

PSYCHOLOGY IN SWITZERLAND

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The following contribution gives an introduction to the history of psychology in Switzerland. It describes the academic training institutions and the situation at Swiss universities concerning their diplomas and training programs. It covers the problems resulting from their popularity. Special attention is given to the research environment for psychologists in Switzerland. The funding system, staff resources, and relative scientific productivity are discussed. The last section is dedicated to the professional situation: How are psychologists organized in Switzerland? In what professional fields are psychologists active? What are the roles and relative prestige of psychologists in public life? A short review of recent developments completes the contribution.

THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY IN SWITZERLAND

Although modern empirical psychology could only really develop in the last decades, the roots of modern Swiss psychology reach well back into the 19th century. As early as 1860, the first chair in Psychology was held by Professor Moritz Lazarus (1824-1903) at the University of Berne. He was the founder of cultural psychology as an experimental scientific discipline. Ten years later (1870) Friedrich Albert Lange (1828-1875) became the chair of "Inductive Philosophy" in Zurich. Lange is the author of the script *The Foundations of Mathematical Psychology* (1865), and he can be seen as one of the founders of the "New Psychology," a field no longer considered a philosophical inclination, but rather as a field of empirical natural scientific research. In 1874, Lange was succeeded by Wilhelm Wundt for a year as the Zurich chair (Heller & Perrez, 1990). The University of Fribourg had already in 1907 an extraordinary

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professor for Experimental Psychology and Pedagogy, Professor Frans van Cauwelaert, who tried to emulate in Fribourg the achievements of the first experimental psychological laboratory of Belgium from where he came. However, since his stay in Switzerland lasted only three years, he could not make the impact he had intended.

A second important source of inspiration for modern Swiss psychology was the psychiatric research of the Burghölzli Clinic in Zurich. The scientific renown of this institution was advanced by Auguste Forel (1848-1931), who assumed the leadership of the Burghölzli Clinic in 1897. He was followed as director by Eugen Bleuler (from 1898), who can be considered as one of the pioneers of modern research on schizophrenia. Among the important advances initiated by this institution belong the epidemiological research of Eugen Bleuler and the contributions to psychodynamic psychology of Carl Gustav Jung.

The third line of development comes from the French-speaking part of Switzerland with Jean Piaget at the University of Geneva. Piaget worked from 1929 on at the University of Geneva and in 1955 he became the Director of the International Centre of Genetic Epistemology. The influence of this Centre was worldwide, and the Jean Piaget Foundation remains even today an important research center, that among other activities publishes the *Cahiers de la Fondation Jean Piaget*.

ACADEMIC TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Research and teaching institutes are currently located at the universities of Basel, Berne, Fribourg, Lausanne, Geneva, Neuchâtel, St. Gallen, and at the Federal Technical University (Hochschule) of Zurich. In most of these psychological departments an academic graduation is possible (lic. phil. and doctorate).

The equipment of the different psychological departments varies according to their specific history and local conditions. Table 1 shows the number of full-time professorships and scientific assistants per university and the number of students preparing for their licence (similar to a master's degree).

The academic training is organized with a first diploma known as *license in psychology*, which corresponds more or less to the master's degree in the U.S.A. Students start their university studies usually around the ages of 19-20, after the Swiss "maturity" which is comparable to the baccalaureate in France.

As undergraduate students in the first two years, they are exposed to introductory psychology, psychological theories, research methods, statistics, and the basis of diagnostic procedures in different fields of application. After

Table 1
Staff Members and Students at Swiss Universities

University	Professors	Students	Assistants **	Stud./ Prof. ***	
Year	1991/ 1992*	1997	1997	1991/ 1992	1997
Basel	3	3	296	1.4	98.7
Berne	7	7	603	5.6	86.1
Fribourg	4	5	512	5.75	102.4
Geneva	20.5	21	887	26.3	42.3
Lausanne	7	8	710	3.7	88.7
Zurich	8	10	1250	10.5	125

Notes: Neuchâtel is not included since its psychology department does not offer a master's degree program. *The number of full professors according to Flammer (1992a). **The number of assistants is based on Flammer (1992a). He used a weighted measure where 1 assistant with Ph.D. = 0.5 points, 1 assistant with masters degree = 0.25 points. ***Number of students per professor.

having successfully completed this first part, they continue the second part (= graduate phase), which consists of more advanced methodology courses, general psychology courses, and at least one specialization.

