundation: context and personalities**

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16 SIP foundation contextually occurred during the geopolitical movements after the end
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18 of Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, which virtually divided the world
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20 into two well-defined blocks: capitalism and communism (Hobsbawm, 1994).
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23 Such postwar context resulted in an occasion for the two-way communication between
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25 science and politics. This situation generated important implications for scientists and
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27 scientific and technological activities in the social, economic and political development for
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29 countries of the contemporary world (Bell, 1973; Ben-David, 1971).
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32 SIP represents an important progress in the development of a scientific field, specifically
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34 for the discipline of psychology; it was the first time that efforts to organize the professionals
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36 of the American continent were carried out.
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41 “On December 14, 1951, Dr. Eduardo Krapf (Argentina); Dr. W. Line (Canada); Dr. Enrique B. B.
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43 Roxo (Brasil); Dr. Carlos Nassar (Chile); Dr. Werner Wolff (USA); Dr. Jaime Barrios Peña
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45 (Guatemala), and Dr. Osvaldo Robles (México) invited their psychologists colleagues who were
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47 gathered in Mexico City for the Fourth International Congress of Mental Health, to help them
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49 found an Inter American Association of Psychologists” (Actas, 1955: 753).
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52 The textual words of that original invitation expressed the following:
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56 “Dear Colleague:
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3 Taking into consideration the importance of Psychology in many social problems, its great
4 significance in the field of science and the urgent need for the specialists in this discipline to have
5 an interchange of ideas that would allow the improvement of specific institutions and of the
6 profession of Psychology, we take the liberty to invite you to take part in the shaping of the Inter
7 American Society of Psychology.
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11 It is of great interest to us to count on your valuable co-operation, and for this reason, and if you
12 agree with us, please send us your "curriculum vitae" and your address. Please make this
13 invitation extensive to other members of our profession in your country" (Actas, 1955: 753).
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20 The period of war and political conflict that suffered Europe during the first half of the
21 20th Century, had a singular repercussion over the development of psychology in the
22 Americas. An important team of various professionals that were trained with the growing
23 experimental psychology in Europe immigrated to different countries of the American
24 continent. Some of them settled in the north, basically in the United States and Mexico, and
25 others lived and worked in Latin America, in countries like Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay
26 (Ardila, 1986; Carpintero, 1993, 2005; Díaz-Guerrero, 1994; León & Gueter, 1993; Sánchez-
27 Sosa & Valderrama-Iturbe, 2001).
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37 The development of Latin American psychology benefited from this migratory flow,
38 since several of the emigrants were very important for the institutional, scientific and
39 professional development of psychology in the region. Those emigrants created scientific
40 societies, organized various scientific publications, promoted scientific events and contributed
41 with the education of psychologists, among other activities.
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49 Among the most outstanding personalities of this migratory movement, who are
50 generally known as the pioneers of psychology, are: Waclaw Radecki in Brazil and Uruguay,
51 Mercedes Rodrigo in Colombia, Helena Antipoff in Brazil, Emilio Mira y López in
52 Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, Walter Blumenfeld in Peru and Béla Székely in Argentina,
53 Brazil and Chile, among others.
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3 Certainly, there is also a group of local pioneers that promoted psychology in Latin
4 America: José Ingenieros, Horacio Piñero, Enrique Mouchet and José Bleger in Argentina;
5 Honorio Delgado, Hermilio Valdizán and Mariano Ibérico in Peru; Manoel Lourenço Filho,
6 Angela Biaggio and Arrigo Angelini in Brazil; Ezequiel Chávez and Enrique Aragón in
7 Mexico; and Abelardo Iturriaga, Luis Tirapegui and Hernán Larraín in Chile, among others.
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12 In the United States and Canada, although in different in periods and of different
13 significance, several leading figures of psychology were migrants to those countries (see León
14 & Gueter, 1993). Towards the decade of 1930, it is pointed out the arrival of Kurt Lewin,
15 Wolfgang Köhler and William Stern to the United States, among others. Erich Fromm,
16 German emigrated, spent many years in United States and Mexico. In turn, James Baldwin
17 visited Mexico and Canada.
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22 Regarding the local psychologists in the United States, it is recognized the major
23 influence of authors like Williams James, Stanley Hall, James Cattell and John B. Watson
24 (Ardila, 1972; Boring, 1950). Several of these psychologists studied with Wilhelm Wundt in
25 Germany. Even Edward Titchener (of English origin) and Hugo Münsterberg (of German
26 origin), who were also trained by Wundt in Leipzig, were important for the development of
27 psychology in the United States.
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32 The migratory movement in Iberoamerica also had its place in the history of
33 psychology. The social and political implications of the Spanish Civil War made that several
34 of the Spanish psychologists moved to different countries of the American continent, mainly
35 to the Spanish speaking part of America: Ángel Garma and Juan Cuatrecasas to Argentina,
36 Francisco Pascual del Roncal and Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora to Mexico, Guillermo Pérez
37 Enciso and Francisco del Olmo Barrios to Venezuela, Mercedes Rodrigo to Colombia, among
38 others (Carpintero, 1993, 2005).
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Part of this history can be seen in the founders of SIP. For example, Eduardo Krapf and Werner Wolff, who occupied the president and vice president positions, respectively, were German emigrates. Krapf was a medical doctor specialized in psychiatry who studied in Leipzig and stayed for a long time in Buenos Aires (Klappenbach, 2004). In turn, Wolff, who had obtained his doctorate in Berlin, spent a brief time in Spain and then settled in the United States (Colotla & Urra, 2006).

