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AN EXPLORATION OF POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT.

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology

Johannesburg, 2009

ABSTRACT

Community psychology has a large role to play in South Africa. Mainstream psychology does not seem to be the answer to many of South Africa's mental health and psychosocial concerns for many reasons, but most importantly because it has little relevance to the problems faced by a large portion of the population. Despite it's potential contribution to addressing this issue, few students persevere with studying community psychology as a subject past an undergraduate level. This report aims to understand what post-graduate students' experience of studying community psychology and what their perceptions of community psychology are, in order to clarify why this is the case. The students interviewed were 7 post-graduate students who had completed an honours course in community psychology. These interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. These transcriptions were then organised into themes using thematic content analysis. These themes were organised under the broad headings of pre-conceived perceptions of community psychology, post-exposure perceptions of community psychology, the experience of studying community psychology at a post-graduate level, motivations to study community psychology and the impact which community psychology has had on the students' future. The research shows that students continue to find many differences between traditional psychology and community psychology. Because of this and a poor knowledge of community psychology, students therefore define community psychology in relation to the more traditional sphere. Related to this idea, it was found that students have set ideas about race and racialisation, as well as the application of psychology to different groups. Possibly the most important findings to come out of the research was that of the relevance of community psychology to the South African population and suggestions of students to increase the numbers of students studying community psychology.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other University.

_____

Lauren Fitchet

__ day of _____, 2009

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the present research study, which focuses on post-graduate students' experiences of studying community psychology, and its relevance in South Africa. The chapter begins by outlining the central research aims that guided the study, describing the rationale behind conducting this research and providing a discussion of its significance within the South African context. Following this, a brief review of some of the contextual literature which forms the background to the research is outlined. This includes literature on the socio-political history of South Africa and a history of psychology in South Africa. The literature presented on the history of South Africa focuses on apartheid and its impacts on health, economic and social spheres of life as well as post-apartheid transformation and remaining challenges in these sectors. Following this, the history of psychology in South Africa is discussed; beginning with the relationship between psychology and apartheid and the emergence of movements within psychology against apartheid. The section concludes with an overview of the current state of psychology in South Africa. Finally, this chapter provides an outline of the structure in which the remaining components of this research report are organised.

AIMS

This research aims to explore post-graduate students' experiences of studying community psychology and to examine their perceptions of the value of studying community psychology in the South African context. Various aspects of these experiences and perceptions are explored within the study. The study includes investigating students' initial motivations for studying community psychology at a post-graduate level in order to shed some light on why students choose or do not choose to study community psychology at a higher level of tertiary education. The study also explores students' perceptions of the subject of community psychology and the ways in which students' perceptions of community psychology changed after completing a course in community psychology. In addition, the research included a focus on investigating students' personal and academic experiences of studying community psychology. Finally, the study seeks to examine the ways in which students intend to use their knowledge of community psychology in their future careers and in what ways they feel that studying community psychology has impacted on their professional development. It is

important to place this study within the South African context, the next section will highlight the necessity of this study.

RATIONALE

There is no shortage of students wanting to study psychology in South Africa, with about one in five university students taking a psychology course (Louw, 2002). A study by Wilson, Richter, Griesel, Durrheim, Surendorff and Asafo-Ayegi (1998) found that 8% of the total student enrolments in tertiary studies are psychology first year students. However, the article providing these statistics does not distinguish between those students who take psychology in the hopes to pursue a post-graduate career in the field and those who take psychology as a 'filler course' in order to gain enough credits to complete their undergraduate degree.

Psychology has played a significant role in South Africa's transformation process post-apartheid (Franchi & Swart, 2003). The fact that psychology in South Africa has followed the socio-historical context closely has had implications for the contemporary development of the discipline (Stevens, 2002). Since the end of apartheid, there has been a move towards changing the training of psychologists to be more responsive to the mental health needs of the country. Some of the changes have included the introduction of formalised courses in community psychology and the four-year training programme (Stevens, 2002). However, none of these changes have made a meaningful contribution to a more relevant praxis (Stevens, 2002). Therefore, the field of psychology needs to be more creative when addressing the challenge of facing the country's problems.

Community psychology, as it is known today, has a short history in relation to psychology as a discipline – both nationally and internationally (Yen, 2008). According to Yen (2008), it is difficult to define community psychology in the South African context because it encompasses a broad range of approaches and tackles a large array of problems.

Community psychology is defined by Pretorius-Heuchert and Ahmed (2001) as a field which aims at mass intervention by training and utilising large numbers of people for intervention and aims to prevent psychological problems before they arise. Community psychology aims to extend psychological services to all citizens (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). This means that it seeks to act as a potential solution to the crisis in mental health care in South Africa, which has emerged due to the historical neglect in service delivery to large sectors of the population. The challenges for psychology in post-apartheid South Africa are

issues revolving around equity and redress, and the development of relevant policies and forms of practice (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). There is a need for broader systemic and socio-political interventions that include social activism, the need to engage with and influence policy and finally a need for the development of community psychology (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). However, psychology in South Africa has not yet engaged in systematically developing and building a theory of practice that can be recognised as South African (Bhana, Peterson & Rochart, 2007). This process should work to include indigenous knowledge systems into the theory and be responsive to the needs and concerns of local communities.

As Pillay (2003) states, "the need for training in community psychology is abundantly clear" (p. 267). However, community psychology has failed to flourish in South Africa (Carolissen, 2006). This is most likely due to the low number of students choosing to study community psychology at both an undergraduate and post-graduate level. Various attempts have been made to explain why this occurs. These include explanations which suggest that students perceive poor financial incentives in community psychology with a low likelihood of finding employment in the public sector, and experience high levels of anxiety surrounding community work during training (Carolissen, 2006).

For these reasons, it is important to understand post-graduate students' perceptions of community psychology in order to ascertain the reasons why students elect to study in this area and whether their experiences of studying community psychology inform their future career development. Students' perceptions of communities may affect their willingness to engage in community psychology practice (Carolissen, 2006). These perceptions stem from the racialised definitions of communities. Ngonyama Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004) highlight the use of the word community as a code for different race groups in South Africa and that the word is usually applied to black people. Students' perceptions are important to examine as these will provide access to the discourses which influence professional practice (Carolissen, 2006). Post-graduate students are in a space between student and professional and thus have access to both sets of discourses surrounding community psychology. These students may be influenced by the opinions that they are exposed to, either in a positive or negative way. Research on students' perceptions of community psychology has mainly focused on post-graduate and masters level training programmes. Due to the fact that most students in these programmes are white (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004), the subjects in these research projects have largely been white (Carolissen, 2006). These authors have found that students' perceptions of community psychology are generally negative. Carolissen (2006)

suggests that further research should then analyse the underlying assumptions which inform perceptions and the establishment of professional identities.

The present study seeks to uncover some of the obstacles that prevent students from studying community psychology or incorporating community psychology in their future career choices. This research could potentially assist in strategies to encourage people to study community psychology and pursue careers utilising the skills and interventions in community psychology. Community psychology and the study of the subject is an under researched area in South Africa, this study may have important implications for the field as a sub-discipline.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In order to understand the significance of this research in the South African context, it is important to understand the history of South Africa and subsequently, the history of psychology in South Africa. This section provides a brief overview of some of the features of the socio-political and historical landscape of South African society during apartheid and in the post-apartheid period in order to contextualise the present study. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of social and political developments in the country for the development of psychology in this context.

A brief history of South Africa in the apartheid era

Following the Second World War, the National Party (NP) won the general election in South Africa (South African Government, 2009). The NP's manifesto revolved around three main points – to maintain white domination in the face of mass resistance against the idea, to uplift poor Afrikaners and to abolish all imperial ties (South African Government, 2009). Apartheid was a more systematic and brutal continuation of the segregationist policies of previous governments. In 1950, the Group Areas Act was enforced (Bhana et al., 2007). As the name suggests, this act assigned different areas of land to different race groups, assigning only 13% of the total South African land to non-white populations. These areas were degraded by overpopulation and soil erosion (Bhana et al., 2007). Acts such as this set the stage for what was to follow.

In 1961, prime minister, H.F. Verwoerd declared South Africa to be a republic (Bhana et al., 2007; South African Government, 2009). He enforced a policy of separate development where the people of South Africa were separated along racial lines. Separate land distribution

led to separate health, education, sport, recreation and transport services. Not only were these services separate but depending on which race classification you fell into, they were also inferior. The government was so committed to this separate development that each resident in South Africa had to be registered in a race category and laws criminalising interracial relationships were introduced (South African Government, 2009).

Over time there was an increase in resistance against the apartheid government and the oppression which went with it. This resistance culminated in events such as the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the student protests in Soweto in 1976 (Bhana et al., 2007). The 1980s was a violent and tumultuous decade in South Africa's history (Yen, 2008). During this time there was a renewal of political and protest action by black people in South Africa (especially young people) (Yen, 2008). The government's violent reaction to this opposition only increased the action taken by those against apartheid.

Apartheid created a fragmented health system which in turn has resulted in inequitable access to health care (ANC in Mayekiso, Strydom, Jithoo & Katz, 2004). This statement refers to all forms of health care including mental health care which at the time – and still to some extent – was racially and geographically skewed in favour of white South Africans. During the 1980s, people began to struggle for and at times begin to provide themselves with much needed health care and social services (Yen, 2008).

In 1989, F.W. de Klerk became president of the country. At the opening of parliament the following year, de Klerk announced the unbanning of liberation movements and the release of political prisoners (South African Government, 2009). This move may have been brought about by pressure on the South African government due to financial, trade, sport and cultural sanctions (South African Government, 2009). The 1990s brought with it great political changes, a new constitution and the creation of new social institutions (Yen, 2008) and the 'new' South Africa was born in 1994 as a democratic society. In 1995, mental health policy was debated at a conference for mental health workers. This conference resulted in psychologists applying themselves to social and mental health issues such as violence, trauma, child development and substance abuse; as well as a greater emphasis on Aids and HIV (Yen, 2008).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) ran from 1995 until 1998 (Yen, 2008). The TRC was conceptualised as a tool for national healing, in order for South Africans to come to terms with the past but unfortunately brought with it it's own problems for South

Africa – including individual psychological harm caused by testifying and the incorrect belief that uncovering the truth would lead to the forgiveness of the parties involved (Yen, 2008).

In 2003, the United Nations Development Programme published the 'South African Human Development Report' which provided an overview of challenges to sustainable development at a national level (MacLeod, 2004). Key challenges include poverty, extreme income and wealth inequalities, access to quality yet affordable basic services, unemployment and underemployment, land reform and housing, education, HIV/Aids, black economic empowerment, training and extension support (MacLeod, 2004).