Although it is assumed that the program will take four years (two years undergraduate and two years graduate school), the mean duration of study is approximately five to six years. Fifty percent of all students take twelve or more semesters to obtain their license diploma (lic. phil.), which is the official degree given on completion of this academic training. The broad scientific curriculum also offers an in-depth exploration of statistics along with an education in different psychological theories and fields (Bodenmann, Perrez, Lotti, Langenick, & Wüst, 1996).

Academic training in psychology is apparently attractive to students, considering the steady increase in the number of enrollees. This increase of students is so pronounced that a mismatch exists now between the number of students and the infrastructure of most university psychology departments. This problem is exacerbated by the absence of selective admission tests. The Swiss educational system offers every student who obtained his or her federal high school diploma free access to every university and every academic branch. The

general selection takes place earlier, at the high school level. This hurdle is currently successfully passed by about 17% per age cohort. The dramatic rise of student numbers is seen in the following Figure 1. It shows the total number of students in psychology for men and women at Swiss universities. It can be seen from this figure that while the number of male students has changed only marginally, the number of female students has increased by more than half over the same period. The same trend can be observed in other European countries as well as in the U.S.A. (Baumann, 1995; Pion, Mednick, Astin, Hall, Kenkel, Keita, Kohout, & Kelleher, 1996).

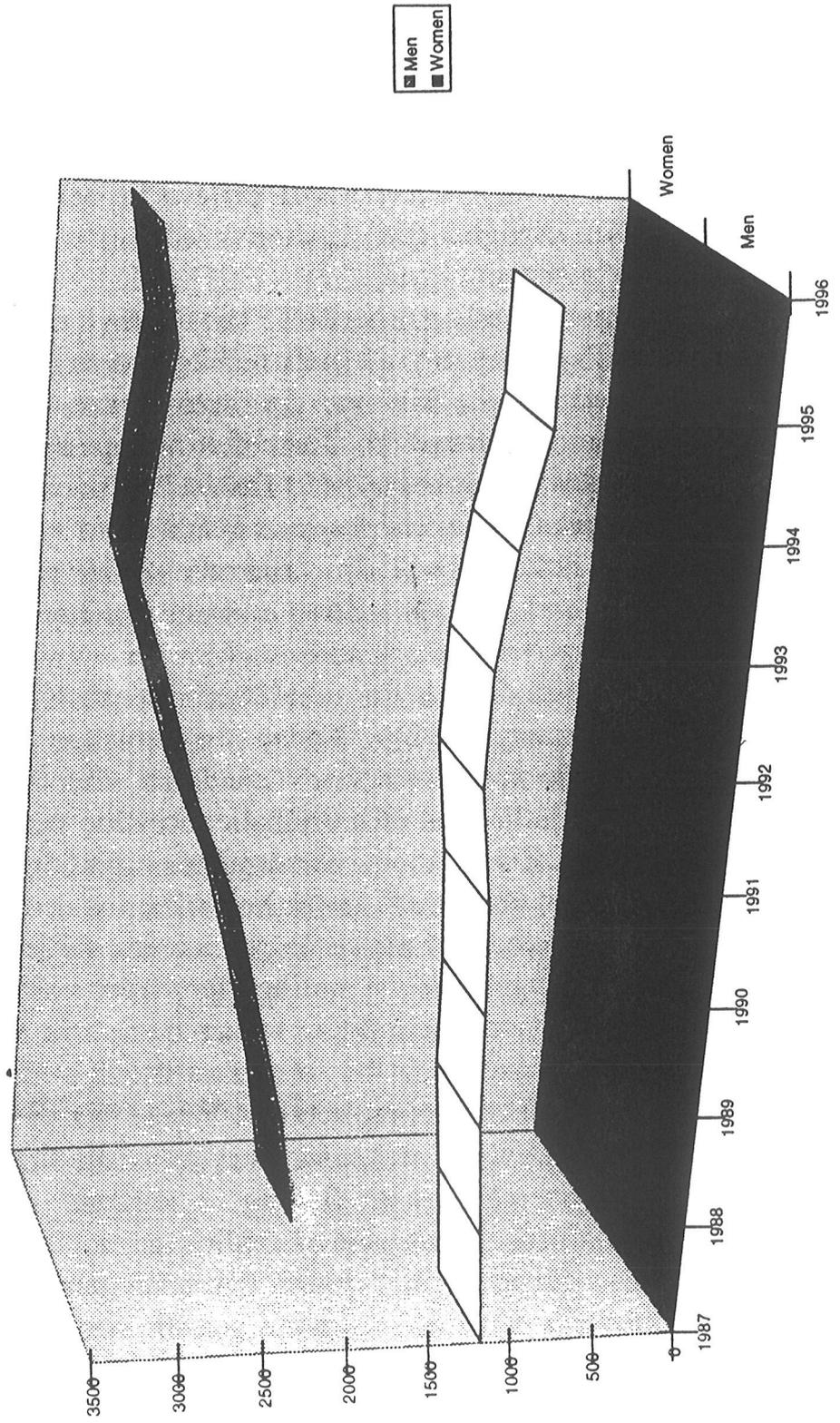
After obtaining their license, about 10% of students continue in a Ph.D. program while most others continue with a practical postgraduate training. The doctoral program takes about 4 to 5 years. Students follow selected courses which focus on their special research topic or on particular training in various methodologies and techniques. The doctoral programs are not as formally structured as in the U.S.A. The two- or three-year doctoral curricula offered by U.S. universities do not exist in Switzerland. The Swiss University Conference is currently preparing an initiative for establishing graduate programs with the financial support of the Swiss Confederation.