Here it is important to remember SIP First Steering Committee and its delegates. Such representatives had the task of writing the statutes of the Society, the legal registry and the announcement of the first scientific Congress of the society, among other things (Table 1).

Table 1: First Steering Committee

Position	Name	Country
President	Eduardo Krapf	Argentina
Vicepresident	Werner Wolff	United States
Secretary General	Oswaldo Robles	Mexico
Treasurer	Hernán Vergara	Colombia
Associate Vice-presidents	Carlos Nassar	Chile
	Jaime Barrios Peña	Guatemala
	William Line	Canadá

Source: Actas, 1955: 745.

During the early years of SIP, the first programs for the training of psychologists have just started in Latin America. Chile in 1946, Colombia in 1947, Argentina and Peru in 1955, Mexico and Venezuela in 1956, among others (Alarcón, 2004; Ardila, 1986; Gallegos, 2005, 2009; Klappenbach & Pavesi, 1994).

In the United States the formal psychology training was established earlier (McGovern, 1992). However, since 1930 it achieved higher degrees of formality in relation to

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3 the discussions concerning the education of psychologists in the clinical area (Gallegos,
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5 2010a).

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7 In turn, in Canada, there were already psychologists working on research during the
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9 first decades of the 20th century. However, the professionalization was only consolidated after
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11 1945, when the Second World War ended. Since 1938 a first meetings took place with the
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13 idea of forming the Canadian Psychological Association and in 1947 the professional
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15 certification of psychologists began (Conway, 2010).

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18 The middle of the 20th Century marked the cut-off point for psychology in the
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20 Americas. In the United States and Canada, the culmination of the Second World War
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22 enabled a new dimension for the profession: psychologists had already demonstrated their
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24 skills in the war efforts and now they could be able to contribute with the more general
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26 problems of contemporary society.
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30 In Latin America, this date marks a step from “psychology without psychologists”
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32 towards the time of “professionalization of the psychologist”. It is also a time in which
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34 science and scientific activities began to play a more decisive social, political and institutional
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36 role.
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39 It is important to remember that at the same time of the formation of SIP took place
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41 the creation of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) in July, 1951
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43 (Holtzman, 1976; Rosenzweig, & Holtzman, 1993). It is one of the most representative
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45 psychological organizations in the world, responsible for editing the *International Journal of*
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47 *Psychology*, organizing the International Congresses of Psychology and promoting
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49 psychology as a science and profession at the world level, among other things.
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52 IUPsyS has sponsored several activities carried out by SIP and also has promoted
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54 several activities developed by institutions and psychologists in the American continent. In
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order to finish this contextualization for the creation of SIP, it is important to remember the objectives that originated it.

“It was established that the nature, purpose and the goal of the SIP was that of an independent international organization of psychologists of the American countries whose duty it is to promote the cooperation of the psychologists of American in the teaching, investigation and professional practice of psychology, fomenting the creation of groups of studies, the holding of national and international meetings, the edition of an Interamerican Library of Psychology, the installation of an Interamerican Bulletin of Psychology and the constitution of a fund which would permit the exchange of professors and the facility for scholarships and the extension of studies and investigation” (Actas, 1955: 774-775).

SIP Activities

SIP, as a scientific society and a professional organization, had carried out important activities during its 60 years of existence. There have been many people who participated in this history. In table 2 the names of the presidents that the Society are presented from the beginning to the present day.