Although there have been many positive changes in South Africa, there are still many problems which plague the country (Pillay & Kramers, 2003). These include the 22.7% of the South African population who are unemployed (StatsSA, 2008). South Africa has a high crime rate, Meyer (1999) states that South Africa is rated as one of the most murderous countries in the world (in Pillay & Kramers, 2003). These two factors, and others, have added to South Africans' wishes to leave the country. Since 1994, the emigration rate has increased by 56% among professionals.

A history of psychology in South Africa

Psychology has traditionally been defined as a scientific search for explanations for the individual's behaviour. The individual is the target of enquiry and intervention. As the literature review discusses in the following chapter, it is precisely the failure of psychology in its traditional form that has given rise to the birth of community psychology, both internationally and in South Africa.

It should be expected that the history of psychology in South Africa would be an interesting one, considering that H.F. Verwoerd was himself a psychologist. Psychology as a discipline began in the 1920s in South Africa (Foster, 1993). Its emergence arose out of a concern over people known then as 'mental defectives' from 1913 onwards. Psychology's development in South Africa is closely paralleled to the international history of the discipline (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). In South Africa, psychology has been dominated by theories and tools imported from other countries (especially the United States of America). Added to this, many psychologists practising in Africa and South Africa are trained in Western paradigms (Bojuwoye, 2006). An example of imported tools is intelligence tests which were put into practice in education and industry – these tests became psychology's way of contributing to South Africa's social problems during apartheid. These theories are

not relevant to everyone everywhere, as the reality that people live with is not the same all over the world. In South Africa, many people were (and still are) concerned with "bread and land issues" (Anonymous, 1986).

Psychology has been criticised for its enmeshment with apartheid and apartheid policies (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). The apparent scientific neutralism of psychology in regard to discrimination and social inequality and it's active support for apartheid policy, psychology carved out a niche and invested all of it's intellectual capital in the service of the prevailing explicitly racist-capitalist system (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). This became a useful tool of the apartheid government in terms of class-ordering, labour and race-thinking. In 1948, South Africa formed its first professional psychology body. This aided the rapid growth and professionalisation of the discipline. This growth brought about the therapeutic industry in South Africa (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004).

Psychology always has and will continue to be interwoven with the social, historical and political power relations of any given society (MacLeod, 2004). According to the Health Professions Council of South Africa, the first clinical psychologist was registered in 1956 (Pillay & Kramers, 2003). In 2003, there were 1734 registered clinical psychologists in South Africa, this means that there is one psychologist to every 23 000 people. The majority of these psychologists work in the private sector. The private sector provides care to only 23% of the population (Pillay & Kramers, 2003). The needs of this minority are different from the vast majority (Anonymous, 1986). This gives rise to the need for a psychology that will consider the conditions under which the majority of people live.

During the 1970s and 1980s, although South Africa was dogged with an obsession about race issues, few articles regarding these issues appeared in the South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP) – showing how researchers managed to ignore issues of race (MacLeod, 2004). Somehow, psychology managed to keep politics and psychology completely separate (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). This was most probably achieved by adopting a medical model and continuing to claim that psychology was a value-free science (Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997). Differences between races were viewed as facts about the environment that could be studied objectively (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004).

However, Painter and Terre Blanche (2004) state that not all psychologists in South Africa were guilty of actively or passively supporting apartheid. In the 1980s, progressive white psychologists and an ever-increasing number of black psychologists began establishing

alternate agendas for research and practice. Not only did these psychologists try to address the political crisis looming in South Africa but also attempted to open the political unconscious of the discipline. Instead of helping people to adapt to the adverse conditions that they were living under, psychology needed to help them to change these structures because the political conditions which were at play during apartheid was likely to influence the mental health of the oppressed (Anonymous, 1986).

There have been many changes in psychology since 1994. Black leadership has emerged in both the Psychological Society of South Africa (PSYSSA) and in the editorship of the SAJP. Before 1994, black authors contributed only 2.4% to 5.1% of articles in major South African journals (Seedat, 1990). This jumped to 22% between 1994 and 2003 (Duncan, van Niekerk & Townsend, 2004). Black psychologists were severely under-represented in academia and professional psychology. Until the early 1990s, less than 10% of all registered psychologists in South Africa were Black (Duncan et al., 2004). These authors go on to state that this number has also increased since 1994, with black psychologists now making up 18% of all registered psychologists.

During the 1980s psychologists began a debate which has now become referred to as the 'relevance debate' (MacLeod, 2004). Psychology in South Africa was said to be in a crisis centred on theoretical relevance and the appropriateness of practice (Seedat, MacKenzie & Stevens, 2004). Various criticisms were levelled against psychology. Psychology was criticised for ignoring the relationship between the individual and the society in which they live, not criticising the ideology which they worked under – causing an active or inadvertent support for apartheid, ignoring issues of the working class, maintaining the inequality in service provision and lacking theory to deal with change (Anonymous, 1986; MacLeod, 2004). Psychologists dispensed advice to people who sought their help without contextualising these choices and psychologists ignored the socio-political influences on their clients' lives (Anonymous, 1986).

Mental health services reflected broader inequalities present in society at the time-including race, gender and class inequalities (Naidoo, 2000). The emergence of a relevant psychology is closely tied to issues of social justice and social transformation (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). The history of psychology and community psychology in South Africa is aligned with the political history of South Africa. The following quote illustrates two ways in which psychology aligned itself with apartheid. According to Bhana et al. (2007, p. 379):

> "Psychology's response to these problems fell far short of being progressive. In both its active advocacy for apartheid policies based on "results" of mental testing and it's apparent scientific neutrality with regard to matters of discrimination and social inequality"

These authors go on to explain that psychology made its professional niche in South Africa by investing its intellectual capital in support of an explicitly racist and capitalist political system (Bhana et al., 2007). This relates to the numerous silences around apartheid policies and practices as well as issues of race, gender and class and how these factors relate to poverty, power, inequality and exploitation (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). In contrast, community psychology was shaped by political pressure and dissatisfaction from the academia and other fields of psychology, examples of this can be found in articles by Berger and Lazarus (1987) as well as Seedat and his colleagues (2001).

In South Africa, there is a distinction between mainstream and progressive psychology (Seedat, 1990). The mainstream or traditional approach emphasised freedom, individuality and value-neutrality (Watson & Stead, 2002). These taken for granted assumptions of mainstream psychology need to be questioned (Hook, 2004). Community psychology falls into the category of progressive psychology as it questions the values, assumptions and applicability of 'traditional' psychology.

In South Africa, psychology is mainly practiced privately in a one-on-one setting; few psychologists practice in the public sector (Wilson et al., 1999). Many psychologists are white, middle class males who focus on individual interventions; these factors make the practice of psychology inappropriate for many South Africans (Fryer, 2008; Naidoo, 2000). There has been a change in the gender bias of psychology, with twice as many women as men have registered as psychologists since the late 1990s (Richter & Griesel, in Fryer, 2008). This shift occurred in other countries earlier than in South Africa. Added to this disconnection, many mental health service providers are situated in urban areas (Naidoo, 2000). There is a population of over 40 million in South Africa, with 'black' people making up 79.3% of this number (StatsSA, 2009). Added to this, 40% of the South African population is living in poverty and 22, 7% of the total population is unemployed (StatsSA, 2008) Poverty is linked to all facets of a person's well being, including their mental health. Poverty has been shown to be linked to many aspects such as violence and HIV/Aids – aspects which require the intervention of a psychologist (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). Only 16.2% of the total population have some form of health insurance or medical aid (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004).

Unfortunately, psychology is biased towards helping the well resourced sector of the South African population. Wilson et al (1998) found that the ratio of psychologists to the South African population is 1:13996 (in Wilson et al., 1999). The supply of professionals is less than the demand and this demand only grows as populations increase (Sobey, 1970). The majority of people in this country do not have access to formal psychological services and those who do are likely to receive help from someone who does not speak their language (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). These figures contribute to the short duration of counselling in disadvantaged communities, averaging at just two sessions (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). The solution may not lie in treating larger numbers of people in hospitals and clinics but also diminishing the hazards, which are found in the home and community (Sobey, 1970).

Nevertheless, to this day, most psychologists in South Africa are white and may still ignore many of the issues facing South Africans in general. Given that psychology has a relationship with the context it finds itself in, a requirement of the discipline is to generate knowledge around the socio-political concerns of South Africa and contribute to the over-coming of inequalities and diffractions of society, along with the psychological issues which accompany these (MacLeod, 2004). However, MacLeod (2004) found that this was not occurring when she compared the topics which were being covered by psychologists to issues facing South Africa highlighted by the United Nations.

MacLeod (2004) went on to recommend areas which need to be developed in South African psychology. South African psychology has not moved from it's reliance on theories developed in other wealthier countries. MacLeod (2004) provided two possible solutions to this problem – psychological theories from other contexts could be continued to be used but in a more critical manner or, more ideally, psychologists should use their position in South Africa to generate new theories.

Community psychology in South Africa was developed as an answer to the crisis of relevance of mainstream psychology. It was (and continues to be) questioned whether mainstream psychological knowledge and practice can be applied to social problems in South Africa (de la Rey & Ipser, 2004). It has been argued that psychology needs to move beyond its preoccupation with the individual towards a broader focus on community. Pillay (2003) believes that community psychology is the answer to these problems in South Africa. In turn, it is important to understand how students perceive community psychology and whether they plan to go into a profession involving community psychology.

Now that the significance of this research is better understood and the study has been contextualised in terms of socio-political developments and developments within psychology in South Africa, the overall structure of the research report will be outlined.

CHAPTER ORGANISATION

The following is an outline of the structure of this research report. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature relating to community psychology and studying community psychology. The chapter begins with definitions and histories of community and community psychology. These are important to understand as they show why community psychology is important in South Africa. The literature review continues to explore the key features of community psychology, highlighting the central values and principles of the sub-discipline. Finally, the chapter examines literature on studying community psychology, including motivations for studying the subject and possible careers in the field of community psychology.

Chapter 3 begins with an outline of the research questions, following this; the chapter details the methodology of the research report. The participants identifying details are given. The tool used to collect data – an interview – is described and defined. The procedure of the research and the data analysis tool are then depicted. The chapter comes to a close by considering ethics, detailing how the researcher may have impacted on the research.

In chapter 4, following an outline of the procedure, the results of the research report are given. The results are categorised into five broad sections: Pre-perceptions of community psychology, post-perceptions of community psychology, the experience of studying community psychology at a post-graduate level, motivations to study community psychology and the impact which community psychology has had on the students' future.