Professional practical training is currently offered for psychotherapy and other clinical subjects at four universities, i.e., Berne, Basel, Fribourg, Zurich, and for organizational psychology at the University of Neuchâtel (for Clinical Psychology see the contribution of Baumann in this issue). However, the majority of practical professional training programs, concerning the applications of psychology, such as psychotherapy, organizational psychology, counseling, and neuropsychology are currently offered by private institutions.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN SWITZERLAND: FUNDING, CHANCES, AND PROBLEMS

Research funding is mainly provided by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). Project applications can be submitted twice a year to Division I (humanities and social sciences) of the SNSF. Funding is strictly based on project quality. The projects are evaluated by external experts and decisions are made by a 14-member committee representing different academic disciplines. While Division I essentially supports basic research, there are also national programs which possess interdisciplinary and applied characteristics. During 1993-1996, of 124 projects submitted in psychology in Division I, 69 were approved. Consequently, in this period, the rejection rate for the project applications in psychology was 44%. The funding allocated was roughly 50% of that requested, almost 10 million sfr. Another 6 million sfr. have been granted for psychology projects by programs outside of Division I.

Figure 1
Increase in Number of Students Studying Psychology at Swiss Universities



Berne and Geneva by far enjoy the highest support. This is due to various reasons. Staff resources, teacher-student ratios, research productivity, and structural features of the faculty are prominent candidates to explain the differences. Whereas, for instance, in Basel both teaching and research resources in terms of qualified professionals are far below acceptable minimum levels, Geneva has a faculty structure with different types of professorship and more career positions at higher qualification levels for the nonprofessorial staff (at the established "assistant" level).

Apart from project funding, the SNSF also provides career support for young academics. There are 1-year (awarded by the universities) and 3-year fellowships (awarded by the National Institution) available for young and promising researchers under age 35. These fellowships are aimed at allowing research stays abroad which are expected to assist one's academic career. Apart from these fellowships, there is also support available for postgraduate training and for enrolling in intensive academic summer school programs lasting 2-3 weeks.

