



# PSYCHOLOGY AND PROFESSION IN SPAIN. THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SPANISH PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Macarena Tortosa-Pérez<sup>1</sup>, Jesus Santolaya Prego de Oliver<sup>2</sup>, Francisco Santolaya<sup>3</sup> and Francisco Tortosa<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universidad Internacional de Valencia-VIU, España. <sup>2</sup>Universidad Europea de Valencia.

<sup>3</sup>Consejo General de la Psicología de España. <sup>4</sup>Universidad de Valencia

*La creación del COP tuvo enorme trascendencia para el establecimiento de la Psicología y para dotarla de identidad. Desde la Ley de creación en 1980, esta organización de carácter semipúblico destinada a ordenar y representar la profesión no ha dejado de crecer, a pesar de graves problemáticas internas y externas. El COP ha pasado por diversas etapas, que reflejan y al tiempo ayudan a caracterizar la corta historia disciplinar de la psicología, sobre todo su definición, frente a otras profesiones. El artículo ofrece una amplia revisión legislativa y documental, sobre todo desde su revista portavoz, Papeles del Psicólogo. Analiza sus complicados primeros años, hasta 1993, bajo la dirección de Carlos Camarero y de Adolfo Hernández, marcados por la configuración interna de la Organización, una grave problemática profesional, y la lucha por conseguir la Licenciatura.*

**Palabras clave:** Psicología española, Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos, Historia, Imagen pública

*The creation of the Spanish Psychological Association (Spanish acronym, COP) was of enormous significance in the establishing of psychology in Spain, and in the creation of its identity. Since the publication of the 1980 Law of Creation [of the COP], this organization—aimed at regulating and representing the psychology profession—has not stopped growing, despite the serious internal and external issues it has had. The Spanish Psychological Association has gone through different stages over the past 40 years, which reflect and help us to characterize the short history of Spanish psychology, in particular the history of its delimitation with respect to other professions. This article presents an extensive legislative and documentary review, particularly based on its representative publication, Papeles del Psicólogo/Psychologist Papers. We analyze the complicated early years, up to 1993, under the direction of Carlos Camarero and Adolfo Hernández, a phase marked by the internal configuration of the organization, a serious challenge for the profession, and the fight to approve the master's degree.*

**Key words:** Spanish psychology, Spanish Psychological Association, History, Public image

**H**istory articles often fall into ceremonial excesses, and one of them is to point out the beginning, to look for a date in order to turn it into a *myth of origin*. Undoubtedly, every history has a beginning, and in the case of the history of Spanish psychology many dates are candidates, and all of them accumulate reasons to support their choice (Blanco, 1997; Carpintero, 2004; Freixa, 2005; Saiz & Saiz, 1996).

One option is 1902 (Campos & Llavona, 1987; Campos, Bandrés & Carpintero, 2002; Carpintero, 2014; Quintana, 2004a), when Luis Simarro occupied a chair of Experimental Psychology in the Natural Sciences Section of the Faculty of Sciences of the Central University. Another would be 1936, the year of the failed international congress of Madrid, which should have discussed a curriculum for a degree in psychology (Carpintero & Lafuente, 2008), or 1948, when a

modest department of experimental psychology was created at the Luis Vives Institute of Philosophy of the Higher Council for Scientific Research-CSIC (Huertas, Padilla & Montes, 1997; Quintana, 2004b), or 1952, when a Spanish Society of Psychology (SEP in Spanish) was formed, which had, among its objectives, the creation of university studies and a professional section (Carpintero & Tortosa, 1996; Martí, 1990), or 1953, when the School of Applied Psychology and Psychotechnics started with the first specifically psychological curriculum and its three sections of professional specialization (Bandrés & Llavona, 2004; Quintana, 2010), or the appearance of psychology studies in Madrid universities in the late 1960s (Rosa & Travieso, 2002; Travieso, Rosa & Duro, 2001).

However, from a ceremonial and presentist perspective, 1979 is usually chosen, firstly because of the magic of coinciding with the centenary of the «foundation» of scientific psychology with Wundt (Vera, 2005), and secondly because RD 1652/1979 and Law 43/1979 were published, creating the independent Faculties of Psychology and the Spanish Psychological Association (COP), respectively. The year 1979

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Correspondence: Macarena Tortosa. Universidad Internacional de Valencia - VIU. Email: macarena.tortosap@campusviu.es.

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7900-4877>



satisfies the requirements for a ceremonial election. In this article, it is chosen because of the creation of the COP, a corporation of Law in which should be integrated those who intend to exercise the profession of psychologists, preceding by 10 years the publication of RD 1428/1990, which established the official university degree of Licentiate in Psychology.

The statement, repeated in the historiography of psychology, that applied psychology precedes and pulls along academic psychology, acquires legal concreteness. The new degree developed rapidly in the environments propitiated 10 years earlier by RD 1652 and Law 43. Since then, the *boom*, the *big Spanish psychology* (Tortosa, Santolaya & Civera, 2015). We propose a historical reading of the early years of the COP, attending to its role in the definition and consolidation of Spanish psychology as a discipline, combining methodological rigor with a sense of the present (Vera, 2008).

#### PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS CIRCUMSTANCES DURING THE DICTATORSHIP

In the middle of the silver age of Spanish culture, the conditions seemed to be propitious, internally and externally, to make the leap from scientific psychotechnics, where *psychology* was installed, to a university degree. But everything that had been built to incorporate, based on its applications, psychology in the university, as was happening in many Western countries, was swept away during the three barbaric years of our (in)civil war, «during which practically all scientific activity was paralyzed, and which had longer-term consequences, even after the end of the war» (Germain, 1980, 139).

During the involitional years of the *high Franco regime*, illustrious emigration and the brutal repression and depuration turned Spanish science into barren land. Ideologization, immobilism, and centralization presided over the resumption of research activity at the CSIC, of psychotechnics, dependent

on the National Institute of Applied Psychology and Psychotechnics, and of the little training offered in high school and universities. Everything was subordinated to the cultural interests of the new State, which pursued the restoration of the classical and Christian unity of the sciences (Díaz-Pinés, 1964). *National Catholicism* would dominate Spanish scientific life for years (López, 2016).

In those *circumstances*, so little conducive to the development of a scientific psychology, the slow and tortuous path of the discipline began, led by Germain and a handful of collaborators<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1). A path in which the connection between Albert Michotte and his laboratory at the University of Leuven, and the group of psychologists constellated by Zaragüeta and Germain in Madrid would play an important role (Leysen & Mülberger, 2018).

Between 1946 and 1956, this group (Yela, Pinillos, Siguán, Secadas, Pertejo, García-Yagüe, Monasterio, Romano, Úbeda)<sup>2</sup> participated decisively in a series of events that straightened the path of psychology (Huertas, Padilla, & Montes, 1997). In 1946, an ambitious publishing project took shape, the *Revista de Psicología General y Aplicada / RPGA (Journal of General and Applied Psychology / RPGA)*, which would welcome in its pages the few who worked in scientific psychology and/or psychotechnics. Two years later, Barbado's unfinished project to create an Institute of Psychology at the CSIC for the training of future researchers was completed<sup>3</sup>. In the early 50's the SEP was constituted<sup>4</sup>, which immediately joined the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), giving international visibility to psychology and psychotechnics in Spain<sup>5</sup>. In addition, members of the group established the first stable connections with public institutions and private companies, facilitating the emergence of psychological services companies. They controlled a good part of the institutions where psychology and/or psychotechnics were produced or published, orienting it in a direction in which rigor and professionalism were the guiding principles for action.

<sup>1</sup> «(...) Behind or in front, directly or indirectly, in the impulse and in the work of all of Spanish psychology of the last forty years ... To Germain we owe (...) all the decisive events in the recent history of Spanish psychology» (Yela, 1967, 235-236). An assumption also shared by another of his collaborators, José Luis Pinillos (Pinillos, 1981), which is also widely assumed in the highly personalized historiography on Spanish psychology, often somewhat uncritical and naive (Quintana, 2010, 26).

<sup>2</sup> «(...) The basic idea was that we had to develop a Scientific Psychology (...) But in addition to this, we did many other things and, fundamentally, what we did was to set up a kind of team, a mentality and a project for the future. A project that (...) was developed in a series of achievements, of the Society, of the School of Psychology and, finally, of the degree in Psychology» (Siguán, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> «(...) that is where the Madrid school of psychologists was practically born, those who today are professors, assistants, and others» (Germain, 1983, 45).

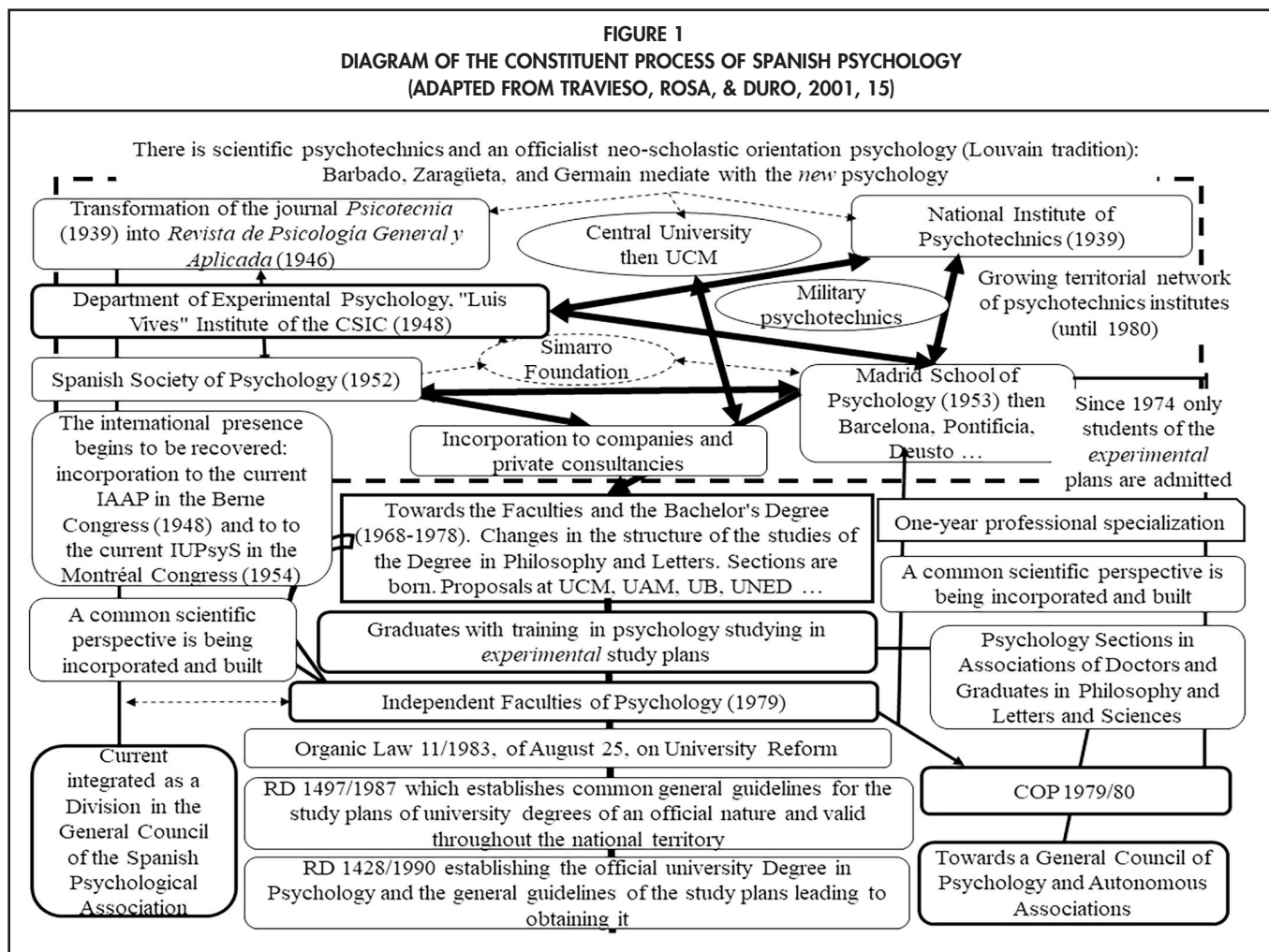
<sup>4</sup> Its bylaws were approved on May 9, 1952 (Anonymous, 1952).

