

# The South Also Exists: Integrating Parapsychology from Forgotten Countries

by

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Since Carlos S. Alvarado's article, "The Language Barrier in Parapsychology", (published in two Spanish-speaking parapsychology journals and in one Portuguese periodical as well as in English), English-speaking parapsychologists have been cautioned about the importance of international communication. At the same time, there has been other evidence of an interest in knowing and understanding the work of non-English speaking parapsychologists. International communication has been discussed in a number of other articles, commentaries and conventions.

I would say that some of the language barriers that exist may be overcome if — in addition to contact through correspondence with PA members, and articles published in international journals — there is increased personal contact between parapsychologists from around the globe. It is obvious that occupational commitments and economic difficulties are the first obstacles that impede this contact, but frequently such contact is the only road to a confident and dynamic flow of communication.

An example of the results of such personal contact comes from recent visits made by PA Member Stanley Krippner to Buenos Aires (Argentina). During his visit, Stan and I (together with collaborators in the *Revista Argentina de Psicología Paranormal*) had the opportunity to strengthen a professional association and a friendship that transcended such boundaries. Both of us were able to communicate our common worries about the field and express the value of Argentinian and American parapsychology.

Stanley Krippner broke this barrier when he expressed our worries to American parapsychologists. This was accomplished once Krippner visited Argentina. Now, an Institute of Parapsychology in Buenos Aires is organizing a series of seminars and its coordinators are thinking about bringing parapsychologists of good reputation to discuss the scope of psi research in their respective countries. Although Argentina is currently suffering a serious economic crisis, some possibilities still exist that might support such a cultural exchange.

The language barriers diminish compared to geographical barriers in parapsychology. On the other hand, a good initiative to help to demolish such barriers is the international communication between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking parapsychologists. There is empirical evidence that shows more continuous communication among English-speaking parapsychologists than among Latin American parapsychologists. However, this situation can be changed. In the first place, there is clear evidence that the number of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking parapsychologists among the PA membership has increased in the last few years.

It is useful to examine the data provided by the membership summaries published by the PA. To make Table 1, I have used two lists, that published in 1988 and that published in 1993. [Editor's Note: Values have been rounded for the table and 1994 values have been added by adding new members to Parra's figures for 1993.]

I have reclassified the lists in order to show the increase of Hispanic and Portuguese members in contrast to members from other parts of the world. The members are distributed among four geographical groups: 1) North-American (non-Spanish-speaking members from the United States and members from Canada), 2) Europe-Australia-Other; 3) Asia (China-Japan-India), and 4) the Hispanic-Portuguese language group

(members of the PA who reside in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Spain, and Spanish-speaking members from the United States). According to these figures, the PA in 1993 is composed of 61% North-American members in contrast to 39% residing in the rest of the world (a difference of 21%). There has been some increase in Hispanic-Portuguese PA Members from 1988 to 1993 (from 4% to 7%) [Editor's note: As the table shows, there may have been a 3% increase in this category in 1994 as well].

If the European members of the PA (who numbered 28% in 1993 [and in 1994]) frequently hold international conventions (the Euro-PA), Hispanic-Portuguese PA members could certainly convene a regional conference in some important capital of their part of the world, perhaps in Buenos Aires, Madrid, Santiago, or Sao Paulo. Such an initiative would not only permit us to development personal relationships across international lines, but might also stimulate interest in the work of scientific parapsychology in the region, fostering recognition for the field in local universities or prestigious centers of science (something which will separate us from those who do not follow the scientific approach in parapsychology and from skeptics).

Such conferences would also extend the scope of parapsychological

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PA Members	Table 1					
	1988		1993		1994	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
North-Americans (USA-Canada)	179	67%	158	61%	166	58%
Europe-Australia-Other	66	25%	74	28%	80	28%
Hispanic-Portuguese	11	4%	18	7%	29	10%
Asia-General (Japan-China-India)	10	3%	11	4%	11	4%
Total	266		261		286	