Only a few years ago psychology students were among the most likely to use these resources, compared with the other disciplines of the humanities and social sciences (Flammer, 1992b). Today the situation has changed. For instance, in 1997 we do not have a single candidate who applied for a 3-year fellowship. This is an indication of a dramatic situation that deserves our full attention, because we risk very soon a shortage of qualified personnel. To what can this development be attributed? In the worst case it could be the result of the rapid rise in the numbers of psychology students, thereby putting heavier work loads on our assistants and preventing them from doing research. In the most favorable case, our most able junior researchers have already established an international network and might be convinced that it is not necessary to go abroad for additional years of apprenticeship. While this optimistic view may perhaps be true for a few exceptional cases, it is rather the first reason, together with the prevailing poor chances of finding an adequate academic position, which is responsible for the unfortunate overall situation. There exists a serious structural problem in our university system that contributes to this pessimistic career outlook: We only have quite limited possibilities to establish different categories of professorship or "higher than assistant" career positions at our universities. However, this is exactly what is needed to give academic perspectives to our junior researchers. Just to illustrate this point with a paradox mechanism: Through our quite generous fellowships we could have well-qualified staff for our needs at the university. However, because there are only a few jobs available, these people have to apply again for project grant money to support themselves. The SNSF is therefore funding them again, for an uncertain future rather than integrating them into an appropriate academic

position. As an assistant's salary covers full living support, we cannot make only financial reasons responsible for this situation. Rather, our established full-professor-dominated structure would have to be opened up to other influences. Complaints about this situation are widespread, but the actual structure seems rather resistant to change.

STAFF RESOURCES AND SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTIVITY

Table 2 compares the staff resources, grant monies awarded, and distribution of publications between six Swiss psychology institutes. Neuchâtel does not appear in the table since it does not offer a master's degree program.

To have an indicator of scientific staff resources per department, we calculated for the period 1991/1992 (which does not deviate significantly from the funding period of 1993-1996), using the relevant indicators provided in the report of Flammer (1992a). One measure (= Indicator A) is defined as the number of professors and assistants (with a Ph.D.). For a second Indicator B we use the sum of professors and assistant professors per department according to the *Psychologen-Kalender* (1997).

Table 2
Staff, Funding, and Distribution of Publications Among
the Different Research Institutes

University	% of Grants 1993-96*	Ind. A 1991/92	% Ind. A	Ind. B 1997	% Ind. B	No. Publ. 1991-97**	% of Ppubl.	No. Publ./prof.	Sd.
Basel	1	5	4.6	3	5.6	8	3.6	2.7	2.88
Berne	33	13.25	12.3	7		43	19.5	6.1	4.45
Fribourg	7	8	7.4	5	9.2	26	11.8	5.2	3.96
Geneva	38	46.8	43.3	21	38.9	106	48	5.0	4.1
Lausanne	3	9	8.3	8	14.8	22	9.9	2.75	2.44
Zurich	15	26	24	10	18.5	16	7.2	1.6	2.4

Notes: Indicator A = Professors & Ph.D. Assistants for 1991/92 according to Flammer (1992a); Indicator B = Professors & Assistant Professors for 1997; *% of the approved psychological research funding by the Swiss National Science Foundation; **Number of publications (journal articles) per department independently of the author's position as first or subsequent author according to the data base "PsycLIT" 1991-3/1997.

If the relative success in securing funding is related to the scientific staff resources of the different departments (see Table 2), we observe that the psychology department of the University of Berne was more active and successful in fundraising than the others. For Fribourg, the relation of expected (according to the scientific staff resources) and received funding is approximately equal. The other universities are more or less below the percentages expected.

However, it should be mentioned that a 3-year period in SNSF funding might not be a very reliable database. One or two larger projects can quickly change the pattern. Moreover, it should be mentioned that some projects might possibly be led by people not belonging to regular faculty members or staff with mandatory duties in the institute, thus making direct comparisons between departments difficult.

A third interesting parameter would be the scientific productivity of the different departments. It is clear that it is difficult to find suitable indicators for this purpose since the scientific value of research is not directly mirrored by the number of publications. We nevertheless calculated the aggregated number of publications in the scientific journals per department according to the database "PsycLIT Journal Articles" for the years 1991-93/1997. It should be kept in mind that Table 2 contains nothing regarding quality of publications, number of book publications, or teaching quality.

We may ask whether productivity in terms of relative frequency of publications is positively or negatively correlated with the teaching quality. How is it related to the number of students, etc.? When the ratio of the number of students per professor (aggregated per department) is correlated with the number of publications per department, we find a negative, though statistically insignificant correlation ($r = -.55$).