<sup>5</sup> It joins other supranational associations such as The International Association of Applied Psychology-IAAP or the Inter-American Society of Psychology [SIP in Spanish].

Each new achievement advanced towards its goal, the creation of psychological studies of university rank<sup>6</sup>. A first step was the creation, in 1953, of the School of Psychology and Psychotechnics within the University of Madrid<sup>7</sup>. «The growing scientific and social importance of psychology and the need to ensure that those responsible for conducting

psychological examinations can perform their duties with full technical proficiency, advise the creation of a center in which the teaching of this discipline and the training of those who cultivate it for various purposes are duly attended to.” (Ministry of National Education, 1953, 3627). The applications continued to draw from theory and training<sup>8</sup>.

**FIGURE 1**  
**DIAGRAM OF THE CONSTITUENT PROCESS OF SPANISH PSYCHOLOGY**  
(ADAPTED FROM TRAVIESO, ROSA, & DURO, 2001, 15)



<sup>6</sup> «We ask for serious and fundamental training in a university environment. Only in the university environment can the complex and varied teaching required for the formation of the psychologist be given, and only from the university can come a psychologist of the category that will make him/her a professional technician capable of practicing with competence and security in the clinic, in the school, or in the industry where he/she is called to work (...)...). They need the university protection and the link with the research laboratory (...) this development calls for the establishment in Spain with university status and with professional rights, this practical research activity, which the psychologist has practiced until now without the university protection that we desire». (Germain, 1953, 489).

<sup>7</sup> DECREE of May 29, 1953, years later a similar project was started in Barcelona (ORDER of November 10, 1965).

<sup>8</sup> It coincides with a juncture (1951-1956) of a certain ideological opening in the national Catholic Spanish university (Otero, 2014), with the liberal Falangists of Christian Democrat orientation Joaquín Ruíz Giménez as Minister of National Education, and Pedro Laín Entralgo as Rector of the Central University of Madrid.

Scientific proposals were beginning to move «from wearing black cassocks to wearing white coats» (Hofrichter, 2015, 32).

The project did not satisfy the wishes expressed by the group (Germain, 1953; Yela, 1953), but it was the first *degreefying* proposal, to a certain extent singularizing, for those who aspired to become psychologists in the Spain of the 1950s. The university building began to be constructed by starting with the roof first, but the «fact is that we were able, nevertheless, to begin» (Yela, 1982, 290). Siguán pointed out what years later would mean the beginning of the conversion of psychological studies into a degree, «the creation of a Psychology Section in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters» (Siguán, 1955, 257).

The touchdown at the university took place with the II Development Plan, its consolidation beginning during the industrial reconversion. It arrived in the midst of the student struggle that led to the ministerial change of a contested Lora-Tamayo for Villar-Palasi and a transformation of the university<sup>9</sup>. During the academic year 1967-1968, a special program within the Philosophy Section at the University of Madrid, in force during 1968-69, gave way (1969-1970) to its own program dependent on the now autonomous Psychology Section of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters<sup>10</sup>(Blanco, 1998; Blanco & Botella, 1995; Rosa & Travieso, 2001). A similar process occurred at the University

of Barcelona (Gabucio et al., 1994; Siguán, 1978), which spread to other universities with new legislative changes<sup>11</sup>.

