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Project

# LATIN AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: REFLECTIONS ON GRADUATE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ISSUE

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# INTRODUCTION



- **CONTEXTUALIZATION**
  - Latin American Occupational Therapy
  - 60 years of history
- **EDUCATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN LATIN AMERICA**
  - Mapping who we are and where we are;
- **CHALLENGES**
  - Did we advance to the social issue?

# DID WE ADVANCE TO THE SOCIAL ISSUE?

- Discussion on the Latin American social context

Neoliberal policies and dismantling of social policies in the region



Political conflicts in Venezuela



Military dictatorships: Brazil, Argentina and Chile



Armed conflicts in Colombia



# LATIN AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



## Beginnings:

- 1950 - Brazil and Argentina,
  - 1960 - Chile, Colombia and Venezuela,
  - 1970 - Peru and Mexico.
- Increasing industrialization and urbanization;
  - Implementation of social policies;
  - Emergency to heal effects of major epidemics;
  - Incentive of foreign rehabilitation programs.
- 1980 and 1990
    - Upper level courses: development of education, professional practice and conference organization.
  - 1997 – Latin American Confederation of Occupational Therapists (CLATO)

# 60 YEARS OF HISTORY

- Military dictatorships
- Democratization processes
- Neoliberal policies implementation
- Fragile social policies
- Expansion of higher education



# QUESTION

- Where are the undergraduate courses in occupational therapy located in Latin America?
  - Were there major expansion?
- Were there changes in the production of specific knowledge?
  - Did we advance to the social issue?

# METHODOS

- Contact with schools cadastred in CLATO(112 schools)
  - Online questionnaire (56% of answer)
    - Interview with coordinator
- Interview with teachers and professors responsible for teaching about social issues (23 interviews)

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

- **Academic development in Latin American occupational therapy**
  - 114 Occupational Therapy courses in 15 countries (data from 2014-2015)



Argentina, Brazil, Chile e Colombia are the pioneers in the education and academic institutionalization of occupational therapy in the region;

Increase of more than 63% (45) of courses in the 2000s:  
great expansion of education and the number of professionals in the region in the 21st century.