Research in Swiss psychology is governed by international standards. There is a steadily increasing tendency to publish in English and in internationally reputed journals. An important step in this direction has been made by the former *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Psychologie* (founded in 1942), which has been transformed into the *Swiss Journal of Psychology*. It has now also become an attractive publication organ for authors from outside Switzerland. Apart from this journal, a second scientific journal is being published in Switzerland, namely the *Archives de Psychologie* (founded in 1901), and there are also the *Swiss Monographs in Psychology*, a scientific book series.

The research topics that are taught at universities and covered in journals and conferences embrace all major topics in psychology, except that there is little emphasis on animal research. Contributions cover topics in cognitive psychology, perception, memory, psycholinguistics, and emotion psychology. Well covered is also research in social psychology, clinical psychology,

psychotherapy, as well as developmental psychology, covering topics ranging from infancy to gerontology. Increasing activity can also be observed with respect to environmental and cultural topics, and in neuropsychology and artificial intelligence.

HOW ARE SWISS PSYCHOLOGISTS ORGANIZED?

The Federation of Swiss Psychologists (FSP) numbering approximately 3,500 members, organizes all academically educated psychologists. About 1,000 of them are psychotherapists. The FSP is subdivided into 12 regional groups and 18 special professional associations such as school psychologists, clinical psychologists, etc. The association with the longest tradition—a member of the Federation of Swiss Psychologists—is the Swiss Society of Psychology with about 450 members. It is made up of psychologists who conduct scientific research at universities or private institutes. The Swiss Society of Psychology was founded in 1943 by founding members such as Jean Piaget, Kurt Binswanger, Bärbel Inhelder, Richard Meili, and Carl Gustav Jung. Piaget was its first president. Today it organizes congresses and deals with problems related to the infrastructure for research and to graduate/postgraduate academic training. It publishes both the *Swiss Journal of Psychology* and the *Swiss Monographs in Psychology* in English in order to facilitate the integration of research activity in the international network and because this makes the linguistic gap between the French- and German-speaking members easier to bridge.

PSYCHOLOGY IN SWISS SOCIETY

Even if the status of psychology and its integration in the public life is not on a level comparable with that of physicians, its situation has improved considerably during the last twenty years. Psychologists are present in schools, and some cantons have passed laws which prescribe the ratio of the number of pupils per psychologist. Several thousand psychologists work as psychotherapists, and a smaller number of psychologists are present in organizational and health contexts.

In the urban areas of the country, psychology enjoys quite a positive image. Perrig-Chiello and Perrig (1992) found in an opinion poll among an urban sample in the German-speaking parts of Switzerland (N=412), that 94% of the subjects were interested in psychology (43% indicated "high interest"), and 86% judged the contributions of psychology to society as important. Fifty-three percent believed that psychology can be helpful in the therapeutic treatment of mental disorders. For assistance in acute crisis, psychologists were considered