In May 1979, the slow and intermittent incorporation of psychology into the university structure culminated when the creation of independent psychology faculties was legislated<sup>12</sup>. The transformation of sections into faculties and the request for new faculties began immediately. One stage began and another ended. The old Institute of Psychology, transformed by RD 2689/1980 into the Institute of Educational and Professional Guidance, and, after some years of difficult coexistence, the studies of the Schools of Psychology (Bandrés & Llavona, 2004) disappeared, as had happened with the Department of the CSIC. Only the SEP and the RPGA remained.

The necessary professional complement, for years forbidden by Francoism which reduced the SEP to a *purely scientific*<sup>13</sup> association, was granted citizenship with the approval of Law 43/1979 on the creation of a state COP—after five years of struggle during the complex political transition, and at the proposal of the Communist and Socialist groups.

The decade of the 1970's, effervescent in society, economy, and science, ended with great expectations for psychology. The first graduates in Philosophy and Letters, then in Philosophy and Educational Sciences, in the Psychology Sections were the real protagonists of the struggle for their own association and degree. It was students that made the

<sup>9</sup> The period 1965-1970 was a key period for the University. Law 83/1965 on the structure of University Faculties and their teaching staff, Decree-Law 5/1968 on urgent measures for university restructuring, and Decree 1774/1968, which developed the first article of Decree-Law 5/1968, were published, which substantially changed and modernized the University model.

<sup>10</sup> ORDER of July 15, 1969 creating the «Psychology» Section in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Madrid. ORDER of September 17, 1971, provisionally approving the Plan of Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the New Autonomous University of Madrid. Branch E (Psychology): It will mainly comprise psychological studies with a view to future specialization in Psychology.

<sup>11</sup> DECREE 1974/973 authorizing the restructuring of the current Faculties of Philosophy and Letters. RESOLUTION of the General Directorate of Universities and Research, determining the guidelines to be followed by the study plans of the Faculties of Philosophy and Letters, which already included specific common subjects and compulsory subjects for psychology students in the first cycle, as well as other specific subjects in the second cycle for the Psychology Section. Soon applied in different Faculties (Complutense and Autónoma de Madrid, Central and Autónoma de Barcelona, Pontificia de Salamanca, University College of Tarragona (today Rovira i Virgili University), La Laguna, Comillas, UNED, Granada, Salamanca, Murcia, Valencia, Basque Country, Oviedo, Santiago de Compostela, Seville, Deusto) created groups that would initiate a determined struggle to create independent Faculties and a Degree with its own curriculum.

<sup>12</sup> ROYAL DECREE 1652/1979 establishing the Faculties of Psychology.

<sup>13</sup> «You have seen in the Statutes that the aims of our Society have been limited with regard to professionalism, and that the phrase «to safeguard the professional interests in the various fields of activity in which the psychologist works» has been eliminated by the Superiority. This means that the scientific character of the Spanish Society of Psychology has been reinforced and that everything that has to do with the psychologist as a professional is removed from its tasks. Consequently, the Professional Section disappears from the Board (...)» (Germain, 1967, 6).



demands first and then precarious teachers, constellated around an *old guard* of self-made psychologists<sup>14</sup>(González, 2002; Martínez, 2007; Tortosa, Alonso & Civera, 1994). Based on a *left-wing* political activism, and the search for a status and a professional organization, they were in many cases immersed in the serious social conflicts that agitated the last years of *Franco's regime* (Duro, 2001; Hernández, 2001). Their struggle gave way to the 1980s, the decade of the *great psychology movement*.

### A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION IS BORN

On January 8, 1980, Law 43 was published. Its First Additional Provision established that the State Coordinating Committee of Professional Sections of Psychologists in the Official Colleges and of Doctors and Graduates in Philosophy and Letters and in Sciences should act as the Management Committee of the Association. It drew up the Provisional Statutes (Hernández, 1982b), approved by Order of March 24, 1980. They recognized the Management Committee as the Provisional Governing Board and established the conditions for membership, the governing bodies, and the first electoral process. The Provisional Board was made up of representatives of the Sections that had been operating at the state level, of which fourteen became Delegations of the Association (Governing Board, 1981a) (<sup>15</sup>Table 1).

The Board elected a Permanent Committee comprised of Carlos Camarero (Dean), Mercé Pérez (Vice-Dean), Adolfo Hernández (Secretary), Vicent Bermejo (Treasurer), and Cesar Gilolmo and Jordi Bajet (members). Shortly thereafter, Carlos Camarero himself<sup>16</sup> became president of the State Governing Board, beginning a six-year term during which no elections were called (Table 2).

The law regulated an essential aspect of the profession, the university degrees required in order to be able to practice legally<sup>17</sup>, and also established mandatory

**TABLE 1**  
**FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COP**

1980.	Delegation of Euskadi
	1983. Sub-delegation of Araba;
	1983. Sub-delegation of Bizkaia;
	1983. Sub-delegation of Gipuzkoa
1980.	Delegation of Eastern Andalusia
	The psychologists of Melilla are part of the Delegation.
1980.	Delegation of Western Andalusia
	The psychologists of Ceuta are part of the Delegation.
1980.	North Delegation
	1980. Sub-delegation of Cantabria
	1983. Sub-delegation of the Principality of Asturias.
1980.	Delegation of Castilla y León
1980.	Delegation of Catalonia
	1985. Approval of the creation of the Col·legi Oficial de Psicòlegs de Catalunya with sub-delegations in Tarragona, Lleida, and Girona.
1980.	Delegation of Galicia
1980.	Balearic Islands Delegation.
1980.	Madrid Delegation
	1983. Sub-delegation of Extremadura
	1983. Sub-delegation of Murcia (Began operating as a Delegation on January 1, 1989).
	1984. Sub-delegation of Castilla La Mancha
1980.	Delegation of Navarra together with La Rioja
	In 1993, the company was divided into two delegations
1980.	Delegation of Las Palmas
1980.	Delegation of Santa Cruz de Tenerife
1981.	Valencian Country Delegation
1983.	Delegation of Aragon