Chapter 5 discusses the results introduced in chapter 4. This chapter focuses on four main points – traditional psychology versus community psychology, the relevance of community psychology to the South African population, ideas of race and racialisation and ways to increase the number of students studying community psychology. The chapter then examines the limitations of the study. This is followed by a discussion of recommendations which have arisen from this research and finally closing comments are presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This literature review will introduce key concepts that appear in this research report and examine and discuss relevant literature pertaining to these concepts. The literature review begins by placing the study within a theoretical framework. After discussing what community psychology is, the definition of community psychology is explored by showing the contrast between the terms community and psychology. The chapter then examines the birth of the sub-discipline of community psychology in the international realm, focusing on the United States of America, but briefly reviewing developments in other parts of the world. The literature review then moves closer to the context of the research by discussing the problems that psychology in South Africa is facing and the emergence of community psychology in the South African context. This is followed by a discussion about issues related to the training of psychologists and the ways in which community psychologists are currently being trained. The literature review then turns to an outline of motivations for studying community psychology, ending with a brief exploration of possible careers in community psychology in South Africa.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This research does not follow one theory of knowledge but borrows important concepts and ideas from different perspectives – including Marxism, community psychology, critical psychology and social-cultural learning. The introduction to the research discussed the impact that apartheid has had on individuals and their psychological wellbeing. Although this political oppression is no longer a dominant feature of South African society, those that were marginalised during apartheid, continue to be victimised in an unbalanced society (Hamber, Masilela & Terre Blanche, 2001). These groups may be marginalised because of their race, gender or class – among other features – and have not changed social positions in the 'new' South Africa.

Community psychology aims to provide services to everyone, so by definition, it must work with these marginalised groups. However, psychologists have struggled to emerge from the politics of exclusion originating in apartheid. During apartheid, psychology acted as a means of maintaining ideas of capitalism (Hamber et al., 2001), by emphasising the importance of individual needs and feelings, suggesting the possibility of fulfilment and

emphasising the need for self-improvement. Added to these challenges, psychology acted as a tool to promote and maintain the status quo, one of white, male dominance (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). Inclusion is thus, a central value of community psychology (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004).

Secondly, community psychology is said to be more socially responsive than traditional psychology (Hamber et al., 2001). This means that it is embedded in the real world – people's daily lives. But what is this real world? Reality is continually changing construct, controlled by those in power. Social reality is embedded in different historical periods and different social formations (Ahmed & Pretorius Heuchert, 2001). Thus, the social reality of apartheid is different from that of today or the social reality of white people is different to that of black people. In turn, the individual is a product of this reality and its social and economic realities. To be effective, the theories utilised by community psychology must resonate with potential struggles of ordinary people (Ahmed & Pretorius Heuchert, 2001). Because the social reality and thus individuals are different in South Africa to other parts of the world, there has to be a contextual base for community psychology theory. Similarly, knowledge is a product of the community and environment (van der Merwe & Dunbar-Krige, 2007). People will make meaning based on their participation in different contexts – including social, cultural, historical and political contexts. Thus, no one's social reality is the same, no two individuals are the same and the way in which people understand and produce knowledge are all different.

In an attempt to keep up with first world countries, South Africa has continued to develop as a capitalist society. Within this type of society, everything can be traced back to material conditions (Hamber et al., 2001). This is based on the idea from Marxism of commodity fetishism, which is defined as the encouragement of people to believe that they can gain happiness by buying different items. Hamber and his colleagues (2001) give the examples of a better house, the latest car or the newest technology.

Social change and empowerment are key values of community psychology (Lazarus, 2001). Ahmed and Pretorius Heuchert (2001) state that social change is achieved when the dominant systems of knowledge are challenged by new definitions of social reality and a transformation of oppressive and exploitative conditions. Empowerment is the process whereby people are afforded the power to change their positions within society. It can be questioned whether this process will bring about real change or only allow people to make changes to aspects of their position. In order to bring about real social change, a revolution of

society is needed – a revolution led by the disempowered population (Hamber et al., 2001). As a community psychologist – and agent of social change – it is necessary to join this revolutionary movement, thus relinquishing the position of power that one finds oneself in.

Community psychology is tied to politics, this idea is further unpacked in the discussion of the history of community psychology. The bulk of psychological research shies away from social and political constructs that have negatively affected much of the South African population (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). Similarly to this, psychologists have been criticised for failing to engage in changing the circumstances of those who are poor and oppressed (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo, 2004). This may be achieved by concentrating on improving individual – or even group – characteristics to better ones place in society. By admitting that community psychology is political, one takes on the responsibility to submerge oneself in politics.

In the position of a community psychologist, it is tempting to move away from the challenge of making a difference in society (Hamber et al., 2001). This may be achieved by becoming concerned with intellectual discussions and theoretical escapades or implementing the tools of training to engage in social action with no larger agenda. The challenge is to act in a way that is informed by critical social analysis – the idea of praxis (Hamber et al., 2001). This requires the psychologist to engage in the real world and join the organisations of the oppressed or to join the small section of those in power which joins the revolutionary class. Research is one way of impacting on praxis (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). To do this totally, one must first accept what they were born with (Hamber et al., 2001) – whether it be into a life of privilege or one of disadvantage.

Different roles are invented by society for people to full, depending on ones place in society; different roles are available to be filled. The role of the community psychologist is both vast and varied – but there are still defined roles. To really impact on society, community psychologists must go beyond the traditional roles of a psychologist (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) have said that community psychology is not a profession but a calling. This may be true, but one has to be in a certain societal position to receive this calling (Hamber et al., 2001).

As this research report progresses, it will be clear that many of the points discussed above are shown to have an impact on the results of the research. Secondly, these points

inform the perspective of the discussion. Now that the point of departure has been detailed, it is necessary to now define community and the larger field in which this research is situated.

DEFINING COMMUNITY

The concept of community is central as it defines both the theory and praxis of community psychology in South Africa (Carolissen, 2006). Because of the clear importance of the term, Yen (2007) cautions that the origin of the word community must be questioned. It has been noted that there is an absence of or limited definition of 'community' in community psychology literature (Carolissen, 2006). This section attempts to critically define the term community.

Kirkpatrick (1986) tracked the changes in living arrangements from the face-to-face living arrangements of a tribe or a village to the development of large cities (in Newbrough, 1997). This change brought with it more formalised and differentiated living patterns as well as a fragmented society and a loss of a sense of community and common good (Newbrough, 1997). This distinction relates to the ideas of community as a 'locality' and a 'relational' community (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001).

Locality refers to a community defined by a geographical area. This type of communities ties are based on the fact that they are in close proximity and have not necessarily chosen to have a relationship with those geographically near to them (Dalton et al., 2001). Many authors define community only as a geographical space (Carolissen, 2006). When interpersonal relations and a sense of community are not limited by geography, then the community becomes referred to as a relational community (Dalton et al., 2001). In 1974, Sarason defined community as a readily available and mutually supportive network of relationships on which a person can depend (in Dalton et al., 2001). This is similar to the definition offered by Ngonyama Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004), who state that community provides people with a sense of coherence which enables them to make sense of their social interactions, actions and thought processes.

Even though the term community usually has positive connotations - in South Africa the term community is not neutral but has been racially and politically constructed (Butchart & Seedat, 1990; Carolissen, 2004; Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004; Naidoo et al., 2007). In South Africa, the term community dates back to the 1930s. The concept of community may promote a myth of coherence between different classes of people, who may

never have had contact with each other if not for the policies of the apartheid government (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). Ngonyama Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004) state that community refers to political histories and beliefs in a given socio-political context, in South Africa, community may come to operate as a code for race and ideas of racial difference, including the idea of 'us' versus 'them'. These authors find many problems with the term community including the fact that it automatically refers to disadvantaged groups of people, therefore predominantly black South Africans and that the word community (Butchart & Seedat, 1990; Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004, Naidoo et al., 2007) suggest that South African students see a community as poor, black informal settlements or townships and thus believe that community psychology exists to help the disadvantaged sector of our community. This belief re-entrenches the othering process that currently exists in South Africa and, at times, in community psychology.

The term community was first used in the 1930's, in order to show how legalised racial categories were different from each other i.e. 'Indian' community, 'White' community, 'Black' community. This was an attempt to show that each grouping had its own distinct culture and that the groups were naturally created and not socially constructed (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). This allows for an avoidance of the subject of race and privilege (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004).

Communities exist within history and different ideologies (Yen, 2007). Added to this, different models of community psychology define community in different ways. For example the Mental Health Model defines a community in terms if a geographical area around a community clinic whereas the Social Action Model looks at both the geographical area and a group based on socio-political beliefs (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) state that the definition of community within community psychology has changed from one of deficits to one of strengths. These different definitions show the lack of a coherent definition of community in the field of community psychology. This, in turn, makes it difficult for lecturers to provide answers to students' questions about placing themselves within the field of community psychology.

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY: JOINING TWO DIVERSE WORLDS?

The development of community psychology has been marked by a struggle to define itself. The ideas of community and psychology seem contradictory (Dalton et. al., 2001). The term

community psychology is a compound of two different constructs; community and psychology, which may be interpreted and understood in a variety of ways (Naidoo et al., 2007). Community psychology may then be defined as a sub-discipline of psychology which is continually changing over time (Carolissen, 2006). The construct of community has been discussed at length and at this point it is important to discuss what psychology is defined as.

Psychology has traditionally been defined as a scientific search for explanations for individual's behaviour. The individual is the target of enquiry and intervention. As pointed to previously, community psychology and community interventions foreground a group as a target to intervene and look at the individual in context (Naidoo et al., 2007). Most students perceive psychology through these "individualistic lenses" (Carolissen, 2006, p. 179). At it's most basic, the idea of a community includes a number of people – whether bound together geographically or a shared ideology. It becomes clear that community psychology makes a pronounced move away from the individualistic nature of traditional psychology.

As the literature review discusses in the following section, it is precisely the failure of psychology in its traditional form that has given rise to the birth of community psychology, both internationally and in South Africa. It is clear that the traditional definition of psychology and the term community have very different target populations – community referring to a group of people, brought together for any one of a number of reasons, while psychology traditionally focuses on the individual, couple, family or group.

In light of this discussion, this research report will utilise the working definition of community psychology suggested by Naidoo et al. (2007). In this definition, community psychology is defined a branch of applied psychology that is interested in the understanding of people in the context of their community – however that may be defined. Community psychology utilises a variety of intervention strategies which facilitate a change and progression in mental health and social conditions of these communities, organisations, groups and individuals. This definition raises some important points; firstly community psychology places people in context. This means that different people, in different places will be thought of and helped in different ways. Secondly, community psychology aims to understand people in their communities; it is not concerned with exerting power over or changing people in order to help them but rather going into a community and working with community members to bring about change. Finally, community psychology can work at many different levels – an important addition to South African psychology. Community psychology taps into the Sub-Saharan African worldview of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is defined by

Kruger, Lifschitz and Baloyi (2007) as the idea that a person is relationally defined by their relationships to other people. If psychology is going to be applicable to people who subscribe to this idea, intervention can not take place on an individual level but rather at a wider, bigger level – such as an entire community.