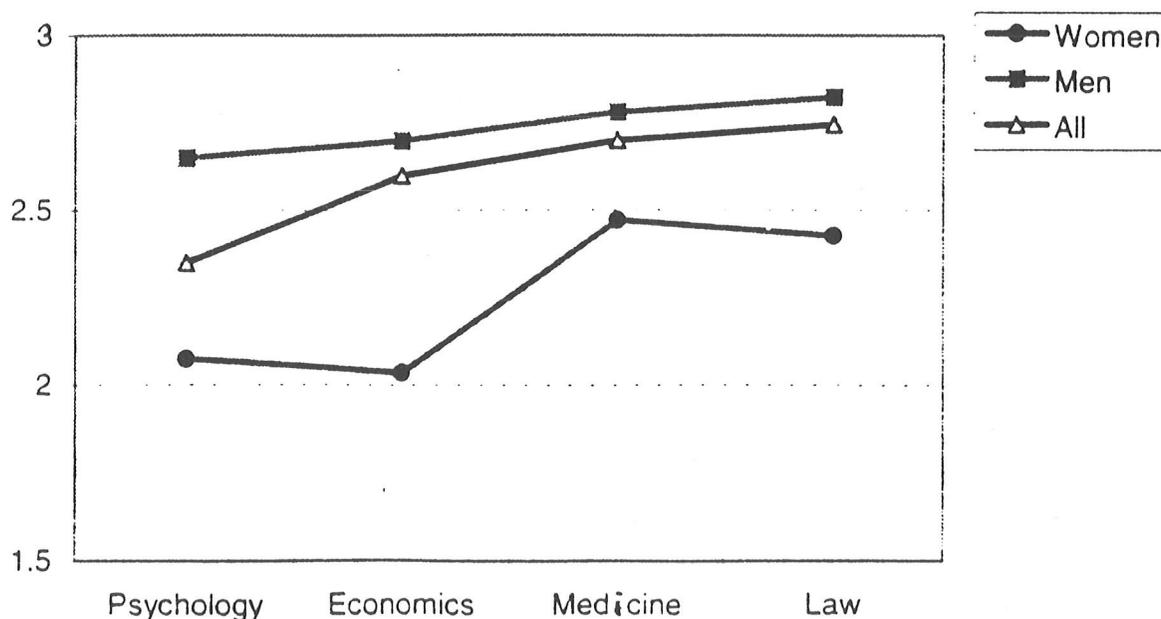
as the most relevant professionals to turn to, and as more important than physicians, psychiatrists or pastors/priests. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents considered psychology a reliable science, and one third of the sample reported personal experiences with a professional psychological support system (therapy or counseling). The social prestige of psychologists is fairly similar to that of professionals such as pilots, teachers, lawyers, psychiatrists, and pastors/priests.

These results are certainly not representative for rural areas, and the French-speaking parts may differ in some ways. Among the rural population and among some social strata lacking higher education, we can observe an unchanged inclination toward nonscientific psychological ideas and practices.

The results of the study of Perrig-Chiello and Perrig (1992) seem at first glance to be in disagreement with the objective professional success of psychologists. Berberat, Goldschmid, Neiryneck-Carton-de-Wiart, Nughes, and Ricci (1990) developed an objective index for professional success including indicators such as extent of responsibility or decision-making power, number of subordinates, and income. They compared different academic professions in Switzerland using this index. Figure 2 shows the results for psychology compared with economy, medicine, and lawyers.

Figure 2 shows a lower objective professional success compared with other academic professions. It also demonstrates an accentuated difference between women and men. This is confirmed by other results of Diem (1992). Among

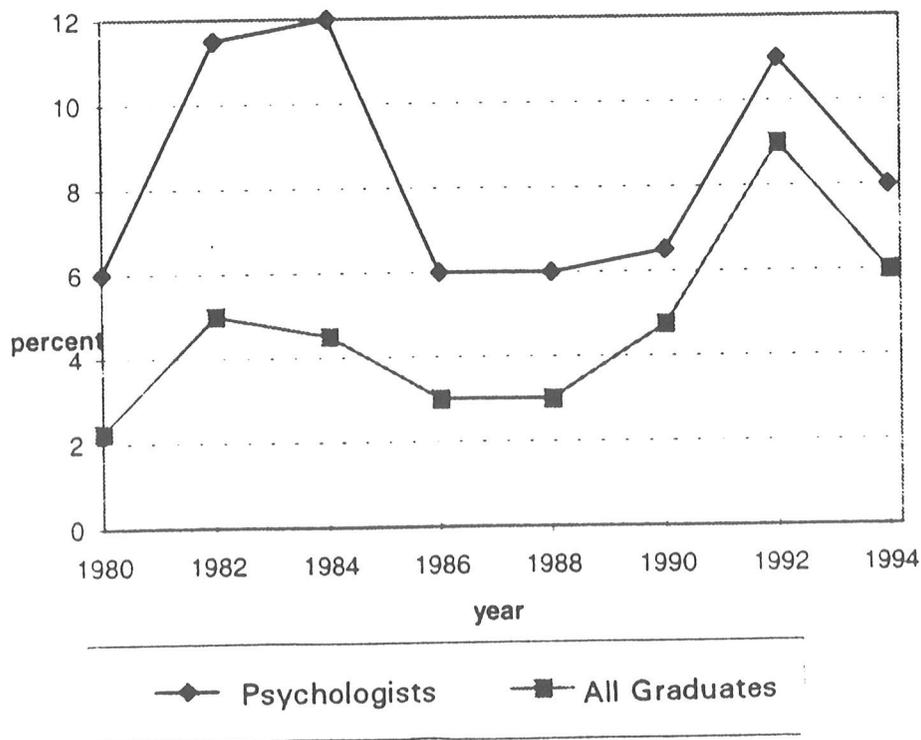
Figure 2
Objective Professional Success (Diem, 1992)