The history of the beginning of the Delegations can be found in issues 78 (Las Palmas, Castile and León, Extremadura), 79 (Principality of Asturias, La Rioja, Galicia, Western Andalusia, Balearic Islands, Valencian Community), 80 (Cantabria, Aragón, Euskadi, Eastern Andalusia, Madrid, Tenerife, Navarra, Castilla La Mancha).

<sup>14</sup> «As a whole, the teaching received by the psychology student is quite deficient. And not because the curriculum is unsatisfactory, although everyone is free to criticize it as they see fit from their own way of understanding psychology (...) the truth is that the list of subjects that make up the psychology degree in our universities is very similar to that found in universities in other countries. What fails are the material means -classrooms, laboratories, practical classes, libraries-, even the quality and experience of the professors, and, above all, the administration and functioning of the teaching, the coordination between professors, and the efficacy of the services». (Siguán, 1978, 127).

<sup>15</sup> The delay in the approval of the definitive Statutes led to a serious organizational problem in 1985. The Generalitat of Catalonia approved the Statutes of the Psychological Association of Catalonia, thereby creating a *de facto* autonomous association where there was already a state association, which did not see its scope of action limited to Catalonia, since, by normative hierarchy, the provision of an autonomous region does not limit a law approved by the state courts (Governing Board, 1985a).

<sup>16</sup> Carlos Camarero, who had chaired the Standing Committee of the Psychology Section of the Association of Doctors and Graduates in Philosophy and Letters of Madrid, and the Governing Board of the Madrid Delegation, also assumed the presidency of the State Governing Board. These are times in which it is difficult to distinguish where the Madrid Delegation ends and the State Association begins.



membership. It made it possible to regulate professional practice and monitor the quality of the services offered through the deontological control (sanctioning capacity) of the activities, as well as to exclusively represent and defend the professional interests of its members (Chacón, 2009).

The COP became the articulator and supporter of a growing professional group, with the help of the psychology sections and departments, despite the obvious mismatch between the training content and the labor market. In 1982, this group was mainly made up<sup>18</sup> of women (59% compared to 41%) and young people (40% were under 25 years of age and 70% under 30; only 3% were over 45), and only one out of every two individuals (45-50%) practiced psychology as their main activity, almost a quarter (20-25%) were unemployed, and the rest practiced psychology part-time or worked in a non-psychology-related activity (Hernández, 1984).

Among its main purposes were to make the proper use of the

label «psychologist» understood and enforced, to implement the necessary means for the proper development of a profession that lacked a social and professional image, to protect it from intrusion, and to ensure its proper practice (Santolaya, Berdullas, & Fernández, 2002).

The 1980s began with a professional association, independent faculties, more than 20,000 graduates, and thousands of students who wanted an independent university degree, more than 2,000 graduates from the Schools, who in many cases worked as psychologists, but still *without* an official degree in psychology that would guarantee a professional pool<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, it is impossible to understand the institutionalization process without the COP (Travieso, Rosa, & Duro, 2001), an organization that maintained a belligerent social activism and a political leaning towards the left that had constituted the breeding ground among those who studied psychology.

The short history of disciplinary psychology begins. These were the years of Organic Law 11/1983 on University Reform, RD 1497/1987 establishing common general guidelines for the curricula of university degrees of an official nature and valid throughout the national territory, and RD 1428/1990 establishing the official university degree of Bachelor of Psychology, and the general guidelines for the curricula leading to it.

The degree reflected a transcendental agreement, the result of the confluence of interests between the university and the COP. It preserves the single degree in psychology, relegating specializations to the postgraduate stage (Fernández, 1999). It qualifies for a specific professional practice, establishing obligations and rights, among them the exclusive use of the label «psychologist», penalizing those who use it without due administrative recognition (Santolaya, Berdullas, & Fernández, 2002).

Many things happened during these 10 years. The Association was endowed (1981) with an organ of expression, *Papeles del Colegio*<sup>20</sup>, for which the Madrid Delegation was initially responsible<sup>21</sup>. It fulfilled a dual role,

TABLA 2 GOVERNING BOARD OF THE COP (1981 REPORT OF THE SPANISH PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, MADRID DELEGATION)	
Dean	Carlos Camarero Sanchez*
Vice Dean	Mercè Pérez i Salanova (resigned 08/02/86)
Secretary	Adolfo Hernández Gordillo*
Deputy Secretary	Vicent Bermejo i Frigola
Treasurer	Cesar Gilolmo Lopez*
Vowels	Carmen Amorós Azpilicuta (resigned 08/02/86), Rafael Burgaleta Álvarez*, Itziar Cabieces Ibarrondo, Alfredo Fierro Bardají, Alfons Icart Pujol (resigned 08/02/86), Miguel Ángel Martín Soler, Miguel Pérez Pereira, Nuria Silvestre i Benach (resigned 08/02/86)
Those marked with an asterisk belong to the Governing Board of the Madrid Delegation, occupying the positions of president, secretary, treasurer, and vice-president.	