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

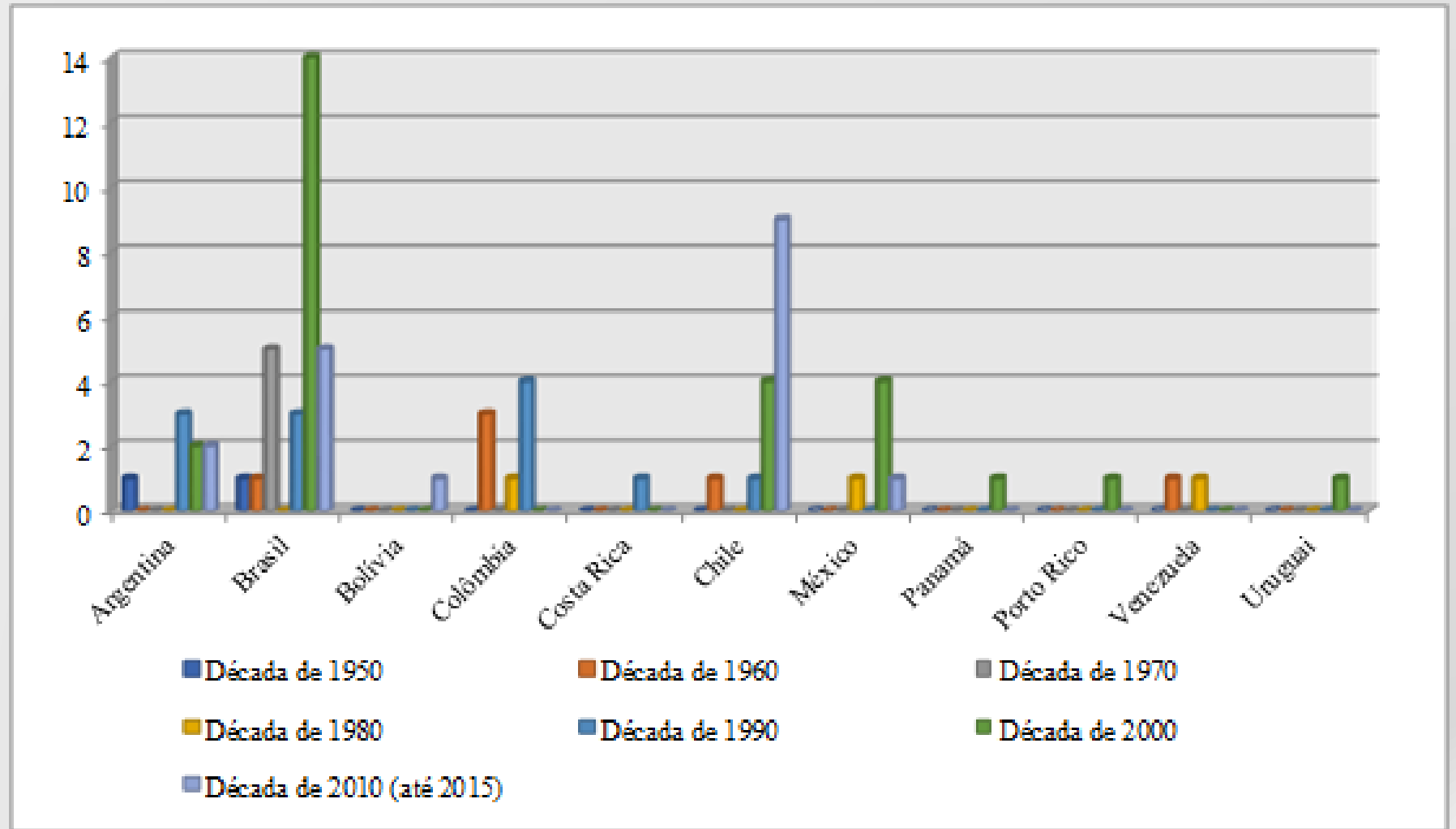


Figure 1 - Year of creation of occupational therapy courses in Latin American countries.



# LATIN AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SCHOOLS



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

## Qualification of occupational therapy professors

(Of the 114 universities consulted, only 40 schools present this information, 35%, among them, 28 are located in Brazil)

### 456 professors and teachers:

- 112 PhD;
- 63 PhD candidates;
- 60 masters;
- 3 master's students;
- 77 specialists;
- 41 professionals with no post-graduate education.

