

The Ford Foundation, Psychometric Experts, and the Dissemination of Aptitude Testing for College Admission in Latin America during the Cold War

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Abstract

This report reconstructs the largely unexplored development of a Latin American network of psychometric experts during the Cold War, which was promoted, funded, and organized by private non-profit US-American organizations, such as the Ford Foundation, the Educational Testing Service, and the College Board. The establishment of this network enabled the dissemination of psychometric knowledge and technologies, and the introduction of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) as a college admissions test in several Latin American countries. The dissemination mechanisms of these bodies included the organization of a Workshop in Test Construction for Foreign Scholars, training instances on educational measurement and testing offered in Princeton, New Jersey, to scholars from developing countries; the establishment of testing dissemination centers in South and Central America; and the institution of a Latin American branch of the College Board in Puerto Rico. This dissemination and networking process was triggered and catalyzed by a global discourse coalition that defined a global crisis in higher education admissions due to the rapid expansion of primary and secondary education.

This report follows the remarkable spread of psychometric knowledge and technologies, and specifically, of aptitude testing in Latin America, in the form of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), for college admission. The SAT is a standardized test that has been used for college admissions in the United States since 1929. After the end of World War II, the use of these tests spread from the United States to East Asia and from the 1950s to 1980s, to Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. In the 2000s, it was exported to the Middle East and South Asia. Remarkably, this process has been largely overlooked by historical research. This gap in research is striking because aptitude tests – which aim to measure intellectual ability and predict college success – act as gatekeepers. They generate and legitimize mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion, and therefore impact directly on social structures and individual biographies.

Considering the global scope of the SAT, it is notable how the test resonated in countries with quite dissimilar cultural traditions, political systems, and levels of economic development, determining the life course of millions of students for decades. Equally impressive is the fact that the dissemination was mainly promoted by *private* actors, such as the US non-profit College Board (CB) which was the owner, developer, and publisher of the SAT; the non-profit testing company Educational Testing Service (ETS) which administers the test; the Ford Foundation (FF); and profit-oriented organizations such as the computing giant IBM; in coordination with international organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as universities, governmental and civil society actors, and psychometric experts.¹

In this report, I seek to reconstruct the process by which aptitude testing, and specifically the SAT, was diffused through Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s in the context of the Cold War. It focuses on a Latin American network of psychometric experts established through the initiative of the FF, ETS, and CB. Remarkably, this network was created within a highly specific geopolitical context: the Alliance for Progress (1961–1969), launched by US President John F. Kennedy and signed by nineteen Latin American countries, all Organization

of American States (OAS) members. This 20-billion-dollar foreign aid program was initiated as part of US defense strategy to prevent the proliferation of the Cuban Revolution by granting loans and foreign aid projects, along with promoting social and political reforms.²

I draw theoretically on conceptualizations of educational transfer³ and global history⁴ to focus on the coordinated interplay between the FF, ETS, and CB in disseminating aptitude testing. The first assumption of the report is that this network played a key role in the construction of a Latin American “testing space,” where psychometric knowledge and technologies – and, specifically, aptitude tests such as the SAT – circulated within and beyond the region. I define this network as an “epistemic community” in the sense that it configured a transnational network that not only shared specific methodological, normative, and epistemic beliefs, but also produced and disseminated problem definitions and solutions.⁵

The second assumption is that aptitude tests for higher education admission were seen as an attractive technology by Latin American and non-Latin American actors, and were hailed as a fair, rational, and objective solution to a perceived global crisis.⁶ Thus, the ETS, CB, FF, and organizations such as UNESCO and the OAS shared a “discourse coalition” that claimed that these tests provided the fairest solution to the newly defined global problem of higher education admissions that had emerged from the massification of primary and secondary education.⁷

Closely related to this, the third assumption is that the spread of the tests in Latin America is linked to a process of Westernization and Americanization, that is, the transfer of Western/American cultural norms and techniques to Latin America.⁸ This is related not only to the fact that the dissemination institutions of the SAT came from the United States, but also because the underlying construct of the SAT, “aptitude,” refers to Western/American conceptualizations of intelligence (i.e., notions of innate and therefore static abilities).⁹ For this reason, these organizations “sold” the test by explicitly

referring to Western categories of rationalization, efficiency, technification, and democratization.¹⁰

