

**“Editing manuals, building a new discipline:
The *Traité* and the *Nouveau Traité de Psychologie* »**

Marcia Consolim¹

The *Traité de Psychologie* and the *Nouveau Traité de Psychologie* are the first and the second edition of the most important manual of scientific psychology published in France during the first part of the 20th century². The *Traité de Psychologie* was written before World War I, a time when Théodule Ribot was a central figure in French intellectual circles, serving as a sort of mediator between philosophy and the natural sciences: as editor of the famous *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, Ribot published both spiritualist philosophers and scientific psychologists. After World War I, with Ribot's passing, Georges Dumas became the primary editor of the first edition of this publication (1923–1924). In 1930, in the face of scientific innovations, particularly represented by the rise of American scientific output, publication began of the *Nouveau Traité de Psychologie* (1930–1948), also organized by Georges Dumas. The changes in this new edition are highly significant within this new context, both in terms of the profile of the invited contributors and in terms of the bibliographic references used. Georges Dumas (1866–1946) became the heir to Ribot's intellectual legacy, whose intellectual trajectory brought scientific production closer to intellectual diplomacy. As the representative of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères for Latin American affairs, from 1908 to 1938 he participated in numerous scientific missions in Brazil (Consolim 2021, 2023, 2024). A professor of Experimental Psychology at the Sorbonne since 1902 and a colleague of Émile Durkheim, he began to disseminate

¹ Full Professor at Federal University of São Paulo.

² DUMAS, Georges (Org.). *Traité de Psychologie*. Paris, Alcan, 1923-24, 2 vols. 2000p. DUMAS, Georges (Org.) *Nouveau Traité de Psychologie*. Paris, Alcan, 1930-1948, 8 vols. 4000p.

“French (social) science” through publications such as the *Traité* and the *Nouveau Traité de Psychologie*—both of which were widely cited in Brazil until the 1940s.

This paper aims to investigate the social and intellectual conditions of publishing these two huge manuals on psychology, and to identify the strategy that was used to establish sociology and psychology as a science. In the first part of the paper, I present statistical analyses of the 35 trajectories of the authors of both manuals. In the second part, I present statistical analyses of the 7.930 bibliographical items. In terms of their trajectories, the graphics and tables will show that there are different groups of collaborators – even though they all belong to the same Parisian intellectual circle. Concerning the education backgrounds, there are three main groups: the “pure philosophers”, the “philosophers-physicians” and the “scientists-physicians”. Concerning the social origins, there are also three groups: the “Parisians”; the “provincials” and the foreigners. I will show that both categories are associated with each other: the ones coming from Paris are mostly oriented towards philosophy/medical education and the ones coming from province or abroad are mostly oriented towards sciences/medical education. In a more detailed analysis, the data show the lower importance of the aggregation [*agrégation*] title to pursue a career in science, considering that four of them even don’t have one. This leads to a greater relevance of doctoral titles for their careers. Concerning the philosophers, the aggregation is much more important, considering all the philosophers have one. That leads to the slower relevance of doctorate titles, considering two of the authors of both manuals don’t have one – which designate them to the secondary school instead of the university.³ I conclude from these analyses that Georges Dumas tried to legitimate a sort of an “holistic” point of view of the human sciences by using two different strategies: he

³ I suggest that the lower importance of the aggregation titles within the scientists is due to the fact the “*agrégation*” is a French title and the scientific areas were part of the process of internationalisation at that moment.

encouraged dialogue between the natural and social sciences in order, on the one hand, to legitimize the latter as “objective sciences” and, on the other hand, to propose a humanistic view of the natural sciences. That is why this publication cannot be separated from the broader context of the disputes between advocates of scientific specialization and axiological neutrality, and advocates of moral values as a guide for scientific production. By recruiting authors with the most distinguished academic credentials in the field of philosophy (Parisian lycée; École Normale; two doctorates; Sorbonne) and in the field of the natural sciences (professors from the Faculté des Sciences and the Faculté de Médecine de Paris), Georges Dumas also sought to internationalize the French humanities, which were still heavily rooted in the country’s secondary school system, by broadening references and fostering dialogue with the United States.