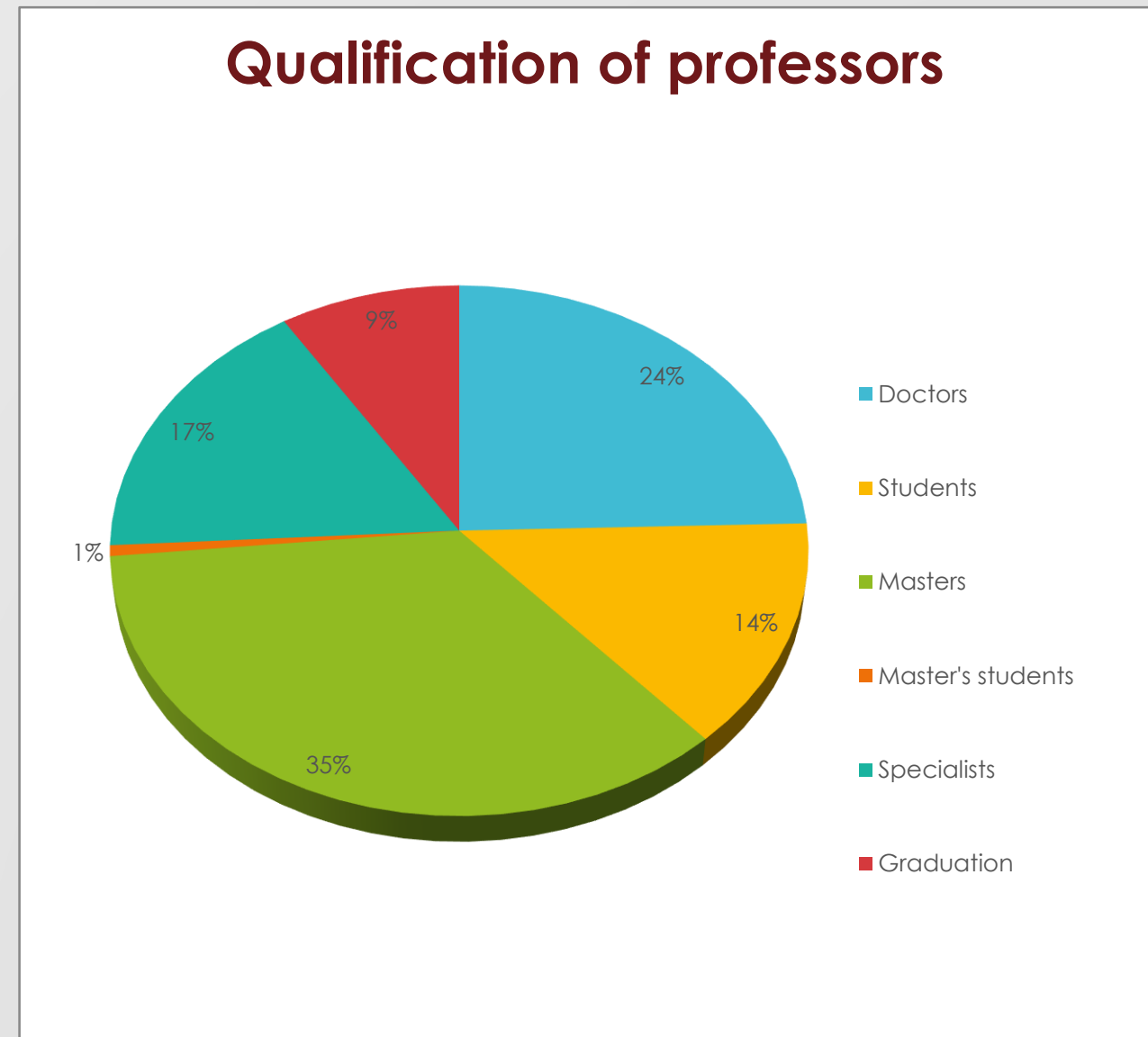


Figure 2 – Qualification of professors and teachers of occupational therapy courses at Latin American universities.

# DID WE ADVANCE TO THE SOCIAL ISSUE?

- Proposals from the World Federation of Occupational Therapists  
2002 / 2016 - Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists
- Education Day - XV World Congress of Occupational Therapists. Chile, 2010.  
Final Assembly: agreements for changes in the education process



Emphasis on the relevance of professional technical education in occupational therapy contextualized to the local reality and associated with the real life conditions.

- **How are the curricula of Occupational Therapy courses in the Latin American region organized?**

## **BASIC CYCLE**

- Biological and health disciplines – from 8 to 10 per course;
- Human and social sciences – two per course;
- Exact sciences – between one and two per course;
- Psychology – from two to four per course;
- Research – two per course;
- Occupational Therapy – Fundamentals in Occupational Therapy and Activities, and therapeutic resources.

## **FINAL CYCLE**

Specific disciplines of Occupational Therapy and professional practices: approximately 16 disciplines per course.

- OT in mental health,
- OT in physical rehabilitation,
- Community OT,
- OT and Primary Health Care,
- OT and health of the worker,
- Social OT,
- OT in gerontology,
- OT in hospital contexts.

# DID WE ADVANCE TO THE SOCIAL ISSUE?

- **How are the curricula of Occupational Therapy courses in the Latin American region organized?**
- High percentage of content oriented to biological sciences and health and **disproportionality** in comparison to contents about social and human sciences;
- Relation to the historical roots of the profession:

Colonization and alignment with the assumptions of the biomedical model with a view to achieving technical and scientific validation, seeking legitimacy and professional identity (1960).

# DID WE ADVANCE TO THE SOCIAL ISSUE?

- **Which disciplines discuss the Latin American social issue in formation?**

[Interviews with 23 professors and/or teachers of Occupational Therapy courses in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela; exception of Brazilian universities]

- Community Context: Community Occupational Therapy;
- Psychosocial area: Occupational Therapy in Mental Health;
- Characteristics of social vulnerability of the assisted population: Occupational Therapy and vulnerable populations.

# DID WE ADVANCE TO THE SOCIAL ISSUE?

- **Disciplines that discuss the social issue: main goals?**
  - Working with communities in the practice of the occupational therapist;
  - To problematize and interpret realities, which they will find themselves in the field;
    - Development of strategies and interventions in the collective sphere;
  - Working with populations in situations of vulnerability and social risks;
    - Social and ethical commitment and responsibilities;
    - Development of a critical and political view of the work of the occupational therapist.



# EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN LATIN AMERICA: DID WE ADVANCE TO THE SOCIAL ISSUE?

- Involvement and dedication of professors and/or teachers;
- Presence of discussions on the social issue, socio-historical context and socioeconomic realities;
- Undergraduate education in Occupational Therapy in Latin America still remains strongly tied to the **biomedical bias, of an individual nature**;
- **Little representativeness of the discussion about social context** in the entire undergraduate education;
- Few advances regarding the proposal of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists;
- Hypothesis: the students are touched to pay attention in Latin American context, what means they know about the social reality of the region, however, they are not prepared to work in this context and in the social area, in a centralized way.



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THANK YOU  
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