Despite the large body of literature on the SAT in the domestic context of the United States, its international ramifications remain nearly uninterrogated.¹¹ Research on the SAT-sponsoring institutions and their international activities is striking in its scarcity. Studies on the ETS have almost exclusively focused on the national context.¹² The two studies on the international engagement of the CB are commissioned work and refer to Latin America.¹³ In relation to the FF, the connection between US foundations and the promotion of science has been researched for decades.¹⁴ Several studies have specifically examined the FF's involvement in the development of higher education and the training of experts in Latin America.¹⁵ Largely unexplored, however, is the foundation's contribution to training a cohort of psychometric experts able to create a continental "testing space" in Latin America (and in other parts of the "developing world").¹⁶

The report specifically analyzes three dissemination strategies promoted by the ETS, CB, and FF in Latin America. These are, firstly, the installation of a CB branch office in Puerto Rico, where a Spanish version of the SAT was created; secondly, the organization of the Workshop in Test Construction for Foreign Scholars of the "developing world" by the ETS with funding from the FF; and thirdly, the establishment of three regional centers of testing infrastructure and expertise, the so-called breeder institutions, within Latin American foundations and universities. This last strategy, a joint project of the ETS and FF, included the organization of workshops, conferences, training, and printing of testing materials, among other activities.

The Definition of a Global Admission Problem

As already mentioned, the configuration of the network of psychometric experts in Latin America was closely linked to a discourse coalition between UNESCO, the US government, and the OAS, which promoted the Alliance for Progress on

the one hand, and the FF, ETS, and CB, on the other. Diverse documents published by these organizations identified a global “educational crisis” that required compliance with certain standards and “best practices.”¹⁷ One of these documents was a 1963 research report about a study on higher education commissioned by UNESCO and the International Association of Universities (IAU), and funded by the Carnegie Corporation.¹⁸ This study was conducted by Frank H. Bowles, the former director and president of the CB, and who served as director of the FF education program from 1963 to 1966. Bowles became a key promoter of the psychometric network of experts.¹⁹

The “educational crisis,” as defined in the UNESCO-IAU study, was conceptualized around a conjunction of forces including industrialization, technology, knowledge explosion, democratization, and rising international interdependence.²⁰ A “revolution of rising aspirations” was developing, Bowles argued, through “the tremendous expansion of pre-university education.”²¹ This development, together with the fact that universities have limited resources, would lead to a “world problem” that needed to be solved by “the right selection of student candidates,” specifically “gifted students.”²²

A similar definition of the problem, and nearly equivalent proposals of solutions, were contained in an agreement between the US government and the OAS, signed in April 1961, for the promotion of “inter-American cooperation”.²³ This Pan-American Union agreement, which was part of the Alliance for Progress, promoted comprehensive planning in higher education and the expansion of inter-American professional training, postgraduate, and scientific programs. “Progress,” “democratization,” and “expansion of educational opportunities” – these were the key concepts of the agreement, and closely matched the conclusions of the UNESCO-IAU study.²⁴ Moreover, the diagnoses of the problem, and the recommended solutions, were also quite similar: an enquiry into “appropriate measures” for the transition between high schools and universities with the aim to select and promote “gifted students,” “regardless of their social and economic conditions.”²⁵

In an article published in 1967 in the *College Board Review*, Bowles stated that, while conducting the UNESCO-IAU study, he had found “little interest” in “American devices in Europe,” here, meaning the “objective method of testing,” and specifically “the aptitude type of test.”²⁶ Instead, during a two-month stay in 1961, Bowles identified “signs of receptiveness” for testing in Latin America.²⁷ In his UNESCO-IAU 1963 study, Bowles recommended that the CB conduct a separate, regional, study on “admissions problems” in Latin America.