the male groups of the different disciplines, the differences in "professional success" are very low; the major difference between psychology and the other disciplines is clearly caused by the disproportionate representation of females in the psychological profession. Women form a much larger section of the workforce in Swiss psychology than in comparable academic professions, and are more frequently employed part-time.

The job market for psychologists is, compared with most other academic disciplines, acceptable. When compared to reports regarding the employment of academically trained persons in Switzerland, the survey of Diem (1996) shows that one year after obtaining their academic diploma (lic. phil.) in 1995, about 8% of those concerned were without employment. For all academic disciplines, the corresponding rate is 6.4% (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Unemployed Psychologists from 1981 to 1995, One Year after Academic Graduation (in percent) (Diem, 1996)



Between the German-speaking part and the French-speaking areas there is a clear difference: in the French-speaking part the unemployment rate of psychology is more than double (10%) that of the German-speaking part (4%).

In what psychological field do they find their jobs? Most of the beginners find employment (see Table 3) in the context of social services and psychological counseling and social work (44%). This is followed by

employment in the public health (18%) and research (15%) sectors.

The survey of Diem (1996) reveals other noteworthy aspects of the professional situation of psychologists in Switzerland. In 1995, the mean income of the beginners in the professional world was sfr. 59,000 per annum, which was sfr. 6,000 less than the mean income of all academic beginners. This can be explained in part by the fact that a considerable percentage of psychologists

Table 3
Occupation Areas of Psychologists from 1981 to 1995, One Year After Academic Graduation (in percent) (Diem, 1996)

	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995
University	26.3	17.1	14.1	17.8	21.8	22.3	19.8	15.6
<i>Social Services</i>								
- social work	6.4	6.6	14.1	14.1	10.9	8.6	12.4	14.8
- psychological counseling	31.4	42.1	37.4	23.5	26.1	25.4	24.1	26.6
- other social services	1.9	5.3	0.0	2.8	3.6	3.0	7.1	2.7
School	10.9	3.9	8.1	9.9	6.7	7.6	9.0	6.0
Culture/medicine	0.6	1.3	2.0	2.3	1.2	0.5	0.5	1.2
Public health	10.9	18.4	8.1	16.9	15.2	17.3	12.3	18.3
Private service	5.1	2.6	7.1	8.5	8.5	8.1	7.1	5.8
Public administration	3.8	2.6	5.1	3.3	3.0	2.5	3.8	3.4
N	156	76	99	213	165	197	212	263

do not work full-time, and they do this intentionally. Eighteen percent of the employed consider themselves (1995) as underemployed, 50% worked half-time and did not want to work more, and 31% of the freshly qualified worked full-time. The increasing number of female psychologists and the fact that women, more often than men, prefer part-time work is related to this.

OUTLOOK FOR PSYCHOLOGY IN SWITZERLAND

One problem that we currently have in Switzerland, with regard to the profession of psychologist, lies in the practical training, intertwined with the university training as we have described. There are only a few uniform standards for practical training. As a consequence very well-trained psychologists also practice alongside those with much less experience and understanding of scientific psychology. The Federation of Swiss Psychologists

is currently undertaking to solve this problem for the whole country by establishing uniform standards.

Health psychology is a new branch with considerable activity over the last years. A report by the Kommission für Prävention der FSP (1992) gives an overview of the relatively recent developments and problems in health psychology. The University of Lausanne has, for several years, offered a postgraduate program in health psychology, and at different universities such as Zurich or Fribourg, research projects on these topics are underway. A sign that this specific area of psychology is providing impulses is that in April 1997 the Swiss Society of Health Psychology was founded.

Psychology is a young discipline. It is still searching for its place and role in society. The need for psychological expertise in different domains of society and private life is strong. The scientific contributions required to satisfy these needs are still in a state of experimentation and in their first phases of consolidation.

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