<sup>17</sup> «The Spanish Psychological Association, which shall be national in scope, shall group together the following graduates who are integrated in the same: Graduates and Doctors in Psychology; Graduates and Doctors in Philosophy and Letters, Section or Branch of Psychology, and Graduates or Doctors in Philosophy and Educational Sciences, Section or Branch of Psychology. This integration shall be mandatory for the practice of the profession of psychologist.» The Transitional Provision of the Law attempted to solve a real problem, the integration into the COP of the graduates who had graduated from the University Schools of Psychology up to 1974, but it opened another, given the overlap of Centers and Plans for years, and the search for recognition of those who, without being formally psychologists, had been working as such.

<sup>18</sup> Based on a survey completed when applying for membership (Hernández, 1982a).

<sup>19</sup> The pages of the first COP publications contain a broad and tough debate on the structure of the study plans, opened by the complaints of members and students, and by the lack of a fluid dialogue with the university sector.

<sup>20</sup> From 1989 onwards it has been called *Papeles del Psicólogo*, and it became the responsibility of the State Board of Governors. The members of the Governing Boards of the Madrid Delegation and the COP are the most productive; the 6 most productive authors (Hernández, Prieto, Camarero, Duro, Olabarría, and Ávila) are linked to them (Civera, 1991).



defining a professional identity<sup>22</sup> and linking the Governing Board with the members throughout Spain. Its editorials allow us to follow the trajectory of the COP (Camarero, 1989; Civera & Alonso, 1995; Padilla, 2008; Vera & González, 2006), and show the major problems: the massification of university studies, the training and its lack of professionalizing perspective, despite failed attempts such as compulsory practices, practicum, postgraduate, etc.,<sup>23</sup> the reform of health care (especially mental health and relations with psychiatry) and social services, as well as the employment situation of psychologists. Soon, in addition to discussing professional opportunities and demanding the political support promised several times (*Junta de Gobierno* [Governing Board], 1985b), a preliminary draft of the Code of Ethics was presented (Batres, 2001; Bermejo, 2001; *Junta de Gobierno* [Governing Board], 1984)<sup>24</sup>, necessary in order to organize a group that had multiplied its number by 9 in just 9 years (Olabarria, 1989), in parallel to the brutal growth in student numbers (Blanco, 1998).

The topics dealt with in the multitudinous congresses organized by the SEP (7th, Santiago 1982, 8th, Barcelona 1990) and the COP (I, Madrid 1984, II, Valencia 1989) mark the major areas and differences in the interests of the university and professional world. In the former, with more representatives of the psychology carried out in the faculties, experimental psychology (human and animal) clearly stood out, and the behavioral approach to psychological processes, assessment, and intervention was dominant. The COP Congresses focused on professional and applied topics. They bring «experiences, ideas, reflections, analyses, knowledge, methods, practical

paths to the different areas of application of psychology: school, health, road safety, psychiatric reform, social services, work, business, multi-professional teams, sports, psycho-pedagogical offices, community psychology, etc.» (Camarero, 1989, 65) In all the congresses, the presence of university students, eager for curricula, before and after accreditations as civil servant teachers, was the majority<sup>25</sup>, although a distance was maintained between teachers and researchers and practitioners (Vera & Gonzalez, 2006).

This theoretical differential spectrum coincides with the analysis of journal articles (Moya, 1990), books (Moya & Valiente, 1991), and doctoral theses (Pérez & Mestre, 1991) that were published. Not only did the number of books and psychological theses increase, but also the number of journals. The latter underwent rapid growth, opening up to the new areas of knowledge that were the backbone of the teaching profession, and to different professional profiles, despite the fact that many studies continued to be published in multidisciplinary journals, or in other fields (pedagogical, physiological, medical, or purely cultural).

The Psychological Association initiated an active journal policy (Padilla, 2008; Pérez, 2008, Tortosa, 2019), which was complemented with the publication of different types of printed materials of varying periodicity<sup>26</sup>. All as part of a collective project driven by the eagerness to professionalize of that COP that sought social image and professional identity. Within this strategy, communication was essential. The new publications were intended to give information and a voice to practitioners, although their pages would later be occupied by teachers and researchers (Tortosa, 2019).

<sup>21</sup> The first editorial pointed out the major difficulties, the external ones, especially those related to the labor market, and the internal ones, especially the «war between schools, and the inadequacy of the training proposal, with the absence of professional practice.» (Governing Board, 1981b)

<sup>22</sup> Among the most discussed topics in its pages: Congresses and meetings, Profession, Work situation, University and postgraduate training, Social Policy, Health Policy, Clinical Psychology, Association Information, School and Educational Psychology, Community Psychology, Psychology and Disability, Psychology and Social Services. Much less, other subjects such as Psychology and Armed Forces, Psychology of Aging, Political Psychology, Legal Psychology, or Traffic Psychology (Civera & Alonso, 1995).