This study was commissioned to the second key figure in the network of experts, the Puerto Rican Adolfo Fortier-Ortiz, dean of the College of Social Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico.²⁸ This study defined the “educational crisis” similarly to the UNESCO-IAU-study and the 1961 agreement as the “revolution of rising aspirations” or, as Fortier-Ortiz warned: “the tension and strain which results when secondary education is expanded more rapidly than higher education.”²⁹ Because of this, “the question of how to select students most justly and effectively from among applicants to higher education in Latin America is becoming a difficult social, political, and technical problem.”³⁰

Fortier-Ortiz criticized the university admission regulations that were then prevalent in Latin America. These included no selection at all, the so-called *ingreso irrestricto* (Uruguay and Argentina), and selective admission examinations (e.g., Peru, Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia), which in some cases also corresponded to an academic degree, as with the *Bachillerato* (e.g., Chile, Costa Rica, and Venezuela). Fortier-Ortiz disapproved of these oral and/or written (essay) examinations, which measured subject-matter achievement, were subjective, and lacked validity and consistency.³¹ As possible solutions to the problem of admissions to higher education, Fortier-Ortiz recommended opening a Puerto Rico branch of the CB that could offer the continent “expert advice and assistance” in the following areas: aptitude testing in Spanish, consultation in admission practices, and general training of university administrators.³²

The Engagement of the College Board in Latin America: The Establishment of a Puerto Rican and Latin American Office

In 1963 the CB established a branch office in Puerto Rico, called the Puerto Rico and Latin America Office (PRLAO), to offer “consultation services on admission problems.”³³ This was the starting point of the joint work of the members of the incipient Latin American network of psychometric experts, and fostered the diffusion of aptitude testing in the region. Fortier-Ortiz served as its first director and Jorge Dieppa, a Puerto Rican psychologist, as its assistant director. Under the office, an international review board was appointed to prepare the Spanish version of the SAT. The CB's strategy in creating this Spanish SAT (S-SAT) was twofold: first, its use for the admission of Latin American applicants to US universities and, second, for access to Latin American universities.

Remarkably, all members of the committee participated in the Workshop in Test Construction for Foreign Scholars, held at Princeton University in 1961 and 1962. They included a Chilean, Erika Grassau; a Costa Rican, Gonzalo Adis Castro; and a Colombian priest, César Jaramillo. Dieppa, Adis Castro and Grassau were university teachers of psychology. In later years, Adis Castro and Grassau worked in the testing departments of state universities, while Jaramillo became dean of the medical faculty of the private Jesuit Universidad Javeriana of Colombia.³⁴ In 1964, Puerto Rican high-school graduates took the new S-SAT, now known as the *Prueba de Aptitud Académica* (PAA), for the first time. It was not only the first “foreign” version of the SAT, but also the first time that a standardized central admission test was used for all universities and colleges in Puerto Rico.³⁵ Remarkably, all the members of the committee would conduct the production of national tests that would follow the model of the S-SAT when they went back to their home countries.

Testing for the Developing World: The Workshop for Foreign Scholars

Even before the creation of the PRLAO, the regional branches of the CB, ETS, and FF had already organized two Workshops in Test Construction for Foreign Scholars. An experimental workshop was organized in 1961 and other workshops took place between 1962 and 1966. Interestingly, the workshops were explicitly addressed to the “developing world,” that is, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.³⁶

The need that these workshops were meant to address was defined by the ETS and FF in a manner consistent with the UNESCO-IAU study and Pan-American agreement: educational expansion would require consideration of new mechanisms of admission. In a proposal addressed to the FF on September 6, 1961, the ETS stated explicitly that “political and technical development” in the countries of the developing world “have resulted in the expansion of educational opportunities.”³⁷ Therefore, the aim was that these countries “place admission to secondary and post-secondary schools not only on a more democratic basis,” but also based on “examination results.”³⁸ The “shortage” of local expertise testing was so “acute,” it was stated, that “numerous” requests to the United States for “help” had been made.³⁹

The workshops were conducted at Princeton University, close to the ETS headquarters. Each had a duration of six weeks and consisted of lectures, individual and group projects, and conferences.⁴⁰ The ETS brochure defined the aim of the workshop to be teaching participants the principles and procedures of educational measurement and statistics.⁴¹ However, the basic goal was to gain practical experience in the construction, use, and interpretation of aptitude and achievement tests. In addition, the participants were to learn how to plan and implement testing programs.

Between 1962 and 1966, 102 scholars from Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East participated in the workshops.⁴² The Carnegie Corporation awarded grants to Commonwealth participants, and the FF to

Latin American participants. Participants were recruited through the distribution of leaflets, individual letters to universities, and by ETS representatives who travelled to different countries. The main selection criteria defined by the ETS were that potential workshop participants had to have a university education (such as a bachelor's degree), a career or career project in educational measurement, and familiarity with educational issues and practices.