This section has provided a definition of community psychology. It is now important to understand where community psychology comes from.

THE BIRTH OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

It is important to think of community psychology as having multiple histories, this branch of psychology emerged from specific material, social and political contexts (Bhana et al., 2007; Stevens, 2007). Different phenomena – such as community psychology – emerge from and are shaped by existing forces (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). Just as the context had an impact on its development, it was hoped that community psychology would have an impact on the greater context. As Bennett and his colleagues (in Newbrough, 1997, p.139) stated: community psychology would "designate a concern for people in settings that need improvement and move beyond the treatment of problematic individual behaviour". Community psychology consistently challenges the dominant, individualistic views of development and well-being by focusing on empowerment, equality and control (Stevens, 2007). In this case, control is not control of one's own destiny but the collective struggle for freedom and justice – referred to as self determination (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001).

Community psychology comes out of a very specific history in both the United States and South Africa. This history informs many of the principles, values and ideologies that characterise the sub-discipline. Kelly (2002) encourages the examination of community psychology's history. This examination and re-examination of history can serve to energise and re-awaken the field of community psychology. Without a re-examination, community psychology runs the risk of becoming separated from its roots (Kelly, 2002). Community psychology began in the United States just over 40 years ago, at the Swampscott conference in Massachusetts (Bishop & Brown, 2006; Kofkin Rudkin, 2003; Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001; Stevens, 2007). This conference was aimed at addressing significant changes in mental health practice, service delivery and policy. Duffy and Wong (2003) state that this conference is cited as the official birth of community psychology and has, at times, gained a

mythical status. Although the Swampscott conference was the beginning of community psychology in the USA, authors from other parts of the world claim that community psychology has been practised in their countries since the 1920s (Yen, 2008). However, this conference had an important impact on the formalisation of community psychology.

The Swampscott conference was sponsored by the US government in order to begin responding to the pressure put on them by the public around poverty, racism and sexism (Yen, 2008). Academic and practising psychologists came together at the Swampscott Conference to call for a psychology that would recognise broader social influences on mental health (Bond & Mulvey, 2000). These psychologists realised that their role as psychologists would have to change and undertook to play an activist role in order to promote social change. Although it was not on the original agenda, the conference provided a space for debate around the social origins of mental illness and ideas about new intervention strategies (Yen, 2008). The intention of those at the conference was to create new ways of thinking, new targets for intervention, new professional roles and new collaborations with citizens and communities (Tricket, 1996).

As suggested by Dalton and his colleagues (2001), there were many factors which led up to the Swampscott conference – the conference did not occur in a vacuum. In 1961, as Kennedy became president of the United States, a report was issued stating that hospitals were over-burdened, resulting in many patients not being treated. Even the small percentages that are treated are not always given effective treatment (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). This report led to changes including an increase in funding for mental health research, more training and use of non-professional practitioners. This in turn would lead to more services based outside of hospital settings and education to the public concerning mental illness (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003).

Again in 1963, President Kennedy made more recommendations concerning the above mentioned report – ‘mental patients’ should be reintegrated into the community, a preventative approach should be taken to mental illness and more attention must be paid to social factors which contribute to the (mal)adjusting of individuals (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). Examples of these factors include poverty, crime, alcoholism and racial discrimination. In turn this meant that roles of health care providers would have to change to include those of educator, social critic, social reformer and social planner (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). In summary, Kennedy called for a total over-haul of mental health service delivery systems in order to accommodate the training of para-professionals so that the psychological needs of all

citizens could begin to be met. Community psychology was integrated into the social and governmental policies of the United States (Yen, 2008).

Community psychology emerged in response to the afore-mentioned social problems of the time and several other problems with mental health service delivery. The number of people needing help was increasing but there were very few mental health professionals and resources to provide them with services. Albee (1959) spoke of such problems saying that it would be impossible to train enough professionals to meet the needs of the population (in Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). People who were seeking help did not want to seek help in traditional health settings, as the services were seen as ineffective and inappropriate (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001). Psychologists then had to find a new way to reach the population.

Following the Swampscott Conference, community psychology began to emerge as a field of psychology in its own right. In the years following the conference, a division for community psychology was created in the American Psychological Association (APA). In 1973, two journals dedicated to community psychology were formed: The *American Journal of Community Psychology* and *The Journal of Community Psychology* (Bond & Mulvey, 2000). Soon after this, in 1975, another conference took place in Austin. At this conference, the training of community psychologists was on the agenda – theoretical, definitional and curriculum issues were discussed (Bond & Mulvey, 2000).

Although many texts regard this to be the birth of community psychology, some authors claim that they have been practising community psychology since the 1920's (Yen, 2008). However the development of community psychology in the USA had a great impact on the development of the discipline internationally. The development of community psychology in other countries was in response to "systems of political regression and exclusion from access to resource and power" (Yen, 2008, p. 390). In the USA and other developed countries the discourse of community psychology revolved around civil and human rights for all; whilst in less developed countries (such as South Africa) the discourse was around liberation and resistance to domination among oppressed groups (Watts & Serrano-Garcia in Yen, 2008).

Community psychology is represented in much of the world – over half of the members of community psychology organisations live outside of the U.S.A. (O'Donnell, 2006). Internationally, community psychology developed in countries where psychologists were concerned about the unequal distribution of resources and skills (Yen, 2007). Around

the world there are differences in the history, theory and forms of practice (Fisher, Gridley, Thomas & Bishop, 2008). There was a significant shift from traditional psychology practice to models that focused on prevention and changing social conditions. In turn, these ideas prompted a theoretical shift (Yen, 2007). Now that events relating to the cited birth of community psychology have been discussed, the literature review will not turn to histories of community psychology around the world.

In Latin America, the origins of community psychology are complex and scattered (Montero, 1996). Burton

and Kagen (2005) state that the development of community psychology in this area differed from that in the United States and other parts of America. This is primarily due to the field's roots in social psychology and not in clinical psychology and mental health (Burton & Kagen, 2005, Stevens, 2007). Montero (1996) divided the history of community psychology in Latin America into sections. During the 1950s, community psychology was thought of as a new psychology. It emerged as a new branch of psychology rather than an add-on to psychiatry or public health (Montero, 1996). This occurred because the dominant paradigm-positivism became exhausted. This meant that community psychology called into question the neutrality of the researcher and suggested that individuals are actually active participants in their lives. Currently, community psychology is taught at universities in many Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, Cuba and Brazil (Burton & Kagen, 2005).

In the mid 1970s, social psychology was revitalised in Latin America. Community psychology emerged as an answer to the crisis in this discipline, by conceptualising work in the community, with the help of the community for the community (Montero, 1996). This work acquired a political character. It was not until the mid 1970s that community psychology developed as an academic discipline, with the formal inclusion of community psychology in academia either as a free standing course or part of existing psychology courses.

The birth and development of community psychology in Australia and New Zealand is unique because instead of a need for a new form of psychology, there was a conscious adoption of community psychology as a critical tool to study and understand social phenomena (Stevens, 2007). Fisher and his colleagues (2008) traced the history of community psychology in Australia and New Zealand. Community psychology has existed in Australia for over two decades (Bishop, Sonn, Fisher & Drew, 2001). In Australia, a few key

individuals and events were important in the development of community psychology. In the early 1980s, the Australian Society's Board of Psychologists was formed. This board provided a space for discussion around community psychology and a space for community psychologists to be recognised (Fisher et al., 2008). In the past 15 years, Australia has made great progress in the field of community psychology with a local textbook published and a professional board being formed (Bishop et al., 2001). Australia takes much of its direction from North American theories of community psychology – retaining the focus on applied interventions for social justice and reconciliation (Stevens, 2007). However, there is a distinctiveness which reflects the social and political structures in this part of the world (Bishop et al., 2001).

Farhall and Love (1987) found that 50% of training programs in Australian universities offered community psychology related teaching (in Fisher et al., 2008), with four graduate programmes in Australia and New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2001). In Australia community psychologists can be found working in local government, school systems, counselling settings, community health and social policy and planning (Fisher et al., 2008).

Although Australia and New Zealand are geographically close to each other, their histories of community psychology are quite different. In New Zealand, a key event in the development of community psychology is the Treaty of Waitang, between the Maori people and the original British settlers in New Zealand (Fisher et al., 2008). Fisher and his colleagues (2008) believe that North American theories and ideas have influenced community psychology within New Zealand but have been shaped within its own political and cultural histories.

Before the literature moves on to the development of community psychology in Africa, it is important to explain the absence of a discussion of community psychology in Europe and Asia. Community psychology is not as embedded in the discipline in of psychology in Europe and Asia as in other parts of the world, although it is practiced formally (Stevens, 2007). In Europe, a formal network of community psychologists has been established (Stevens, 2007).

In Africa, community psychology is underdeveloped (Marks, 2006). This is most probably due to the invisibility of psychology in general on the African continent (Stevens, 2007). Community psychology is formally recognised in different parts of Africa such as Ghana, but even there it is underdeveloped (Marks, 2006). As in other parts of the world,

community psychology in Africa was developed in response to critiques of traditional psychology, political systems of repression – including exclusion from mental health services and at times to pressures placed on psychologists by governmental changes (Yen, 2008). The social struggles that many African countries have experienced at grass roots level gives the potential for community psychology to develop to a much greater degree in many countries in Africa (Stevens, 2007). The development of community psychology in South Africa will now be discussed.

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The birth of community psychology in South Africa occurred later than some of the other countries discussed in the previous section. Psychologists in South Africa justified this lack of action by claiming that psychology was a value free science and that people who chose to work towards social change were working in politics and not psychology (Yen, 2007). People had been questioning psychology's legitimacy in relation to relevance and it's commitment to addressing needs (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). Mainstream psychology in South Africa was critiqued for inaccessibility, an elitist orientation, its focus on diagnosing pathology and the one-on-one modality of intervention. In the mid 1980s, it was argued that the individual nature of psychology hid the true nature of problems (Yen, 2007).

Lazarus (1988) described the provision of mental health in South Africa as poor; inaccessible (especially in disadvantaged communities); inappropriate and prejudiced (in Naidoo, 2000). Community psychology was conceptualised as the answer to these problems. It emphasised the need for: the transformation of the nature and content of psychological service delivery, redefining the causes and determinants of psychosocial and mental health problems; making service delivery culturally and contextually congruent and reformulating the roles of psychologists to include community and resource mobilisation, advocacy, lobbying, training and networking (Seedat et al., 2004). Community psychology highlights the fact that behaviour occurs in a context and therefore needs an individual and broader based understanding (Naidoo, 2000).