<sup>23</sup> It is a classic of the decade, for students, association members, and teaching collectives (Crespo, 1982; Various, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> The Governing Board acquired the commitment to develop the Psychologist's Code of Ethics based on the preliminary draft presented at the First Congress of the COP. Shortly afterwards, it organized a Conference for its creation (Madrid, January 1987), with a large participation from Delegations and Faculties. The draft Code was submitted for public exposition (February 1987). On March 13, 1987, the Follow-up Commission appointed at the Conference, after deciding on the amendments, submitted the proposed text for ratification by the Board of Governors. Once ratified (May 1987), after the mandatory period of public dissemination, study, and development, the General Assembly of the COP endorsed it (March 27, 1993) (Código Deontológico [Code of Ethics], 1993).

<sup>25</sup> These and other congresses helped society, legal, economic, and de facto powers to begin to get an idea of what psychology and psychologists were, even though they still lacked a clear social and corporate image (Berenguer & Quintanilla, 1994), as did the students themselves (Sierra & Freixa, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> *Psicothema*, published by the Division of Philosophy, Psychology, and Educational Sciences of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Oviedo and the Northern Delegation of the COP, is the one that has been included in WOS for the most years (Tortosa, González, Santolaya, & Aguilar, 2020).



An incipient internationalization also began, which was a role that the SEP had been assuming. It joined the executive committee of the IUPsyS at the Sydney Congress (1988), and the current European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (Lausanne, 1986) (Poortinga, & Lunt, 2011). In addition, it organized in Madrid, with the collaboration of the SIP, the first Ibero-American Congress of Psychology of Work and Organizations (March 1988) and the First Ibero-American Congress of Psychology (July 1992). It announced that the IAAP would hold in Madrid (1994) the XXIII World Congress of Applied Psychology, recovering the tradition that had brought together in Barcelona the II and VI Congresses of Psychotechnics (Saiz, et al., 1994).

*Papeles* closed the decade with a monograph entitled *Profesión y Colegio, Memoria de una década* [Profession and Association, Memoir of a decade] (Varios, 1989a). It began with a personal memoir by the first Dean<sup>27</sup>, who pointed to unemployment and underemployment as the main problems, as well as non-existence in the health field. However, he

continued, the 1980s had also been decisive years for the configuration, development, and extension of the profession, for finding signs of identity, for making it known, for sharing concepts and delimiting contents, for opening new fields of research and intervention. For this reason, it is considered «the decade of the psychologist, of the definition of his/her social role» (Camarero, 1989)<sup>28</sup>.

The monograph, published by *Papeles*, which began with the former Dean Carlos Camarero an editorial activity already linked to the COP, responded to the initiative of the new Board of Governors, chaired by Adolfo Hernández, secretary of the previous Board, which would continue until 1993. It has maintained a line of continuity since the constitution of the COP (Hernández, 1990)<sup>29</sup> (Table 3). Despite objective improvements, the Board faces an unresolved basic problem. There is still a mismatch between the training offered at the university and labor demands, changes in study plans with the unresolved issue of insufficient curricular practices, which in many cases are far from the professional reality<sup>30</sup>.

**TABL3 3**  
**ASSOCIATION BOARDS OF GOVERNORS ELECTED IN**  
**1987 AND 1990**

Dean	Adolfo Hernández-Gordillo (Chairman of the Madrid Delegation until December 22, 1988)	Adolfo Hernández-Gordillo
Vice-Dean	Juan Huerta Pérez	Juan Huerta Pérez
Secretary	Begoña Olabarría González	Begoña Olabarría González
Vice-Secretary	María del Valle Laguna Barnés (Resigned 02/14/1989)	José María Prieto Zamora
Treasurer	Adelina Lorenzo Segovia	Dositeo Artiaga Moiron
Spokespersons	Mauricia González Priego, José María Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, José María Peiró Silla, José María Prieto Zamora, Jesús Rodríguez Marín, Encarna María Sánchez Espinosa, Alejandro Torres Carbajo, Juan de Dios Uriarte Arciniega (Resigned 5/03/1988)	Alejandro Ávila Espada, Manuel Berdullas Temes, Manuel Fitgueira Lois, Alfonso Luque Lozano (Resigned 07/13/1990), José María Peiró Silla, Santiago Porta Dovalo, Jesús Rodríguez Marín, Juan Romero Rodríguez

<sup>27</sup> In the middle of the decade, before the general elections of June 22, 1986, the COP summarized the main problems afflicting psychology so that they would be known by the competing parties (Junta de Gobierno [Board of Governors], 1985b).

<sup>28</sup> That year, the COP approved the project '*Identidad e imagen corporativa del Psicólogo en el Estado Español: un estudio desde la perspectiva del Marketing Social y Profesional*' [Identity and corporate image of the Psychologist in the Spanish State: a study from the perspective of Social and Professional Marketing]' (Quintanilla, 1990), which aimed to obtain information to guide new positioning strategies. Its main results are published in the monograph '*El psicólogo en España: Situación laboral y perfil profesional*' [The psychologist in Spain: Work situation and professional profile] (Díaz & Quintanilla, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> The new Board focused its objectives on 4 major challenges: renewal of the curricula, consolidation of the profession in the educational and health sectors, social image and maintenance of the COP as a unitary and representative organization of psychologists (Hernández, 1990).