Each applicant was also required to submit a letter of recommendation. The criteria for this letter reflected the desired profile of candidates and future psychometric experts. Firstly, the referee had to certify that the applicant had a command of statistics; secondly, they were to evaluate the candidate's command of English (it was made clear that the expert would be expected to act as a translator of the knowledge gained); and thirdly, to predict if the candidate would be able to propagate the knowledge: the "training received at the Workshop will be immediately and effectively used by him in this position."⁴³

These requirements show that the program sought to train people capable of acting as "cultural translators," both for linguistic translations and to mediate values, ways of thinking, knowledge, and practices.⁴⁴ Almost half (49%) of the 102 participants in the five workshops came from Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by 28.4% from Asia, 21.6% from Africa and the Middle East, and only 1% from Europe.⁴⁵

Workshop Outcomes: Circulation of Aptitude Testing

A direct result of these workshops was that participants from Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela tried to develop aptitude testing in their home countries. However, the reasons for, and the impacts of, these endeavors were diverse, due to the specificity of educational traditions and the political climates of the countries, which lie beyond the scope of this report. Nevertheless, two contextual factors are noteworthy, Firstly, these activities were immersed in the broader reform process marked by the Alliance for Progress, and were linked

with high economic dependence and political connections between the country and the United States.⁴⁶ Secondly, the key notions with which the test was “sold” – objectivity, rationality, and equality of opportunity, among others – had attraction and resonance in those countries.⁴⁷

In Costa Rica, Gonzalo Castro Adis, who attended the experimental workshop in 1961, developed a national version of the PAA in the Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas of the Facultad Ciencias y Letras of the Universidad de Costa Rica.⁴⁸ The result was the *Prueba de Aptitud Académica-Universidad de Costa Rica*, which was introduced in 1964 as a mandatory and exclusive admission test for this university.⁴⁹ However, only in 2006 did it become a central admission test for all public universities in Costa Rica.

In Chile, aptitude testing was also rapidly introduced. In August 1961, Frank H. Bowles, the president of CB, met with Erika Grassau in Santiago and invited her to participate in the PRLAO’s Commission of Experts. Grassau took part in the 1962 workshop⁵⁰ and then, as director of the Institute for Statistical Research of the Universidad de Chile, developed a national version of the PAA.⁵¹ This test replaced the *Bachillerato* exam and served as the central mechanism to regulate admission to higher education in Chile for around 35 years. With the introduction of the PAA in 1967, Chile became, along with Costa Rica, an early adopter of aptitude testing for college admission in Latin America and globally.⁵² Chile also served as an example of a far-reaching and radical institutionalization of the SAT: the PAA addressed all higher education applicants, and was the main admission criterion, with secondary school grade point average (GPA) having much lower weight (10–20%).

In Colombia, César Jaramillo took a key role following his participation in the 1962 workshop.⁵³ In 1966, the Servicio de Admisión Universitaria y Orientación (later Servicio Nacional de Pruebas) of the Universidad Javeriana produced and administered a national PAA which tested verbal and mathematical aptitude (along with five other aptitude tests and five knowledge tests).⁵⁴ This battery of tests was not named the *Prueba de Aptitud Académica*, but *Exámenes*

Nacionales. Between 1980 and 1999, it was renamed *Exámenes de Estado*, and only then was it instituted as a condition for admission to higher education.⁵⁵

Developments in Venezuela differed from those in the other Latin American countries. Venezuelan universities maintained the principle of free university admission until 1974, when the newly established Oficina de Planeamiento del Sector Universitario was commissioned to develop an admission test along the lines of the PAA. This was piloted in some states in 1978. From 1984, the Consejo Nacional de Universidades established this as the central university admission test.⁵⁶

The Building of “Breeder Institutions” of Testing in Latin America

A letter from Harry Wilhelm, head of the FF in Latin America and the Caribbean to William K. Gamble, representative and program advisor of the FF in Mexico City, written on May 2, 1969, made clear that the FF envisioned a strategy of supporting Latin American institutions in developing testing technologies and expertise training.⁵⁷ He explicitly named the Getulio Vargas and Carlos Chagas Foundation in Brazil, the Di Tella Institute in Argentina, and the University of Chile, as funded by FF. He also mentioned the possibility of extending the scope to EDUPLAN in Venezuela, and the Institute of Education of the University of the West Indies.⁵⁸ By offering training and equipment to these private and public institutions, the FF and ETS sought to build up subregional dissemination centers for testing. In an internal letter to William K. Gamble on December 11, 1967, Leon A. Schertler, based in Costa Rica as director of the FF’s Central American regional office, referred to these centers as “breeder institutions.” The idea was that they would be able to “transfer” “their experiences and findings” in educational measurement and testing to other organizations within the national context and to neighboring countries.⁵⁹