Demands leading up to the birth of community psychology in South Africa were different to those in other parts of the world: apartheid had compromised the mental health of many South Africans and every person was called on to contribute to the liberation of South Africans (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001). In South Africa, community psychology was

developed in response to three broad demands: a demand for more appropriate services, the socio-political demand for the use of psychology against the oppression of apartheid and finally a demand for a relevant psychology at the different levels of practice, theory and research (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001).

The political nature of community psychology is highlighted by its function as a form of action against apartheid (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001). It was at this point that psychologists challenged mainstream psychology and its complacency towards apartheid. This process was not aided by the fact that most psychologists were white and middle class, and perpetuated the silence around race, violence and culture (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001).

From 1994 onwards, the government implemented community oriented interventions, in which psychologists worked with the government. This prompted psychologists to redefine their role to include acting as agents of change (Yen, 2007). This process was aided by the Minister of Health establishing a year of community service for clinical psychologists (Bhana et al., 2007). Unfortunately, these services remain strongly clinically and individually centred. This is summed up by Rappaport (1977) when he stated that the establishment of community mental health centres in the United States was “old wine in a new bottle” (in Bhana et al., 2007, p.385). Unfortunately, in South Africa a process which marginalises community psychology is occurring (Carolissen, 2006). Community psychology has become a psychology for poor, black clients delivered predominantly by black service providers (Carolissen, 2006). Many white students do not feel that community psychology is relevant to them or to the communities that they come from.

A fraction of people needing psychological services seek out treatment, this is for many reasons including a lack of services, few black psychologists, language and cultural barriers and societal norms against seeking mental health services (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001). This may be due to the fact that psychology in general is invisible in Africa (Stevens, 2007). Many psychologists in South Africa work in a waiting mode of service delivery, but community psychology advocates a seeking mode of taking services to people, identifying potential problems and initiating preventative interventions (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001).

CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPALS OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Before discussing the training of psychologists and community psychologists it is important to give an overview of what content is included in the field of community psychology. This will be achieved by discussing the core values of community psychology - this is built on later in the literature review when the role of the community psychologists is discussed.

Different authors prescribe different levels of importance to different values in community psychology. For example, Prilleltensky (1997) lists the five primary values of a psychologist as compassion, self-determination, human diversity, collaboration and distributive justice. Stevens (2007) lists the four core values of community psychology as a sense of community, prevention, collaboration and empowerment. Collaboration includes the focus of the interaction or relationship between the individual and their environment. An understanding of this relationship will lead to well-being for the participants (Lazarus, 2007). This is achieved by addressing social factors which lead to problems in communities. These values will constantly be a factor for community psychology students, as they need to overcome the challenge of putting them into practice with everything they have learnt of psychology previously.

Although core values have been discussed in this section it is important to keep in mind that context influences the practice of community psychology. Community psychology will reflect the different ideas and ideologies of the place of practice, being conservative at times and radical at others (Stevens, 2007). These core values challenge students and practitioners to develop new, different ways of working, even in one-on-one consultations. Constantly, professionals have to reflect on their own power in order to work with a client instead of for or over him/her (Lazarus, 2007). Rhoads (1997) builds on this idea by challenging community psychologists to situate their practice within the community that they serve, re-conceptualise their relationship to their community and focus on social transformation (in Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004).

In a similar vein to values, community psychology also needed a set of guiding principles (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). Kofkin Rudkin (2003) lists the five guiding principles of community psychology which can be summed up and explained as research, theory and practice are developed within a value system. Therefore it is important for community psychologists to understand their feelings and to be transparent about them.

If we want to understand the individual, it is necessary to understand the multi-leveled society which they are situated in. The community has to be understood in context. In society, there are many different perspectives which must be looked at and the perspectives of all groups should be honoured. Individual action is not always the answer - social change is often necessary to improve a person's life in a meaningful way, this idea is important in the South African context. Finally, instead of analysing and concentrating on a community's weaknesses, their strengths should be utilised to bring about necessary change.

Seedat, Cloete and Shochet (1988) give an idea of the breadth of community psychology by describing two models of community psychology. According to these authors the social action model and the mental health model are on opposite ends of the spectrum of models utilised in community psychology work and are underpinned by different values (Seedat et al., 1988). The mental health model is rooted in the community mental health movement. This means that by increasing the coverage and impact of mental health services, more people will receive help sooner and hopefully relieve the pressure on the hospital system by preventing mental illness (Seedat et al., 1988). This would be achieved by locating community mental health centres within geographical communities to facilitate greater access (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001).

The origins of pathology are no longer only with the individual but rather at the interface of the individual and their environment. However, the psychologists act only as a professional in this model, supplying advice and information to their clients. The role of the psychologist is to give professional, expert advice (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001). Change occurs as a consequence of the transfer of expertise in a specific area (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001). As with all models, there are both positive and negative aspects to the mental health model. The model increases the amount of person power available by utilising natural caregivers in the form of nurses, teachers and parents (Seedat et al., 1988).

On the other end of the continuum is the social action model. The social action model critiques the individualistic approach of traditional psychology and the way that it holds the individual accountable for their pathology (Seedat et al., 1988). This model assumes that there is a failure to consider any link between behaviour and social systems, thus neglecting the idea that structural inequalities will result in a range of psychological and social problems (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001). Similarly to the mental health model, the social action model is also aimed at prevention but from a totally different perspective. It asserts that it is important to take the inequalities in society into consideration. Again, there is a shift from

blaming the victim to looking at these inequalities and the effects that this may have in the individual (Seedat et al., 1988).

The above process is aided by empowerment. Rappaport (1981) speaks of empowerment as implying that "what you see as poor functioning is a result of structural inequalities and lack of resources which makes it impossible for the existing competencies to operate" (Seedat et al., 1988, 222). This means that in order for a community or a community member to be empowered, the inequalities need to be addressed (Seedat et al., 1988). By empowering a community, circumstances can be produced that put pressure on those with power to improve the quality of life for communities (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001).

This model relies on community participation and equality in community relations, relying on this grass roots support for the programmes based on it (Seedat et al., 1988). The social action model assumes that non-professionals in the community are sensitive to the needs of the community. An obvious problem with such a model is how to get a community involved, but the social action has devised strategies including ideas to increase community morale, tapping into community resources, developing social skills and generating opportunities to promote local leadership (Seedat et al., 1988).

In short, the social action model radicalises a community's social problems, this means that the problem cannot be solved by only looking at the community that the problem is in but by looking at the broader social structure and mobilising the community to address these issues at the higher level (Seedat et al., 1988). The psychologist is not neutral in a social action intervention, with their ultimate goal to empower the community they are working in (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001). These models have very different implications for the role of a community psychologist. Therefore, they would require different types of training and result in very different roles for the community psychologist. The next section gives an overview of some of the possible roles for community psychologists.

POSSIBLE ROLES FOR COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS

Given the values of community psychology and the rapidly changing world that psychologists find themselves, the nature of work and the context in which it occurs is constantly changing. This means that theory and research must be challenged (Watson & Stead, 2002). This includes the role of a community psychologist. The role of a community psychologist is difficult to define. Rappaport (1981) believes that community psychology is

more of a social movement than a profession. This idea gives rise to the important question – where will a community psychologist work?

At the Swampscott conference, it was said that community psychologists could contribute in three major ways. A community psychologist can identify and analyse community problems, they can participate in service delivery at the levels of design, delivery and evaluation and finally community psychologists could actively participate as professionals (Mann, 1979). Community psychology provides opportunities to develop new roles for psychologists as active participants, compared to those adhered to and prescribed by mainstream psychology (Kelly, 2006). Spielberger and Iscoe (1970) defined five roles of community psychologists: a mental health consultant, participant conceptualiser, social systems evaluator and social change agent. These roles encompass the skills of helping caregivers in a community to understand specific problems in the community, helping community members to analyse and clarify problems in their community and to help the community solve these problems. Research forms a large part of the role of a community psychologist as it facilitates empowerment by using different research methods. Once again there is a differentiation from mainstream psychology, as the end product is something that is available and accessible to the community (Lazarus, 2007).

It is important to understand what is meant by roles performed by mainstream psychologists and possibly the roles that students conceptualise for a psychologist. In mainstream psychology, the psychologist performs two major roles – assessment and therapy – performed in the comfort of the consulting room. The mainstream psychologist is value neutral and makes attempts to stay separate from the world (Swartz & Gibson, 2001). This is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Kelly (2006) states that much of what happens in community psychology is anonymous. When starting off their career new community psychologists may be egotistical (Kelly, 2006). It may be difficult for students to grasp this idea, as they may believe that they deserve some recognition for all the hard work that they have put in to qualify as psychologists and in each intervention. In a community psychology intervention, the community psychologist would join with the community to bring about the desired change and the praise is given to the community when that change comes about. This idea links to the first of seven important qualities which Kelly (2006) believes a community psychologist should possess - a community psychologist should be willing to accept the reward of the betterment of the community and not gratitude or acknowledgement.

The second quality is one recognisable area of confidence – this may be therapy, being able to organise community service or be able to analyse a problem. This is important as the community needs to have confidence in the community psychologist and having an easily recognisable skill will aid the community in doing so (Kelly, 2006). Thirdly, it is important that the professional should be able to step out of their professional role and become emotionally involved in the community and the work they are doing. A community psychologist should be tolerant of diversity and be able to cope effectively with varied resources. Although the professional should be committed to risk-taking, they must be able to balance patience and zeal. In order for sustainable and significant change to be made, difficult decisions must be made. However a community psychologist needs to be able to judge when it is the best time to make these decisions.

There is a clear change from the role of a hierachical expert to a collaborative professional who uses an action-research process to transform people and social institutions (Newbrough, 1997). Even though values and beliefs are important to community psychologists, they are employed because of their professional credentials. Kofkin Rudkin (2003) believe that skills which a community psychologist possess would make them sought out for employment. These skills include diagnosing organisational problems and promoting a better functioning within organisations, as well as reducing inter- and intra- group conflict. From the preceding discussion of roles, principles and values of community psychology it is clear that at times; this can be a challenging profession to enter into. At times differing value systems cannot be merged in good conscience (Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). Secondly, the level of commitment required on the part of the professional is so great, especially in terms of time. Trickett (1994) stated that time is required before the intervention can begin in order to understand the setting in which the professional will work. Serrano-Garcia (1987) builds onto the idea of time commitment saying that a community psychologist's involvement with a particular community would have to be long enough to show that they are committed to the group, build consciousness around certain issues as well as pass on their skills and knowledge (in Kofkin Rudkin, 2003). However, this intervention should never be too long as this may foster dependence on the part of the community or burnout in the professional.