Table 2: SIP Presidents (1951-2011)

Name	Country	Time
Eduardo Krapf	Argentina	1951-1953
Oliver Brachfeld	Venezuela	1953-1955
Willard C. Olson	United States	1955-1956
Otto Klineberg	United States	1956-1957
Guillermo Dávila	Mexico	1957-1959
Gustave M. Gilbert	United States	1959-1961
José A. Bustamante	Cuba	1961-1963
Harold H. Anderson	United States	1963-1964
Carlos A. Seguin	Peru	1965-1966
Wayne H. Holtzman	United States	1966-1967
Rogelio Díaz Guerrero	Mexico	1967-1969
Robert M. Malmo	Canada	1969-1971
Arrigo L. Angelini	Brazil	1971-1973

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3	David Belanger	Canada	1973-1975
4	Rubén Ardila	Colombia	1975-1977
5	Herbert C. Kelman	United States	1976-1979
6	Aroldo Rodrigues	Brazil	1979-1981
7	Luis F. S. Natalicio	United States	1981-1983
8	Isabel Reyes Lagunes	Mexico	1983-1985
9	Harry Triandis	United States	1985-1987
10	José Miguel Salazar	Venezuela	1987-1989
11	Gerardo Marín	United States	1989-1991
12	Angela Biaggio	Brazil	1991-1993
13	Martin Fishbein	United States	1993-1995
14	Euclídez Sánchez	Venezuela	1995-1997
15	Bárbara Marín	United States	1997-1999
16	Susan Pick	Mexico	1999-2001
17	Bernardo Ferdman	United States	2001-2003
18	Héctor Fernández Álvarez	Argentina	2003-2005
19	Rolando Díaz-Loving	Mexico	2005-2007
20	Andrés Consoli	United States	2007-2009
21	María Regina Maluf	Brazil	2009-2011
22	José Toro-Alfonso	Puerto Rico	2011-2013
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Source: Interamerican Society of Psychology.

SIP has performed several activities with the aim of establishing connections among psychologists of the Americas. For example, it has organized 33 Inter American Congresses of Psychology, in different countries of the American continent (Table 3). At the beginning, the Congresses were organized in the northern region of America and later they extended to the rest of the continent.

Table 3: Interamerican Congresses of Psychology (1953-2011)

Number	Place	President	Assistants	Year
I	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	Andrés Avelino García	50	1953
II	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	Guillermo Dávila	200	1954
III	Austin, Texas, United States	Wayne Holtzman	150	1955
IV	Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico	Marion García	200	1956
V	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	Rogelio Díaz Guerrero	350	1957
VI	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Lourenço Filho	399	1959
VII	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	Guillermo Dávila	650	1961
VIII	Mar del Plata, Argentina	Fernanda Monasterio	690	1963

IX	Miami, Florida, United States	Marshall Jones	300	1964
X	Lima, Peru	Carlos Alberto Seguí	466	1966
XI	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	Rogelio Díaz Guerrero	900	1967
XII	Montevideo, Uruguay	Elida J. Tuana	392	1969
XIII	Panama City, Panama	Carlos Malgrat	700	1971
XIV	São Paulo, Brasil	Arrigo Angelini	3072	1973
XV	Bogotá, Colombia	José Antonio Sánchez	2800	1974
XVI	Miami, Florida, United States	Gordon Finley	720	1976
XVII	Lima, Perú	Reynaldo Alarcón	4000	1979
XVIII	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	Rolando Tabar	1600	1981
XIX	Quito, Ecuador	Nelson Serrano	2000	1983
XX	Caracas, Venezuela	José Miguel Salazar	2500	1985
XXI	La Habana, Cuba	Jorge Grau	1500	1987
XXII	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Héctor Fernández Álvarez	2540	1989
XXIII	San Jose, Costa Rica	Daniel Flores Mora	2500	1991
XXIV	Santiago, Chile	Julio Villegas	2500	1993
XXV	San Juan, Puerto Rico	Irma Serrano-García	2000	1995
XXVI	São Paulo, Brasil	Maria Regina Maluf	2200	1997
XXVII	Caracas, Venezuela	Maritza Montero	1800	1999
XXVIII	Santiago, Chile	Antonio Mladinic	1500	2001
XXIX	Lima, Perú	Cecilia Thorne	1700	2003
XXX	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Mario Molina	3757	2005
XXXI	Mexico, D.F., México	Isabel Reyes Lagunes	1200	2007
XXXII	Guatemala City, Guatemala	María Pilar Grazioso	1700	2009
XXXIII	Medellín, Colombia	Henry Castillo	2266	2011

Source: Interamerican Society of Psychology.