Concerning the bibliographical analyses, the data show that the main authors cited in both manuals were the three main founders of scientific psychology, Théodule Ribot, William James and Wilhelm Wundt, followed by Henri Bergson, Henri Piéron and Édouard Claparède. Comparing both manuals, the first and the second one, we see that the “fathers” of the area were less mentioned in bibliography comparing to the new generation, as Piéron and Claparède. As these authors are specialised in experimental psychology and psychological physiology, we see this new approach and subject becoming more debated in France. Concerning the languages in the bibliography, the data show that the most used languages are French, English and German, but their distribution changes depending on the area of specialisation and the edition of the manuals. The English is clearly growing in importance compared to French bibliography – which decreases in the second manual. Also German references leave space for the growth in English bibliography.

It is important to stress that, in this period, there was no degree of psychology at university, but just free courses and chairs at some of the main higher education institutions – Sorbonne and Collège de France – besides some laboratories of psychology attached to this courses/chairs or to the clinics of psychiatry at hospitals – like the laboratory of psychology inside the Clinic of Mental Illnesses in Sainte Anne. Scientific psychology is therefore a subordinated subject at this period at the higher educational system – both in philosophical hierarchies and in medical ones. In the most prestigious institutions of French philosophy of that period, the dominant areas of “mental studies” were bergsonian metaphysics or neokantian philosophy, but not scientific psychology – which they consider as a reduced perspective of “consciousness” or “mental categories” to biological organism. In the most prestigious institutions of French medical education, like Faculté de Médecine of Paris, studies on mental health/illnesses were dominated by neurology and psychiatry, but not psychology, considered a too practical or too applied subject. In consequence, these two manuals clearly can be considered a “position taken” by the organiser, Georges Dumas (1866-1946), with the aim to give visibility and academic status to “French science”.

Considering the profile of the collaborators and of the bibliographical references, we conclude that the strategy of Georges Dumas was oriented by a particular position taken concerning relationship between science and political issues. The two main collaborators, Dumas himself (Lycée Louis le Grand, École Normale, Sorbonne) and his best collaborator, Henri Piéron (École Pratique, Laboratoire de psychologie, Collège de France), sought to engage with the scientists from the United States while simultaneously competing with them for intellectual influence in Latin America. These

collaborators had known each other for a long time and established their connections with the foreign intellectual world through “social institutions” such as the League of Nations.

Bibliography

BOSCHETTI, Anne. *Sartre et « Les Temps Modernes »*. Paris : Minuit, 1985.

CARROY, Jacqueline ; Ohayon, Annick et PLAS, Régine. *Histoire de la psychologie en France*. Paris, La Découverte, 2006

CHARLE, Christophe. (1994a), “Ambassadeurs ou chercheurs? Les relations internationales de professeurs de la Sorbonne sous la iii^e République”. *Genèses*, [s. l.], 14: 42-62.

CHARLE, Christophe. (1994b), *La République des universitaires (1870-1940)*. Paris, Editions du Seuil.

CHARLE, Christophe; Schriewer, Jürgen & Wagner, Peter (orgs.). (2004), *Transnational intellectual networks: forms of academic knowledge and the search for cultural identities*. Frankfurt/Main, Campus Verlag.

CONSOLIM, M. (2021), “Circulação de intelectuais e recepção das novas ciências do homem francesas no Brasil, 1908-1932”. *Tempo Social*, 33 (1): 17-51.

CONSOLIM, M. (2023), “L’enseignement des sciences sociales au Brésil : Français, Nord-Américains et Brésiliens (1933-1945)”. *Revue d’Histoire des Sciences Humaines*, 42: 15-48.

DUPOUY, Stéphanie. « La vérité troublée : Georges Dumas, psychiatre du front », *Vrai et faux dans la Grande Guerre*, C. Prochasson et A. Rassmussen eds., La découverte, 2004, pp. 234-254.

KARADY, Victor. "Présentation", em Marcel Mauss. *Oeuvres I. Les Fonctions sociales du sacré*. Paris, Minuit, 1969

LINOS, Marie. Dans la Fabrique of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*: circulations transatlantiques des savoirs du social dans l'entre-deux-guerres. PhD. Histoire. 2022.

WEISZ, Georges. « Les transformations de l'élite médicale en France ». In: Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales. Vol. 74, septembre 1988. pp. 33-46.

_____. « Regulating specialties in France during the First Half of the Twentieth Century », *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 15, n. 3, pp. 457-480