The Case of Chile

With the engagement and support of FF and ETS, Chile became not only one of the first and most enthusiastic recipients of standardized testing in Latin America, but also one of its main regional disseminators. This marked the beginning of the development of a psychometric infrastructure and expertise that would go beyond college admissions, with testing used widely and systematically as a governance technology for control, selection, and diagnostic purposes in the education system.

The engagement of the FF and ETS in Chile was legitimized through the same “crisis definitions” used by UNESCO and the CB. A request for grant action for the development of a testing department at the University of Chile, written on January 28, 1965, stated that the Chilean educational system was “subjected to most of the pressures and strains typical in the developing countries.”⁶⁰ It was declared that “although the education pyramid tapers sharply as it approaches its apex, the number of university students is expected at least to double within the next ten years.”⁶¹ The flood of applicants was expected to intensify in the political context of the time, as the “universalization of universal primary education” pushed by the Eduardo Frei Montalva government (1963–1970) would “greatly increase the pressures of student numbers at all levels of the educational system.”⁶² The proposed solution was explicit: “developing more rational procedures for selecting and evaluating students and educational instruments.”⁶³

The Chilean openness to testing techniques was contextualized in Frei Montalva’s Christian Democrat administration, which had as its slogan “revolution in freedom.” Following the principles of educational planning promoted by UNESCO, and financed by the Alliance for Progress, the Frei Montalva government launched an educational reform that implemented American pedagogical and curricular theories as well as testing methods.⁶⁴ Besides the abovementioned creation of the PAA at the Universidad de Chile, between 1967 and 1971 the Ministry of Education instituted a verbal and mathematical ability test applied in the final year of basic education.⁶⁵

Chile's role as a regional test disseminator was catalyzed by a specific grant from the FF.⁶⁶ During the development of the Chilean PAA, the FF sponsored the University of Chile's Institute of Statistical Research, under the direction of Grassau, to organize a workshop on measurement and educational test construction for high-school teachers, conducted along with Morey Wantman (ETS, FF) and Mario Leyton (a PhD student at the University of Chicago and an FF consultant).⁶⁷ This seminar took place between December 1963 and February 1964 in Santiago, and was the first of its kind in Latin America. It included seven participants from other countries in the continent, from Bolivia, Argentina, and Peru.

The close cooperation between Grassau and the FF and ETS continued. Between April and June 1965, Grassau traveled with FF funding to the United States and visited testing centers and experts at the University of Chicago, in Minnesota, California, the office of the CB, and the ETS.⁶⁸ Grassau also visited a number of Latin American universities. Subsequently, the FF supported the Institute of Statistical Research to establish a "testing department" by funding data processing training and equipment, fellowships for department members to study abroad, the services of international specialists, library acquisitions, training seminars, and collaborations with educational testing institutions abroad.⁶⁹

The results of this grant were substantial. An FF inter-office memorandum sent by John Netherton, who was stationed in Santiago, on December 14, 1967, praised Grassau's work in her capacity as the director of the institute as "the victory it represents for modernity and sweet reason."⁷⁰ According to his letter, the department was able to construct, score, and analyze achievement tests, and to organize training for examiners, university staff, and primary and secondary teachers in educational measurement and testing.⁷¹ However, the most "dramatic achievement" was, as Netherton expressed, the replacement of the "ancient, unsatisfactory *Bachillerato*" by an "efficient objective selective system for university candidates" – the PAA.⁷²

The psychometric expertise and infrastructure established at the University of Chile through the engagement of the FF and ETS enabled Chile to be the only Latin American country that participated in one of the first International Large-Scale Assessments: the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)'s Six Subject Survey (SSS), with the Institute of Statistical Research becoming a member of the IEA.⁷³ In 1970, Erika Grassau and Cristina Rodriguez translated the evaluation experience into a report.⁷⁴ However, the publication of the national results five years later had few public or political repercussions.⁷⁵

