

BOOK REVIEWS

■ Psychology in Latin America: A long overdue recognition

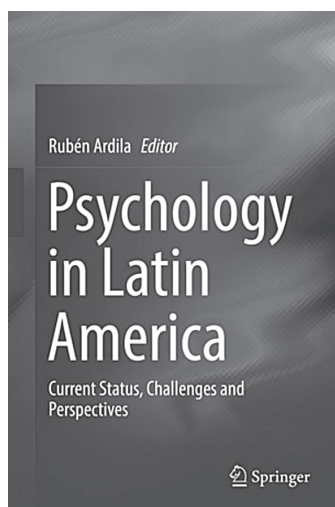
Rubén Ardila

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Psychology in Latin America: Current Status, Challenges and Perspectives (Ardila, 2018) is the latest product of renowned Colombian psychologist, Dr. Rubén Ardila, the editor of the book, which has been released recently by the prestigious publishing house Springer. In this book review we discuss the qualifications of its editor, Dr. Ardila, and of the contributors he convened for the task. We also discuss the book content and its applicability.

Dr. Ardila is an experimental psychologist, social scientist, professor, and leader in psychology (Consoli et al., 2017). Considered the most visible and influential Colombian psychologist, he is the founder of the *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología* (Latin American Journal of Psychology) and *Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana* (Advances in Latin American Psychology). He has published 34 books and more than 300 scientific articles in prestigious journals from across the world. In 1983, Dr. Ardila received the *Premio Interamericano de Psicología* (Interamerican Psychology Award) from the Sociedad Interamericana de Psicología (Interamerican Society of Psychology), and in 2007, the Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology from the American Psychological Association. Perhaps most relevant to Dr. Ardila's qualifications for the task are the over half a century that he has invested in contributing to, reflecting on, and disseminating the psychology work done in Latin America (see, for example, Ardila, 1968, 1986, 2004, 2018), his sizable accomplishments as editor of two of the most prestigious scientific journals in Latin America, and his deft editing of several books. Finally, considering the decision to publish this book in English, it is important to underscore that Dr. Ardila earned his doctoral degree



in the USA and that he has published extensively in English. In sum, Dr. Ardila is the psychologist with the proverbial “finger on the pulse” of psychology in Latin America. He is a visionary, and this book exemplifies and operationalizes the progressive quality of his vision.

The team of authors assembled by Dr. Ardila to contribute the chapters that constitute this tome can be best described as a “who is who” in contemporary psychology in Latin America and captures Dr. Ardila's enviable convening power. All the lead authors have significant seniority standing in the field and several of them elected to have junior colleagues join in the task, giving the lead authors' mature contributions an additionally fresh perspective. The 20 authors (13 males, seven females) of the 11 chapters come from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. These seven countries are among the major power houses that produce psychological knowledge in Latin America. All authors actively collaborate throughout Latin America and beyond, giving their written voice a credibility that transcend their country of origin. Furthermore, all of them have published extensively in English, something that is readily noticeable in their crisp English narrative. Finally, Dr. Ardila invited to the project the distinguished South African psychologist Dr. Saths Cooper, who, at the time of his contribution was the president of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsy). Dr. Cooper wrote the foreword to the volume, considered the book “timely,” and described Dr. Ardila as “a doyen in the field.” In all, the team assembled by Dr. Ardila for the co-construction of this project is of the highest quality and the reader will appreciate this throughout.

The book as a whole achieves a remarkable feat: it simultaneously delivers breadth and depth. With respect to breadth, it presents a 360 degree view of psychology in Latin America; the depth comes from the contributors addressing psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a way of improving the quality of life not only of individuals but, perhaps most importantly, of communities. We would like to underscore that the present tome complements an existing one that focuses exclusively on Caribbean psychology (Roopnarine & Chadee, 2016).

We consider the book not only timely but long overdue. It addresses a notorious gap: the lack of a thorough articulation of the complex contributions made by psychology in Latin America to the sizable range of areas within psychology. In all, the text focuses appropriately on Latin American scientific psychology as well as culture. Moreover, we believe that the wise choice of writing the text in English will bring the belated international attention that psychology in Latin America has deserved for decades.

The focus of each chapter is on one of the main specialties in psychology in Latin America including clinical and health psychology, developmental psychology, educational and school psychology, organizational and work psychology, the range of

social psychology (with its respective psychological, sociological, or cultural emphasis), community psychology, and legal and forensic psychology. The book includes two additional chapters addressing psychological research and the professionalization of psychology in Latin America. Finally, the tome is bookended by respective chapters: the first one, written by Dr. Ardila, offers a panorama of psychology in Latin America while the last one, penned by Dr. Reynaldo Alarcón from Peru, addresses current trends and perspectives on the matter at hand. In addition to the names of contributors previously mentioned, the list is completed by Claudia Bregman, Héctor Fernández-Álvarez, Miguel Gallegos, Hugo Klappenbach, and Sebastián Vázquez-Ferrero (Argentina); Jairo Eduardo Borges-Andrade, Silvia H. Koller, Jesús Landeira-Fernández, Maria Regina Maluf, Normanda Araujo De Moraes, and Renan de Almeida Sargiani (Brazil); Juan Pablo Toro (Chile); Germán Gutiérrez, Érico Rentería Pérez, and Ángela Tapias (Colombia); Cinthia Cruz del Castillo and Rolando Díaz-Loving (Mexico); and Maritza Montero (Venezuela).

Every chapter starts with a meaningful abstract that offers the reader a pertinent summary of what they can expect within a given chapter. Moreover, every chapter is properly contextualized, not only geographically but historically, and is then followed by critically analyzed contemporary information, including pertinent citations and their references. Readers are likely to have the enjoyable experience of traveling professionally throughout Latin America and coming out of the experience with a fervent eagerness to dive further into the topics, be those research, practice, or advocacy. Finally, the book has a detailed index that makes the finding of specific information a much simpler task.

The book has the potential to reach many audiences and is likely to become a major desk reference for library patrons seeking psychological knowledge generated in Latin America. The tome can serve as a textbook for advanced undergraduate students majoring in psychology, as well as graduate students interested in world affairs in psychology, with an emphasis on contributions from Latin America. It is a relevant gateway to students engaging in education abroad programs in Latin America as well as for Fulbright scholars visiting Latin America. Moreover, it is a contemporary, analytical source for scholars focused in Latin American studies. Finally, scientists, academics, and practitioners alike can enjoy and appreciate the systematic articulation of the current psychological knowledge in Latin America in one or

many of psychology specialties, all in a single tome. The book is available from the publisher in hard or soft cover, as well as in an electronic version.

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