These Congresses have grown in the number of paper presented and in the number of participants. While in the early Congresses the number of participants was no larger than 500, in the recent congresses the average participation was around 2000 members. In some congresses the massive participation of students have been highlighted (Angelini, 1979), as well as in other activities of SIP (Gallegos, 2009).

SIP has also promoted the formation of several task forces in different areas of psychology. These groups are constituted by active members of the Society and have the aim of developing research lines, as well as collaborating in the organization of the Inter American Congresses. In Table 4 the current task forces are presented.

Table 4: Task Forces (2009-2011)

Task Forces	Coordinator	Country
Environmental Psychology	José Pinheiro	Brazil
Clinical Psychology	Diego Castrillón	Colombia
Community Psychology	Francheska Cintrón	Puerto Rico
Psychology and Education	Aldo Bazán	Mexico
Students	Marcelo Buenahora	Paraguay
	Migna Rivera	Puerto Rico
Ethics and Deontology	Richard Tori	Peru
History of Psychology	Ana Jacó	Brazil
	Ana Guzzi	Puerto Rico
Organizational Psychology	Karisol Chevere	Puerto Rico
	Luis Ahumada	Chile
Formation and Training of Psychologists	Ilia Rosario Nieves	Puerto Rico
Health Psychology	Alfonso Urzúa	Chile
Traffic Psychology and Safety	Mirta Fernández	Argentina
Psychology and Sexual Diversity	David Ramírez	Costa Rica
Violence	Silvia Pugliese	Argentina
Psychology and Poverty	María del Pilar Grazioso	Guatemala

Source: Interamerican Society of Psychology.

The granting of the Interamerican Psychology Awards is another activity organized by SIP (Table 5). They have been awarded since 1976, every two years, during the Inter American Congresses (Ardila, 1986). Candidates are nominated by SIP members, based on to their contribution to psychology as a science and/or as a profession. They are awarded to two psychologists: one Spanish or Portuguese speaking and the other English or French speaking.

Table 5: Interamerican Psychology Award (1976-2011)

Nome	Name	Year
Rogelio Díaz Guerrero (Mexico)	Charles Osgood (United States)	1976
Arrigo L. Angelini (Brazil)	Wayne H. Holtzman (United States)	1979
Jacobo Varela (Uruguay)	Harry Triandis (United States)	1981
Rubén Ardila (Colombia)	Herbert C. Kelman (United States)	1983
Aroldo Rodrigues (Brazil)	David Belanger (Canadá)	1985
Emilio Ribes Iñesta (Mexico)	Martin Fishbein (United States)	1987