Those who practiced psychology still did not have a full professional personality in health, education, or social intervention fields. Professional profiles were not defined, unacceptable levels of unemployment and underemployment were maintained, the internationalization policy did not follow a defined strategy, the lack of representativeness in decision making continued, the never-ending story of the approval of the Statutes was still unfinished, and the difficult fit of a state Association, which maintained its central core in Madrid, with a Spain of autonomous regions<sup>31</sup>, did not improve. In addition, it had to face new problems such as those arising from the proposal first and later the approval of the Degree in Psychopedagogy (MEC, 1993), despite its active opposition and that of the Conference of Deans of Psychology-CDPUE. Furthermore, negative biases in social and professional attributions were still active, there was widespread ignorance of the new specialties, and there was still an overlap between

psychology and psychiatry in which the latter dominated.

However, it was not all bad news. The long struggle for the definition of psychology as a health profession met a great victory. Aiming at full recognition, a project was designed for the postgraduate training of specialists in clinical psychology through a PIR system<sup>32</sup>, which already had precedents in several autonomous regions. The PIR system aimed to define, in the future Decree-Law on Specialties in Health Sciences, a profile of its own in the mental health care network of the Spanish National Health System (Various, 1990). Key to this strategy were the Supreme Court Rulings of December 12 and 13, 1990, which endorsed that clinical activity can and should be framed as a health profession, exempting it from VAT<sup>33</sup>.

A new decade began, the 1990s, and it did so with the legalization of an official university degree in psychology<sup>34</sup>, which was incorporated into the catalog of official university

**TABLE 4**  
**NOMINATIONS TO ELECTIONS FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GOVERNING**  
**BOARD OF THE COP - 1993**

Dean	Begoña Olabarría González	Francisco Santolaya Ochando
Vice-Dean	Miguel Anxo García Alvarez	Eduardo Montes Velasco
Secretary	Teresa García Moreno	Manuel Mariano Vera Martínez
Vice-Secretary	Manuel Berdullas Temes	Juan Manuel Egurtza Muniain
Treasurer	Luis María Sanz Moriñigo	Rosario Carcas Castillo
Vowels	José Manuel Gil Vega, Adolfo Fernández Barroso, Amparo Belloch Fuster, Alejandro Ávila Espada, Margarita Laviana Cuetos, Enrique Carbonell Vaya, Juan Romero Rodríguez, Santiago Porta Dovalo	Isidro Felipe Carbonero Rodríguez, Luis de Nicolás Martínez, José Ramón Fernández Hermida, Jaime Garau Salas, Antonio Rodríguez Batista, Ignacio Rubio Izquierdo, Francesc Campos i Alemany, Avelina Peleato Sánchez

<sup>30</sup> Chacon (1995) characterizes the design process of the new curricula as endogamic, not involving external referents, such as companies that hire psychologists, COPs, associations, experts in various fields, etc.

<sup>31</sup> It maintains an organizational model full of problems (Hernández, 1989a), such as: 1. The existence of Delegations and Subdelegations instead of Associations of autonomous scope, although there are Delegations that still do not coincide with the autonomous territories, either by defect or by excess. 2. The maintenance of a State Board of Governors instead of a General Council of Colleges. 3. Lack of Delegation Regulations. 4. Instability in the leadership and in the structures of representation. 5. Lack of sectorial professional organization structures, in addition to the territorial ones. In order to tackle these problems, it is necessary to achieve the approval of definitive Statutes and to build a more effective and efficient organization, sensitive to the territories.

<sup>32</sup> The COP and the Autonomous Communities of Galicia, Andalusia, Madrid, Navarra, and Castile and León presented a Framework Document on postgraduate training in clinical psychology through a PIR system (COP, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> «The activities whose purpose is the study of the psyche, the diagnosis, prevention, or cure of its alterations, carried out by those who, ascribed to the Psychological Association, are professionally qualified to do so (...), are services of assistance to individuals in the exercise of health professions and, consequently, such activities are exempt from value added tax (...).» (Dirección General de Tributos, 1991).



degrees in Spain. It was a qualifying degree for a growing public, who were now enrolled on a bachelor's degree. The degree qualified individuals for teaching and research, but it also qualified for a differentiated professional practice, which was to continue to be specified and defended by the COP, a task in which it would be accompanied by the CDPUE<sup>35</sup>.

This first stage came to an end in 1993. Elections were held in the COP, for the first time with two candidates (Table 4). The one led by Francisco Santolaya was chosen. A process of decentralization in decision-making and transformation of the association structure began, as well as, with the Statutes already approved, the consolidation and definition of the profession, which helped Spanish psychology to position itself internationally.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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<sup>27</sup> In the middle of the decade, before the general elections of June 22, 1986, the COP summarized the main problems afflicting psychology so that they would be known by the competing parties (Junta de Gobierno [Board of Governors], 1985b).

<sup>28</sup> That year, the COP approved the project "Identidad e imagen corporativa del Psicólogo en el Estado Español: un estudio desde la perspectiva del Marketing Social y Profesional" [Identity and corporate image of the Psychologist in the Spanish State: a study from the perspective of Social and Professional Marketing] (Quintanilla, 1990), which aimed to obtain information to guide new positioning strategies. Its main results are published in the monograph "El psicólogo en España: Situación laboral y perfil profesional" [The psychologist in Spain: Work situation and professional profile] (Díaz & Quintanilla, 1992).

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