



## Psychologists' labour market in Rosario

Mg. Ignacio Saenz

 ignaciofsaenz@gmail.com

Received: December 2015 – Accepted: March 2016

Regular professor of Supervised Professional Practice "A".  
UNR School of Psychology  
Regular professor of Methodology in Quality Designs.  
UAI School of Psychology and Human Resources

There is a brief reference to our health system and intermediate organizations as an introduction for the analysis of a psychologist's labour market. This one cannot be only measured or evaluated from the economic point of view. Although health care union organizations and prepaid ones are diminishing the number of psychology sessions and services, we cannot reduce either training or labour area to clinical practice. There are psychologists who are actually working in institutions without being included in the payroll, and even newly graduates work for free. There have been several explanations for these unusual situations: "you will have

enough time to get a promotion", "or to be included in the payroll" or "just consider this as a training period".

Modesto Alonso says "health care union organizations as well as prepaid ones try to discourage long-term treatments and encourage the regulation of demand through the payment of vouchers."<sup>1</sup>

The opening question to the survey on which this work was based is: "Is it possible that some predominant concept of health exists in the curriculum and what the relationship with our professional practice is?" Graduates from the career of Psychology and registered at the Psychologists' College Registration belonging to the 2nd circumscription in Rosario were asked a questionnaire containing this matter and we were also authorized to get specific information from the psychologists' working area and his insertion in the labour market. The proposal was to work on this instrument together with the College to perceive a real view over a psychologist's labour insertion. One of the most important stages of the professional practice is training and insertion.

The Psychologists' College sent the questions to every registered member by mail. Over 80% of them graduated from the UNR (Rosario National University) and the survey allowed them to tell about their stay at the UNR.

It is observed, based on the information obtained from the questionnaire, "the hidden curriculum" oriented to a psychoanalytic approach is not really hidden to those who have attended the UNR, as 77% of the enquired people consider that the concept health-disease transmitted by the UNR has an orientation to Psychoanalysis. Most subjects, whether graduates or undergraduates, stated they do not have the necessary tools to work professionally to satisfy people's needs in our social context.

<sup>1</sup>Alonso M, Gago P, Klimar D (2010). Psychology Professionals from Argentina. Quantity Synthesis. 2008. Anuario Investigaciones. Vol 17

Therefore we ask ourselves, "would the content developed during the 6-year-career at University train students to act properly at work?" In the 1984 teaching plan there is a university graduate profile "with a strong orientation to different approaches of thoughts or schools of Psychology with a philosophic, anthropological, biological and social basis and in sciences of language"

It is observed, based on the information obtained from the questionnaire, "the hidden curriculum" oriented to a psychoanalytic approach is not really hidden to those who have attended the UNR, as 77% of the enquired people consider that the concept health-disease transmitted by the UNR has an orientation to Psychoanalysis. Most subjects, whether graduates or undergraduates, stated they do not have the necessary tools to work professionally to satisfy people's needs in our social context.

Therefore we ask ourselves, "would the content developed during the 6-year-career at University train students to act properly at work?" In the 1984 teaching plan there is a university graduate profile "with a strong orientation to different approaches of thoughts or schools of Psychology with a philosophic, anthropological, biological and social basis and in sciences of language"

From the survey results we got that the proposed formation, in the curriculum, is not the one that is given, so it cannot reflect a wide range of demands and real problems of society to a psychologist's profession.

A relevant information to the labour insertion of psychologists in Rosario circumscription is the analysis between 2000 and 2007: 1721 psychologists were registered and 1102 consulting rooms were opened, and during the same period 626 consulting rooms were out of operation.

78% started their professional work providing clinical service. It seems the clinical field is the only one to work in. Is this choice of most psychologists to work in the clinical area due to his own decision, or the obtained formation or to a slanted academic curriculum, which prevents him from seeing all the areas he can work in? Moreover, in the practice of the profession there is a high percentage of lower-paid professionals, and very often the professional activity is developed together with another productive activity as well.

Most of the enquired professionals, 86% gave a very clear answer to the question "What is the predominant health concept in the current academic development in Psychology?" The answer is Psychoanalysis.

The questionnaire asked to professors of the career as regards the health-disease concept and its relationship with assistance and public health showed different positions. Professors Iris Valles and Lucia Bertolano agreed that in the curriculum there is a tendency to the disease core explaining that that is why there are policies supporting assistance rather than prevention or public welfare. Antonio Gentile said he

does not know what health concept occurs in the academic curriculum. Ricardo Caroni said, "I'd recover developmental psychology. I think it is very important for the health-disease subject. Developmental matters from our health area and models are crucial." Jaime López said the career has a fundamentally psychoanalytic formation due to its academic staff. The institution is impregnated with psychoanalysis, specifically, the contemporary French approach.

The questions made to undergraduates attending their 6th year at UNR do not show a different reality.

In analysing the results it can be observed that 95% of subjects chose psychoanalysis in their first option. And then a question emerges, where is this choice made from? Does it arise from the certainty that it is the most appropriate theory and practice to work with in real world? Or is it due to curricular deficiency that only shows the theoretical basis of psychoanalysis and some other approaches in particular, the one thing students would consider to exist, that the clinical psychoanalytic therapy is the only working area for professionals?

All this information has put into evidence that there is a concept of health-disease predominant in the School of Psychology that does not allow a psychologist's insertion because of the labour-economic crisis.

When students were asked about the professional practice areas, the one chosen as a first option was the clinical one without leaving any opportunity to the rest of the areas. We can say that if there was not an economic crisis nowadays, we would find lots of unemployed psychologists as well (70%) Saforcada 2008).

According to Aguirre<sup>2</sup>, "The problem or difficulties for labour insertion began with the '89 economic crisis. It means that students who graduated 15 years ago still have difficulties to insert in the working market. Since then there has been an over offer of psychologists and generally speaking there are three profiles of professionals. The exercise of the profession has 70% of psychologists that are underemployed, they are people who are working but would like to work more, especially those who graduated at least 5 years ago. However, the full labour insertion takes longer than any other profession"

In the interviews to professors they said marketing has been made at the university, using a theory to get a market (Jaime López) to which some extracurricular activities have been added, making the Institution look like a billboard, and on the other hand, because of the kind of knowledge transmitted at the School (Jorge Hernandez), it causes uneasiness in students as regards an Analysis Theory teacher. And at the same time, professors themselves, though this would not have been his intention, can think part of the work in classrooms can lead to potential patients. Iris Valles says that "the University will never cease to be a window to the labour market. But if it develops exclusively that aspect, it will become something wicked."

---

<sup>2</sup>Survey made on October 14th, 2005 in the Psychologists' College Registration. Circumscription II. Rosario