The number of different roles that a community psychologist can potentially play points to many different areas which need to be covered in the training of community psychologists. Before community psychology training is discussed, it is important to look more broadly at the training of psychologists in South Africa.

TRAINING PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Training is an overall attempt to change behaviour so that a trainee may become capable of performing certain tasks. This capability depends on acquisition and mastery of skills, knowledge, insight and self-understanding (Sobey, 1970). Internationally, psychologists expect training programs to focus on the following aspects: core psychological knowledge, professional decision making abilities, knowledge of ethics and the development of professional values (Bojuwoye, 2006). However, any psychology course cannot be without content based on local context.

In South Africa and internationally the credibility of psychology as a profession relies on it being able to offer effective services to a wide spectrum of people in diverse circumstances (Mayekiso et al., 2004). This in turn means that psychologists are required to represent linguistic and cultural diversity and to make their services available and affordable to an array of people. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) recommended that at least 50% of students selected for professional study are black (Bhana et al., 2007). This is important because the majority of South Africa's populations' first language is an African language.

Overall, psychology in Africa is underdeveloped and still has a strong American and European influence (Bojuwoye, 2006). This underdevelopment is due to a number of factors. Poverty throughout Africa results in psychology and mental health services being given less priority by governments. Added to this, the high level of poverty throughout Africa means that many African people live in rural areas which results in a large proportion of the African population being unaware of the role that psychologists play in urban areas (Bojuwoye, 2006).

Given the above discussion, it is promising to note that psychology features prominently in African universities, however this is mainly in the education sphere (Bojuwoye, 2006). This means that the health sector is underserviced and people are left with no option but to consult religious and traditional health care providers. In South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia professional associations are involved in the regulating of the training of psychologists.

In line with the requirements set out internationally, Bojuwoye (2006) states that psychologists in Africa should be trained to conduct psychological assessments, therapy and

community work. Being able to conduct community work means that the role of the psychologist is broadened to include acting as a consultant, advocate, trainer and supporter to community based organisations. The psychologist should also be able to help people fulfil both their concrete and abstract needs (Bojuwoye, 2006).

A large responsibility rests on training institutions as they need to select and train candidates (Mayekiso et al., 2004). These training institutions would need to continuously scrutinise their selection processes so they do not perpetuate the existing social inequalities. Fisher et al. (in Mayekiso et al., 2004) challenge these institutions to find a way to assess the potential of students so that previously disadvantaged candidates are not continually looked over for post-graduate programs. The challenges that exist in South Africa and in psychology in general extend to graduate selection and training (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). This means that training institutions must produce graduates that are able and willing to work in contexts which are diverse and disadvantaged (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004).

In post-apartheid South Africa, there are new criteria for training psychologists as set out by Gibson, Sandenbergh and Swartz (2001); these include the exposure to community in a contained and structured way, using the students' existing skills but encouraging them to transform their perspectives about community work in a critical way. This exposure to community work takes place under supervision. Training courses cannot be without local content – this includes the impact of South Africa's history and socio-cultural and political factors (Bojuwoye, 2006).

The goal of psychology in post-apartheid South Africa is to restructure the discipline to meet the needs of the majority (Stevens, 2002). Psychology in South Africa was constructed in a specific socio-historical context: psychology, clinical training and racism were linked. Psychology was used to uphold apartheid through research, discriminatory health care and employment practices (Stevens, 2002). In post-apartheid South Africa, some characteristics of training have been changed, but Stevens (2002) contends that none of these changes are significant enough to contribute to a meaningful change to a more relevant psychology.

The literature highlights the low number of black students studying psychology in South Africa, particularly at a post-graduate level (Franchi & Swart, 2003, Stevens, 2002). This assertion is supported by a study conducted in 2004 (Mayekiso, 2004) who found that psychology is still a white dominated profession although measures may be taken to increase

the number of black students accepted into post-graduate courses, from 13 and 14% between 1994 and 1998 to 25 and 31% from 2000 onwards. This is still well below the 50/50 split that was recommended by the Professional Board of Psychology. During the 1980s, only 10% of registered psychologists in South Africa were black, with few psychologists moving out of private practice into the community (in Franchi & Swart, 2003) This figure has increased since the 1980s due to the increased number of black students studying psychology at a post-graduate level.

There are factors that discourage black students from pursuing post-graduate studies in psychology including an overemphasis on western, individual ideas (Franchi & Swart, 2003). Black students are trained in 'white' institutions, which may cause either a marginalisation from training or from their history (Stevens, 2002). A second discouraging factor is the discriminatory selection process (Franchi & Swart, 2003). Stevens (2002) recommends that different criteria need to be set for selecting black psychology students either looking at trainability or mentoring possible candidates. Added to the ideas surrounding race are those surrounding gender. Richter and Griesel (1999) report that psychology - along with other helping professions – is becoming a woman's profession (Bhana et al., 2007). Along with the push to select black candidates, is the need to select male candidates.

In 1981, Holdstock claimed, "psychology must certainly rate as one of the most irrelevant careers in South Africa" (in Wilson et al., 1999, p. 184). The profession has acknowledged this state of affairs and it is committed to changing its practice framework (Wilson et al., 1999). This will be achieved when the current and predicted needs of the multicultural society of South Africa are met, within demands and challenges of this society (Wilson et al., 1999). Therefore, Ahmed and Pillay (2004) argue that training institutions need to "differentially skill, re-skill as well as multi-skill trainees and trainers" (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004, p.649). These authors worry that clinical training may not be attractive enough to some disadvantaged students because they may find more money in other spheres, such as industry (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004).

Kottler and Swartz (2004) found that the training experience of psychology students at a post-graduate level was a negotiation of personal and professional identity. These authors discuss the tension caused between the two roles of student and professional - which are expressed as ambiguity, paradox and contradiction (Kottler & Swartz, 2004). This tension may be played out in different parts of training.

As mentioned earlier in this section; Gibson and her colleagues (2001) argue for a new kind of training in which work in the field of community psychology is stressed as well as more traditional ideas of psychotherapy and psychological assessment. Trainers are opposed to this because of the challenge around integrating community psychology ideas into traditional courses. Trainers are not alone in their complaints as students find this type of combination both difficult and demanding (Gibson et al., 2001). This brings the literature review to the idea of training community psychologists.

TRAINING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS

As discussed above the 'birth' of community psychology took place at the Swampscott conference in 1965 (Zax & Specter, 1974). The aim of this conference was to discuss different ways of training psychologists so that they can work in the community mental health sector (Zax & Specter, 1974). There was some debate about the relevance of clinical training in the community and many clinical psychologists converted to community psychologists. On one side of the debate, the skills were seen as relevant and useful but on the other, the emphasis on the individualistic nature of functioning was seen as a hindrance to community work (Zax & Specter, 1974).

Training in only one field does not help to solve the multidimensional problems that communities face. Kelly (2006) believes that most post-graduate programmes reflect only a single sphere approach to problems and claims that neither theoretical nor practical training of this manner will help students. One way to aid the process of solving problems in the community is to develop the skills of working in groups to brainstorm solutions to the community's problems (Kelly, 2006).

It cannot be denied that community psychology is a good alternative to individual psychotherapy in the South African context (Pillay, 2007). However, there is a gap in the literature relating to what precisely training of community psychologists should be made up of – how best to prepare a psychologist to work in communities in South Africa is still a mystery (Pillay, 2007).

Learning in community psychology requires more than face-to-face classroom interaction, text books and articles – it requires all of this in order to have a good theoretical grounding as well as authentic learning in the community (van der Merwe & Dunbar-Krige, 2007). In other words, learning can take place in many contexts in community psychology. It

can and should take place in the community where services are to be delivered. In 2003, Pillay concluded that psychology trainees want more practical training in all facets of training (in Pillay, 2007). In the past, most courses in community psychology concentrated on theory and lacked any practical exposure (Pillay, 2007). In the teaching of community psychology, there has been a shift from teacher led learning to a learning in which students are actively involved in teaching, learning and assessment (van der Merwe & Dunbar-Krige, 2007).

Any community psychology course must include the issues concerning cultural and contextual features of communities – this will help the student understand how people within a community may think and act; and that at times this may be different to the way that they themselves think and act (van der Merwe & Dunbar-Krige, 2007).

Until recently, students were given only a courtesy exposure to community psychology (Marks, 2006). In recent years, community psychology has begun to formalise and has become established in training institutions (Bhana et al., 2007; Yen, 2008). In examining the relevance of psychology in the post-apartheid period, de la Rey and Ipser (2004, p. 545) reported that "…most departments of psychology teach community psychology and almost all professional training programmes in clinical and counselling psychology have a community component". This finding was pre-empted by Pillay (2003) when he stated that community psychology should not be a discipline of its own and rather cut across all disciplines, training all psychologists in community psychology.

Wingenfield and Newbrough (2000) report that since the 1980s a few community psychology courses in undergraduate and post-graduate degrees have been introduced in South Africa. This has grown to the point where by 2004; most universities in the country offered at least one course in community psychology (De la Rey & Ipser, 2004). In a survey conducted by Yen (2008), 16 South African universities advertised community psychology courses at an undergraduate, honours and/or masters level. However, the author goes on to say that even though this is the case, community psychology remains marginalised.

The University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Fort Hare have developed masters programmes in Community Counselling Psychology (Yen, 2008). These courses represent a step towards integrating community psychology with mainstream ideas – as suggested by Gibson et al. (2001). Unfortunately, the fact remains that community psychology is not a registration category of the HPCSA, so

students completing these courses may fall back into the individualistic, traditional way of practising psychology (Yen, 2008).

Gibson et al. (2001) discuss the difficulties that students face when studying community psychology. There is an increase in their work load as this training requires students to acquire a new set of skills. Communities may not be enthusiastic when receiving students into their communities. This may be due to the vast cultural and linguistic differences between community psychology students and the communities that they are sent to work in. Many students have both realistic and unrealistic fears about violence are a weakness for community psychology students (Gibson et al., 2001). Along with their beliefs about violence, students may feel ashamed when confronted by the poverty and deprivation in some South African communities. This is predominantly due to the fact that the majority of post-graduate students come from a more privileged background than the communities that they would be working in.

At times, it may feel as though the interventions which students put into practice in the communities do not make a significant difference. The structures in and out of academic institutions place pressure on these students to succeed at the work that they are doing in different communities. Finally, there is theoretical confusion surrounding community psychology which increases students' anxiety around community psychology (Gibson et al., 2006). Jozefonicz-Simbeni, Israel, Braciszewski and Hobden (2005) discussed community psychology with students and students reported that defining what community psychology is and what community psychologists do is difficult. The students suggested that there should be better documentation by community psychologists in order to get more information to students. Knowledge could also be disseminated through introductory lectures in undergraduate studies or by career counsellors in high schools. If university students had more basic knowledge on the field of community psychology, they may be more likely to enter into or support the field (Jozefonicz-Simbeni et al., 2005).