The Cases of Brazil and Guatemala

In Brazil, the center chosen by the FF from which to disseminate aptitude testing was, in contrast to Chile, a private institution: the Carlos Chagas Foundation. The connection between the FF and the Carlos Chagas Foundation started at least in 1963, when Romeu Morais Almeida, a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Sao Paulo, and Ligia Siniescalao of the Regional Center of Educational Research, attended the Workshop for Foreign Scholars at ETS in 1963. Both worked under the supervision of Morey Wantman on translating and adapting the SCAT test into Portuguese.⁷⁶

During the 1960s, different US institutions – both governmental and nongovernmental – had considerable influence on the debate on higher education in the country, along with international organizations like UNESCO and the World Bank.⁷⁷ After the military coup of 1964, the Brazilian government received funding from agencies such as USAID to implement education projects including ones related to a major reform in higher education.

The Carlos Chagas Foundation, founded in 1964, aimed to re-conceptualize the common admission procedures, the *vestibular*, used by the faculties of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, biology, and biochemistry in the State of Sao Paulo. A three-year USAID grant in 1966 financed the development of university admission tests for studies in the biological sciences,

with funding for printing equipment, graduate studies abroad, and study tours for staff members, programs for educational research, along with printing of publications and professional guidance booklets. The grant also supported the organization of conferences on new methods in university admissions.⁷⁸ A second grant, three years later, enabled the purchase of two optical scoring machines to facilitate more efficient testing scoring and tabulation of research data.⁷⁹

But the Carlos Chagas Foundation was not the only one to receive funding from the FF. A grant to the Getulio Vargas Foundation, based in Rio de Janeiro, enabled this organization to establish a center for test construction, although this was limited to secondary education.⁸⁰ This center aimed to train Brazilian educators, conduct research related to testing, and construct and offer tests and – ultimately – a testing service to Brazilian schools.

In Central America, the FF chose Guatemala as another diffusion center for testing technologies and expertise. In 1963, the testing department of the American School of Guatemala was asked by the University of San Carlos to construct admission tests for its newly established General Studies program.⁸¹ The school received a grant for a two-and-a-half-year period to develop these tests for the University of San Carlos to train Central American test development personnel and to develop tests for admission for universities and secondary schools.⁸² Funds were also provided for staff salaries for writing, administering, and correcting the tests, for staff to attend training at ETS summer workshops, and for material and IBM computer test equipment.⁸³

As a result, and with the help of Morey Wantman of the ETS, a battery of six tests was developed.⁸⁴ Wantman also held workshops to provide training in test construction and statistical analysis. Six Guatemalans also received intensive training at the Summer Workshop in Test Construction for Foreign Scholars at the ETS.⁸⁵ Two regional conferences on college admission problems and testing were organized: one in San José, Costa Rica, convened by the Superior Council of Central American Universities and the CB, and the other in Guatemala,

organized by the University of San Carlos. Both conferences discussed about admissions problems, testing and evaluation.⁸⁶

In order to extend its training and extension services in educational testing to universities and public-school systems throughout Central America, in 1970, the FF awarded a two-year grant to the Universidad del Valle in Guatemala. This small, private university had already received grants in 1963 and 1967 to develop training workshops and provide technical assistance to local universities.⁸⁷ In 1972, the university received another grant for a “training and extension program in educational testing for Central America.”⁸⁸ Through these grants the Universidad del Valle developed a program on testing, measurement, and evaluation with assistance from FF, and organized regional workshops in 1972 and 1973 with visiting professors including Erika Grassau, UNESCO staff in Mexico and Jorge Dieppa, CB of Puerto Rico, among others.

Conclusion

This report has reconstructed the configuration of a Latin American network of psychometric experts during the Cold War, promoted, funded, and organized by foundations as the FF, the testing company ETS, and the CB. The building of this network made possible the circulation of psychometric knowledge and technologies, as well as the adoption of the SAT as a college admission test, in several Latin American countries. The main strategies deployed by FF and ETS included the organization of a Workshop in Test Construction for Foreign Scholars at Princeton University, offering training in educational measurement and testing to Latin American scholars, and the establishment of diffusion centers for educational testing in South (Chile and Brazil) and Central America (Guatemala). These centers, which were explicitly dubbed “breeder centers” by FF representatives, were built as testing infrastructure and training poles for institutions locally and in the surrounding countries. During that time, the CB also established its first Latin American branch office in Puerto Rico, where members of the network who had attended the Workshop for Foreign Scholars

at Princeton developed the first Spanish version of the SAT and, later, national versions of the test in their home countries.

