

Bibliographical review

The work or the legal psychologist in the current Ibero-American context

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Norza, E., & Egea, G. (2017). *Con-ciencia criminal. Criminología, psicología jurídica y perfilación criminal*. Bogotá: Manual Moderno

The book *Criminal con-science* is composed of several investigations that give account of the professional work in the field of legal psychology and its areas of application. Its content is divided into three sections: *Legal Psychology, Criminology and Criminal Profiling*, with a total of thirty chapters.

This text has fifty outstanding authors from different countries and specialties, and corresponds to an interdisciplinary work coordinated by the psychologist, criminologist and captain of the Colombian National Police, Eryvn Norza Céspedes, and by the psychologist, criminologist, teacher and researcher of the Simón Bolívar University, Gloria Egea Garavito.

In the first chapters of the section called *Legal Psychology* a conceptual and contextual framework of the area in question is presented. The first chapter proposes an approach to the subfields of legal psychology and its intervention constructs, which allows professionals in related areas or students interested in this field to familiarize themselves with some of the concepts to be dealt with throughout the text.

In the following chapters a state of the art is performed that evidences the development of legal psychology in countries like Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico and Chile. This allows the reader to become acquainted with the evolution, main findings and issues addressed in this area and its fields of action, taking into account the cultural, social and political context of these countries and thus provide a starting point for future research in the area.

Subsequently, the issue of professional ethics is discussed, a crucial aspect in the development of the forensic psychologist's work. In this section, the study of sixteen deontological codes in Latin America was carried out, in which it was concluded that the forensic psychologist should

be guided by the principles of competence, responsibility, integrity and respect for the rights and dignity of individuals.

Also, in this first part, some investigations are documented related to child maltreatment and sexual abuse, where the authors describe, from the literature, the types of maltreatment with more prevalence at present, as well as the assessment and observation methods that should be carried out in cases of child sexual abuse. This is done in order to contribute objectively to the judicial process without violating the rights of children and adolescents. In this section it is important to mention the issue of the Parental Alienation Syndrome, which, according to the author of this chapter, is increasingly present in judicial processes and constitutes a problem of high psychosocial impact with negative repercussions on the emotional development of children.

Later, the topic of legal neuropsychology is addressed, which by being a new area, requires arduous research. In this section an approach is made to the advances achieved in this field from the emergence of the concept to the latest published findings. This topic acquires great relevance because one of its main objectives is to explain from the cognitive, social and emotional neurosciences the neural systems involved in the different behaviors that have a legal implication. And, in the same way, to develop crime prevention strategies through the provision of guidelines promoting legal processes more sensitive to human conditions in the judicial system.

The second part, called *Criminology*, describes in its first chapters the criminal and penitentiary sanctions as a corrective measure. In this, the authors question what the possible options of penitentiary treatment could be, in order to reduce recidivism and increase the probability of a correct reintegration of individuals to society. Additionally, this section addresses, from a theoretical perspective, the issues associated with the relationship between drugs and crime, as is the case of drug addiction in Colombian women, which, with a criminological engineering approach,

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makes it possible to analyze the social problems through the construction of causal diagrams in order to modify the structures considered as problematic and contribute to the design of public policies that contemplate different interventions. In this section, another crime of great interest in the few investigations carried out is the theft of motor vehicles, and the corresponding chapters study the variables involved in this crime and propose control actions that arise from a multivariate analysis.

And finally, the third part of the work, called *Criminal Profiling*, begins with a review of the literature regarding the method of criminal profiling and its evolution in various countries, where it is striking the lack of further training and expertise for use in Colombia. In this sense, as part of this research technique, the psychological footprint construct is addressed, which is made up of the analysis of the *modus operandi*, motivation and offender's signature.

It is important to emphasize the importance of this technique in the work of the legal psychologist, who, based on the crime or illegal act, should be in charge of the

study of personality characteristics, social interaction and behavior of the perpetrator. On the other hand, this same section examines the psychological autopsy, whose subject of study is the victim, and whose objective is to contribute to the judicial process in clarifying dubious deaths, and, as an innovation, a reflection is made about their relevance in different contexts, such as civil and labor. Finally, the last chapters of this section deal with investigations carried out around delinquent-criminal personality from legal psychology, particularly on phenomena such as partner violence and cybercrime.

In conclusion, this book is a contribution of great relevance both for professionals and students in the areas of psychology, law and criminology, and for officials of the justice system, as it brings together research findings on current criminological phenomena in Latin America, as well as innovative analysis techniques that provide a starting point for academic and practical discussion in the approach of future research.