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3	Eduardo Rivera Medina (Puerto Rico)	Robert J. Newbrough (United States)	1989
4	Posthumous award	Joseph Matarazzo (United States)	1991
5	José Miguel Salazar (Venezuela)	Sydney Bijou (United States)	1993
6	Maritza Montero (Venezuela)	Gerardo Marín (United States)	1995
7	Rolando Díaz-Loving (Mexico)	Florence Denmark (United States)	1997
8	Héctor Fernández Álvarez (Argentina)	John Berry (Canadá)	1999
9	Silvia Maurer Lane (Brazil)	John Adair (Canadá)	2001
10	Euclides Sánchez (Venezuela)	Barbara Van Oss Marín (United States)	2003
11	Irma Serrano-García (Puerto Rico)	Robert Sternberg (United States)	2005
12	Isabel Reyes Lagunes (Mexico)	Alice Eagly (United States)	2007
13	José Toro Alfonso (Puerto Rico)	Albert Bandura (United States)	2009
14	Susan Pick (Mexico)	Judith Gibbons (United States)	2011
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18	<i>Source:</i> Interamerican Society of Psychology.		
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22	Two posthumous awards have been granted: to Carlos Albizu-Miranda from Puerto		
23	Rico, in 1987 and to Ignacio Martín-Baró from El Salvador, in 1991. Since 2007, the Inter		
24	American Psychology Award, for the Hispanic or Portuguese version, has been named		
25	Rogelio Díaz Guerrero, to honor of one of SIP pioneers. Since 1991, it has also been		
26	instituted the Inter American Student Awards, granted to undergraduate and to graduate		
27	students (Ferdman, 2000).		
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35	Regarding publications, SIP has promoted book editions, minutes of congresses,		
36	scientific journals, and others. It is worth mentioning for its importance and significance for		
37	psychology in the region the books <i>Psicología en las Américas (Psychology in the Americas)</i>		
38	(Alonso & Eagly, 1999) and <i>Problemas centrales para la formación académica y el</i>		
39	<i>entrenamiento profesional del psicólogo en las Américas (Central problems in academic</i>		
40	<i>formation and professional training of psychologists in the Americas)</i> (Toro & Villegas,		
41	2001; Villegas, Marassi & Toro, 2003a & b).		
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51	Also, papers on community psychology presented at SIP congresses were compiled in		
52	books (Montero, 1997; Varas-Díaz & Serrano-García, 2005). Also, the proceedings of the		
53	Inter American congresses have been published: in some cases containing the whole papers,		
54	in some others with a summary of the papers, and in others just with the invited lectures. With		
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3 sound judgment, all these publications were treated as a real library for psychology students
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5 in the Americas (Díaz-Guerrero, 1994).
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7 As regards to periodical publications, SIP began with a *Newsletter* (1957), that was
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9 later titled *Interamerican Psychologist* (1976) and then redefined as *Interamerican*
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11 *Psychology* (2007). With the sponsorship of IUPsyS, between 1981 and 1983, it was edited a
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13 journal entitled *Spanish-Language Psychology* with the aim of sharing in English the
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15 productions that were not part of the “lingua franca” of the science, scientific papers
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17 published originally in Spanish or Portuguese.
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20 As a matter of fact, the most important SIP publication is the *Interamerican Journal of*
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22 *Psychology* (IJP), created in 1967 (Ardila, 1986; Ferdman, 2000; Gallegos, 2010b). In Table
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24 6, it can be seen the names of the editors of the journal from its beginnings until now.
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30 Table 6: Editors of the IJP (1967-2011)

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

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Source: Interamerican Society of Psychology.

Originally, the IJP included papers en English, Spanish and Portuguese, and in 1998
also in French (Cassepp, 2004). The content of the journal since 2000 year is open access.
This is the result of an open access editorial politics recently initiated (Koller & Trzesniak,
2003).

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3 Large amounts of articles, reviews, brief reports, special sections, student awards and
4 many other contents have been published in its pages, from 1967 to today. It has published
5 papers by authors from different countries in the world, considering a large representation of
6 psychologists in the Americas. During the first decades the journal published more papers
7 from North American authors, but in recent years papers from Latin American and
8 Caribbean authors have increased (Cassepp, 2004; Maluf, 2004; Serrano-García & Resto-
9 Olivo, 2003).

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11 Last but not least is the historical video of SIP compiled by Marcelo Urrea, which
12 reviews the history of the Inter American Society of Psychology. Shortly, it is expected the
13 edition of the book compiled by Hugo Klappenbach and Ramón León, which contains several
14 autobiographies from important psychologists who have been closely related to SIP history.

25 26 27 **Conclusions**

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29 More than 60 years have passed since the foundation SIP. From its early beginnings,
30 several psychiatrists were instrumental in setting up and development of SIP. Eventually, due
31 to greater academic professionalization of psychology, SIP has become an institution
32 exclusively administered by psychologists.

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34 This institution was born in an environment marked by the Second World War effects,
35 the beginning of the Cold War and the great exile that many scientists suffered due to the
36 Spanish Civil War. It was also a period in which the first academic programs in psychology
37 were developed in Latin America, while in United States and Canada the profession as
38 psychologist had been previously consolidated.

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40 A great deal of important activities had taken place during its existence: scientific
41 meetings, awards, creation of task forces and books editions, congress minutes, and the
42 publication of a first class scientific journal.

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3 For all these achievements and others that have not been mentioned, it should be noted
4 the importance that SIP has had in the scientific, academic and professional development of
5 psychology in the Americas. In the strict sense, SIP activities have had a major prominence
6 and impact in the Latin American region.
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11 While it is recognized as an Inter American institution, eventually the activities of SIP
12 have concentrated in Latin America, at the same time there have been productive exchanges
13 within Iberoamerica (Gallegos, 2011). This has not been an explicit or intentional purpose of
14 SIP, but it became evident in the last decades (Villegas, 2004).
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20 It will be a pending assignment to continue fostering the relationship between the
21 Anglo-American and Latin American nations, without losing sight of the communication with
22 the rest of the world, and the most representative scientific institutions of the international
23 psychology as the IUPsyS. The aim of the present article was to contribute to describe SIP
24 activities during its first 60 years of history.
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