The legitimation strategy of this whole process was based on a discourse coalition that defined a global crisis of “rising aspirations” shared by representatives of the ETS, CB, and FF, and organizations such as UNESCO and OAS. According to this discourse coalition, the crisis had emerged from the accelerated expansion of primary and secondary education, and had transformed higher education admissions into a social, political, and technical problem. In this argument, the burning question was: how can higher education admissions be organized in the most equitable and effective way? In a sense of the “scientification of the social,”⁸⁹ that is, the continuous influence of social experts on society, the configuration of a Latin American network of psychometric experts offered a scientific-technical, “objective formula” to solve the admission problem based on psychometry.

Since the Latin American network and testing infrastructure was mainly developed by US-American institutions in the context of the Alliance for Progress, it raises a question as to the extent to which the circulation of the tests, and their adoption by countries such as Costa Rica, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela, was linked to an Americanization of Latin American cultures. As this report has only dealt with the process from the perspective of the institutions promoting it, future research should reconstruct and analyze the perspectives of local actors, their interpretations and adaptations, as well their resisting and contesting reactions towards testing and the Western/US-American values it promoted, such as “aptitude,” “rationalization,” and “efficiency.” Future research may also examine whether the network and infrastructures established by the FF, ETS, and CB provided the personnel and infrastructural/institutional basis for the later adoption of other types of tests, such as international and national large-scale assessment. The Chilean case certainly suggests this.

Remarkably, the transnational involvement of the FF and the ETS also extended to Europe, thus widening the network's scope. In 1968, the Pedagogical Centre organized an international conference in Berlin with funding from the FF,

under the direction of Karl Heinz Ingenkamp, on the topic of “Possibilities and Limits of Test Use in Schools.”⁹⁰ The FF specifically funded the involvement of non-European participants. Key figures such as Henry Chauncey, founder of ETS, and James Bryan Conant, who as president of Harvard University had introduced the SAT as an admissions test, also attended the conference.⁹¹ And Latin America was also represented: Grassau, along with an Argentine scientist, were among the experts who attended the conference.

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¹¹ Alarcón 2015.

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¹⁶ With the exception of Alarcón 2015.

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¹⁸ F. Bowles. (ed.) (1963). *Access to Higher Education: Joint Unesco-IAU Research Programme in Higher Education* (Paris: UNESCO & International Association of Universities, 1963). Frank Bowles (ed.) *Access to Higher Education. National Studies: Joint Unesco-IAU Research Programme in Higher Education* (Paris: UNESCO & International Association of Universities, 1965).

¹⁹ Bowles, 1963, 1965.

²⁰ Alarcón 2015.

²¹ Bowles, 1965, 10.

²² Bowles, 1965, 10.

²³ Unión panamericana. *La educación superior en América Latina y la cooperación interamericana: Informe y recomendaciones* (Washington: Unión Panamericana Secretaría General Organización de los Estados Americanos, 1961).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Unión Panamericana, 1961, 5, 14-15.

²⁶ F. Bowles. *The Refounding of the College Board, 1948-1963: An Informal Commentary and Selected Papers* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1967), 290.

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²⁸ A. Fortier-Ortiz. *Problems of University Admissions in Latin America: A Report to the Trustees of the College Entrance Examination Board* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963).

²⁹ Fortier-Ortiz, 1963, 5.

³⁰ Fortier-Ortiz, 1963, 5.

³¹ Fortier-Ortiz, 1963, 17.

³² Fortier-Ortiz, 1963, 29.

³³ J. J. Dieppa. „Developing the Spanish Version of the SAT.” *College Board Review* 53 (Spring 1964): 12–15, 6.

³⁴ Alarcón, Governing

³⁵ Fortier-Ortiz, 1964, 8.

³⁶ Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter RAC), Ford Foundation records (hereafter FF), 62-144; 64-159.

³⁷ RAC, FF, 62-144.

³⁸ RAC, FF, 62-144.

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- ³⁹ RAC, FF, 62-144.
- ⁴⁰ RAC, FF, 62-144.
- ⁴¹ RAC, FF, 62-144.
- ⁴² List of participants contained in RAC, FF, 62-144; 64-159.
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