In a review of findings on community psychology training in South Africa, Carolissen (2006) found that there has been a growth in community psychology rhetoric and training since the 1980s. However, few students express interest in community psychology due to poor financial incentives, sparse public employment opportunities and anxiety about doing community work during training (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Carolissen, 2006). There are financial implications for working in communities – especially when this work takes place in a group context, but Pillay (2007) believe that this can be addressed. Medical aids should be

encouraged to pay for group psychological interventions and the state may subsidise this type of intervention. Another option is that psychologists may gain their financial stability from working in private practice but engage in community work as part of their social obligation (Pillay, 2007).

Van Wyk and Naidoo (2006) found that in some universities, students felt inadequately equipped to work in communities despite the fact that they had a solid theoretical grounding (in Pillay, 2007). There may also be the problem that the lecturers are giving negative thoughts and beliefs about community psychology to the students, even unconsciously (Altman, 1996; Trickett et al. in Carolissen, 2006).

In the past six years, four community psychology text books have been published in South Africa (Yen, 2007). This shows the growth of theory and praxis within the field. Unfortunately, this growth brings about a separation from the public. This is because it serves the needs of professionals rather than the general South African population (Yen, 2007). As Stevens (2007) states producing knowledge in community psychology should be about the promotion of social development and communal growth rather than only for the sake of knowledge. However, it is encouraging that there is growth in the field. Hopefully, in the future this growth will encourage more students to consider studying community psychology. Currently, there are many factors influencing students level of motivation towards studying community psychology.

MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDYING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Before discussing what motivates students to study community psychology, this section examines a study by Lesch (1998) which investigated why students found a community psychology course difficult and demanding. He found that students found it difficult to think in terms of a community, as they were used to focusing on understanding and helping individuals (these students understood psychology as psychotherapy) and furthermore the students thought that they were not the right people to do community psychology (in Pillay, 2003). Lesch's final finding was that the students had a sense of powerlessness and guilt due to their own privileged status. Students appear to understand and accept the need for community psychology but because of their training in traditional psychology, they do not feel as though they are practising psychology when they work in a community psychology setting (Marks, 2006). Marks (2006) goes on to discuss the marginalisation of community

psychology in the educational setting and much of this marginalisation has to do with the stigma attached to the subject.

Added to the above mentioned factors, perceptions of career barriers have the potential to influence individual's career choice (Stead, Els & Fouad, 2004) and the subjects that they choose to study. In turn, this may facilitate or detract from people realising their career goals. Stead and colleagues (2004) conducted a study to discover what high school students perceive as career barriers. As discussed earlier, there are many factors working against black students and this study found that black learners view their race or ethnicity discrimination as a barrier (Stead et al., 2004). Holmes (2007) believes that black students often drop out of their psychology training because they struggle to integrate their cultural expectations and their role a psychologists (in Pillay, 2007).

Community psychology is viewed as less vigorous, less structured and less theoretical when compared to other subjects in the discipline (Marks, 2006). Students believe that community psychology appears and is necessary in practice but lacks the theoretical underpinnings. This may be due to a number of factors such as the placement of the subject in both undergraduate and post-graduate courses. For example, students may only be given an introduction to community psychology or merged with another subject such as critical or social psychology. Secondly, as discussed in this chapter, there is a lack of a clear definition of community – a central idea in community psychology – as well as a wide array of theories within the discipline which intervene with communities in vastly different ways.

Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) discuss what may cause a person to enter the field of community psychology. They found that there were no dramatic events which push someone in this direction. Jozefonicz-Simbeni and her colleagues (2005) state that people used to enter the field of community psychology because of the values such as empowerment and prevention. However, these authors go on to say that people may now enter the field because they want to pursue certain, topical areas.

The work which people engage in plays an important role in their subjective experience of the material world, affecting the way that we are perceived and evaluated by ourselves and others (Watson, 1996). This means that work plays an important role in the construction of our self and our identity. Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) state that it is impossible to work as a community psychologist and at the end of the work day go home and turn off these values. The professional identity and the personal identity become one.

Secondly, work will socially locate us – it allows other people to categorise, define and make sense of our situation (Watson, 1996). Watson (1996) goes on to say that work and the implications from our work allow us access to physical, material and cultural resources – it places us in the power structures of society.

CONCLUSION

The literature review has given an overview of important issues in relation to community psychology in South Africa. This gives rise to questions about community psychology training in the South African context. In particular, how can the sub-discipline of community psychology can be made more attractive to the student population. This may lead to an increase in people working in the area of community psychology - generating theory and practising in a way that is relevant to South Africa. The report will now move onto the methods chapter, beginning with an outline of the questions which this study aims to answer.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by listing the questions which this research addresses. This is followed by an outline of the design adhered to in the study. The participants utilised in this study are described followed by a description of the tool that was used to collect data for the research. The procedure that was followed by the researcher is then outlined before discussing how the data that was collected was analysed. The section closes with ethical considerations that had to be taken into account in this research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study and are answered in this research report.

1) What are post-graduate students' perceptions of community psychology?
2) Do post-graduate students' perceptions of community psychology change after studying a course in community psychology? And in what ways?
3) What are post-graduate students' experiences of studying community psychology?
4) What motivates students' to choose to study community psychology at a post-graduate level?
5) Do the post-graduate students plan to use community psychology in their professional careers? And if so, in what ways?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Epistemology is defined as a theory of knowledge and assumptions about knowledge (Stevens, 2007). This research falls within the interpretive epistemology. Research from this perspective aims to understand the meanings and intentions which underlie everyday human actions (Mouton, 1988). This type of research aims to describe and represent a subject-centred account of behaviours (Swart & Bowman, 2007). The interpretive position acknowledges that people experience social reality differently (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). This is important given the idea that people each have their own reality based on their social and economic circumstances (Hamber et al., 2001). Whilst this approach does not always provide an answer to the research question it allows for insight and comprehension; this is achieved

by making use of open and flexible research strategies and methods, which lead to insight (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

This is positive as it leads to a deeper understanding of the topic at hand. This in turn means that although data is being obtained, it is about a very specific context – in this case post-graduate students at the University of the Witwatersrand. If a positivist research approach had been used, the data generated may not have fully explained the perceptions of community psychology students' or how they came to study community psychology.

Within the interpretive paradigm, this study makes use of a qualitative research design. Babbie and Mouton (2001) define qualitative research design as an approach to social research in which the research pays attention to the insider's perspective. Qualitative research concentrates on qualities of human action (Mouton, 1988). This study is looking at the perspective of the insider, in this case the post-graduate psychology student, as the research aims to explore their perceptions. The goal of qualitative research is understanding rather than prediction (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This is especially true in interpretive research.

PARTICIPANTS

People eligible to take part in this study were students who had completed an honours level course in community psychology. The participants used in this study are seven students from the University of the Witwatersrand. These students have completed a course in community psychology at a post-graduate level. More details on each of the participants are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Description of Participants

Participant	**Age (at time of interview)**	**Race**	**Gender**
Participant 1	26	Black	Female
Participant 2	24	Black	Female
Participant 3	22	Coloured	Female
Participant 4	22	Indian	Female

Participant 5	23	White	Female
Participant 6	22	White	Female
Participant 7	23	White	Female

The participants were drawn in a purposive way, as the research aims to study the perceptions of a specific group of students. Purposive sampling draws a sample "based on your judgement and the purpose of the study" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 166). Post-graduate students were chosen to ensure that they have a sufficiently clear understanding of the nature and scope of community psychology and because they may pursue some form a career in psychology or using psychology. The group of participants is highly specific, which means that the findings of the research will be specific to this university. However they will be in depth and thorough, and will have implications for further research. Alongside purposive sampling, there is a level of convenience sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), this is mainly due to two factors – first of all as a student at The University of the Witwatersrand, the researcher had access to this university's student population and the participants used were those who were able to meet with the researcher.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

The research makes use of one-on-one face-to-face semi-structured interviews. An interview is the process of one person obtaining information from another based on a pre-determined set of questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). A semi- structured interview means that every response from the participant is a stimulus for the next response (Hyman, 1970). This means that the interview has set themes and topics but others may emerge in the form of a conversation (Mouton, 1988), but in a systematic way so that no important points or questions are forgotten (Schurink, 1988).

Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that this is the most common form of data collection in South Africa, due to the low level of literacy. "Interviewing is the most important data collection instrument in the social sciences, and is in itself more than a mere tool" (Schurink, 1988, p. 136). In South Africa, much time is spent building rapport with the participant, the introduction to the research is very important. This means that the data gathering process is longer in Africa than in the West because of the length of every social encounter (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

There are many pros to using face-to-face interviews, including a higher response rate and the chance to explain any confusing questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Even though they are long – the interviews in this study ranged from 40 minutes to an hour in length, face-to-face interviews receive more responses than any other survey type technique, as people are less likely to refuse someone an answer when they are standing in front of them (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The interview schedule can be found in Appendix D. The schedule consists of many open-ended questions. During interviews, students had the opportunity to clarify what was being asked of them and discuss topics that did not appear directly in the interview schedule. The responses to the interview questions were recorded verbatim so that the data could be coded.

PROCEDURE

The researcher asked permission from the Honours Course Coordinator and the lecturer of the Community Psychology Honours Module to approach students that have completed this course. The researcher then approached the community psychology honours class towards the end of the module and requested their participation in this research. During this meeting, the researcher introduced herself and explained that she would like to conduct interviews to investigate their perceptions about the value of community psychology. The researcher will provided the class with an information sheet regarding the nature of the study (Appendix B). The information sheet contains contact details for the researcher so that the class could ask any questions that they may had about the research.

The researcher contacted the potential participants to set up interview times that were convenient for the participants. These interviews were conducted at the University of the Witwatersrand and the researcher's place of residence to ensure privacy during the interview.

At the interview, the researcher gave the participant two informed consent forms (Appendix C & D). The first consent sheet states that the participant agrees to participate in the research but may leave at any time, they may also refuse to answer any question that they do not want to. The second consent sheet requests permission for the interview to be tape-recorded. The interviews were no longer than 1 hour in duration. These interviews were recorded so that they could be accurately transcribed at a later stage. Once all of the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed all of the interviews verbatim.

The process of capturing the data for this research was a relatively smooth process. Although the group from which the participants were drawn was a lot larger than the seven students who consented to interviews, enough data was obtained to provide meaningful results. Due to time constraints and other commitments of the researcher and the students, some potential participants were not able to take part in this study. This is unfortunate as they may have provided insight into their perceptions of community psychology.

DATA ANALYSIS

Once all of the interviews were completed and transcribed, the data was analysed using thematic content analysis; which according to Braun and Clarke (2006) is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It mainly organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail." (p. 79). This is a useful research tool because it is flexible and the rich detail can also be a complex account of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Another important concept defined by these authors is a theme, which is an idea that captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions. This important idea represents a patterned response or meaning in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The type of thematic analysis used will provide a detailed account of specific themes. This type of thematic analysis is used because there are a group of questions which the researcher aims to answer (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretical thematic analysis is driven by the researcher's analytical interest in the area i.e. post-graduate students perceptions of community psychology. Unfortunately this form of analysis provides a less detailed description of the complete data set but a more detailed description of the aspect which the research is concerned with and the research questions.

As well as this, the research used a semantic approach, which means that the explicit or surface level meaning of the data is analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) go on to explain that the "analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (p. 84). In turn, this means that the research is not concerned with the topic of community psychology per se but rather particular people's (post-graduate students) experience and understanding of community psychology (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). As expected, this is a problematic and complex process and can only access a person's current position in relation to community psychology – the experience is revealed in relation to and engagement with the phenomena (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006).

Like any research method there are pros and cons to thematic content analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the pitfalls of this type of analysis usually come down to a poorly conducted analysis or inappropriate research questions. In this research these were guarded against by the role of a supervisor and the submission of a research proposal. This was accounted for because the supervisor of the research was able to check the themes as the research reached this point. On the other hand, this method of analysis provides flexibility and is able to summarise a large body of data by highlighting similarities and differences within the data set and the social and psychological interpretations of the data are accessible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This type of data analysis is well suited to a South African context as it is not expensive and requires little training on the part of the researcher. Content analysis is also not time consuming which means that the researcher has more time to spend building rapport and creating a relationship with the participants (Viney, 1986).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students were invited to participate in the study. Each participant was given two forms at the time of their interview. The first was an informed consent form (Appendix C), by signing this form, the participant understands that participation in the research is voluntary and they can withdraw at any point. If there was a question that they do not want to answer, the participant may have refused to. Secondly, the informed consent form informed the participant that no information will be included that may identify the participant. The second form gave the researcher permission to tape-record the interview (Appendix D). Once the researcher had qualified, the tapes would be destroyed. The researcher did not identify the participants or include any information in the research report that may identify the participants. The participants were, however, made aware that the researcher and the supervisor had access to all the information which is contained in this report.

The research instrument and data analysis tool are both ethical as they allow the participant to control their own level of disclosure. This may become a problem, because if a participant wished, they may have remained completely private, which means that content analysis cannot be applied (Viney, 1986).

Since the supervisor of this research study and the lecturer of the Honours module in Community Psychology are both part of the selection panel and lecturing team for the Masters in Community-based Counselling Psychology programme, several additional ethical considerations are raised in relation to the study. Potential participants were therefore be

informed that they would not be disadvantaged or advantaged in terms of the selection process (if they were applying for this programme) for choosing to or declining to participate in the study. Similarly, they will not be disadvantaged or advantaged in terms of their course results for the Community Psychology Honours module and data collection only commenced after they had completed the module. Stricter confidentiality processes were put in place to protect the identities of participants for this reason. Whilst the supervisor had access to the processed transcripts, the identifying information of participants was not shared with the supervisor. The lecturer of the Honours Community Psychology module has no knowledge of who agreed to participate in the study and was not involved in the study in any way.

This study was approved by the psychology ethics committee at the University of the Witwatersrand. A copy of the ethics clearance certificate can be found at the end of the research (Appendix E).

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity may be defined as a requirement of the researcher to reflect, examine and analyse their personal views and feelings and to identify how these may impact the research process (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). It is important to understand any impact that the researcher may have had on the research process (Swart & Bowman, 2007). This is because a researcher's personal values or theoretical orientation may guide a researcher to ask certain questions and respond in particular ways (Roos, Visser, Pistorius & Nefale, 2007). In this section, any characteristics of the researcher that may have had an impact on the research will be discussed. This awareness of the influence of the researcher's assumptions and characteristics is central to ethical practice (Roos et al., 2007).

As a young, white South African, the researcher's race and age may have had an impact on the way which participants answered the interview questions. The race factor is especially important in interviews 1, 2, 3 and 4 as these students were of different races to that of the interviewer. Given the ideas that emerged in the research – race, the idea of community and furthering ones' studies, non-white participants may have wanted to show the interviewer their perspective or may not have mentioned all of their opinions due to this difference.

Secondly, because the interviewer is a student in Masters in Community-based Counselling Programme and a past student of the honours course in community psychology, the participants may have thought certain answers were expected of them. It can be assumed because of the interviewer's interest in community psychology, the participants may have

believed that they were expected to only give positive opinions about the subject and the course.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the research questions that will be answered in the following chapter, it has given a clearer understanding of the research design adhered to, the participants that took part in the study and the data collection tool which the researcher used to collect data for this study. The procedure for conducting the research and how the data would be analysed were outlined. Finally the ethical points that were considered for this research were described, as well as how they were compensated for. Now that the methodology is clearly understood, the report shifts to explain the results of the research.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

Across the seven interviews, many common ideas emerged. This meant that themes could be extracted from the data. Different participants placed emphasis on different ideas. These themes have been grouped into sections, according to the research questions: Pre-conceived perceptions of community psychology, post-exposure perceptions of community psychology, the experience of studying community psychology at a post-graduate level, motivations to study community psychology and the impact which community psychology has had on the students' future career choice.

THE RESULTS

Pre-conceived perceptions of community psychology

On entering the community psychology course in honours, students had different ideas of what community psychology and the community psychology course would entail. In this section academic, professional and personal perceptions of community psychology before entering the course are outlined. Unfortunately all data used in this research was collected after the course was completed which means that the original perceptions that students had of community psychology may not be accurate as they may have been distorted by ideas learnt in the course or because the students could not remember what they thought before the course began. These perceptions are therefore retrospective.

Academic and professional perceptions of community psychology

The academic and professional perceptions of community psychology include what the students thought that they would be studying in the course, as well as what these concepts would entail as well as the type of work that people do in the role of a community psychologist.

Some of the participants emphasised that they perceived the course to include more of an emphasis on groups rather than on individuals. In particular, Participant 2 and 5 expected a shift from the individual to a group focus:

> So that was my perception, you are looking at it from a group perspective and not an individual perspective. (Participant 2)

> …the focus wasn't on the individual all the time… (Participant 5)

These participants show the marked difference between the work that students had covered in other courses and what they believed community psychology to be. The following quote expresses the idea that community psychology may not even be psychology at all but rather falling under another sphere of the humanities. Participant 6 below expected community psychology to be similar to social work.

> I also thought it was going to be about real people and social issues - leaning towards a social work type of thing. (Participant 6)

The above quotes show that students go into a course on community psychology expecting it to be different to other courses in psychology. However, they are not quite sure to what degree it differs – Participant 2 felt that the focus would be on groups all the time while Participant 5 believed there would be space for individual work as well as group work. On the other hand, Participant 6 was expecting a subject which could not even be classified as psychology. Community work is not particular to only community psychology – social workers reach out to communities with the intention of helping them overcome their problems (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). It is necessary for students to understand that there is a difference between community work, community service and community interventions within community psychology. Participant 2 expected to deal with general rather than specific issues.

> …at an undergrad level, they make it seem like you're going to do things about general issues like racism and xenophobia… (Participant 2)

The above quotes comment on community psychology and traditional courses in psychology, as well as the role that psychology has to play for the client populations that it serves. It is interesting to note that Participant 6 referred to the targets of community psychology as "real people". This brings about the question of who traditional psychology targets. It seems that the Participant is referring to people that face some of South Africa's more prevalent problems – as she comments on social issues – such as poverty and unemployment. Hamber and his colleagues (2001) state that community psychology is more socially responsive than other forms of psychology and is thus embedded in the "real" world – or everyday lives of people. This may link back to ideas about race and the perception that community psychology is for black people while more traditional forms of psychology are aimed at white people, as discussed by Carolissen (2006).

Secondly, the issues which are tackled in each form of psychology are seen as different – community psychology deals with "general" or "social" issues while traditional psychology may deal with more personal issues. In turn, it is possible that there is a perception that social issues – such as the given examples of xenophobia and racism – do not have an effect on the individual. This suggests that the personal and social are regarded as separate and do not interact to affect wellbeing. Participant 6 did not know what community psychology was:

> I didn't really know what community psychology was but it was a very serious option for me. (Participant 6)

Even though Participant 6 did not have an idea of what would be covered in a community psychology course, she still chose to take the subject. This may be due to the current make-up of the psychology department at the University of the Witwatersrand, with many of the lecturers – including the head of the school - having a strong inclination towards community psychology.

Participant 3 expected the course to be easy while Participant 6 believed that it would be difficult.

> I had chosen other subjects that I thought were difficult and this might be easy. (Participant 3)

> …well, I knew it would be challenging – more challenging than any other course, so I sort of saw it as the hardest course that I would be doing. (Participant 6)

There are different opinions on the level of difficulty of community psychology, as shown by Participant 3 and 6. This may be for various reasons including the limited exposure that students have had to the subject at an undergraduate level and the perception that community psychology is different to traditional forms of psychology.

The idea of race and racialisation occurred at some point in each of the interviews. Some of the participants discussed what they believed a community to be made up of. Participant 4 and 7 both discussed the perception that communities are made up of predominantly black people, and that community psychology is practiced in specific geographical areas, particularly townships. Participant 7 then went on to share their idea of the work that they would be doing and what kind of people became community psychologists, in particular showing a racialised perception of community psychologists.

> …your definition of community is predominantly black people, underprivileged people, so you basically think that it's gonna be working with underprivileged, black people in a township… (Participant 4)
>
> The idea of community was pretty set, a poor group of people that live together… … I guess I expected community psychology to be for black people… (Participant 7)
>
> …so when I thought about what kind of work I would be learning to do, it mainly revolved around these groups… …I am embarrassed to say it now, but I expected community psychologists to be black. (Participant 7)

The idea of race and community appear to be linked for the participants in the research – particularly the link between black people and the utilisation of community psychology. This link may have been formed in their minds for one of two reasons – traditional psychotherapy can be expensive, possibly too expensive given the perceived financial constraints on the black South African population. A second possibility is the – much documented (Anonymous, 1986; MacLeod, 2004; Ngonyama Ka Sigogo, 2004 & Seedat et al., 2004) – inappropriate nature of traditional psychology interventions for the South African population. In South Africa, the idea of community was constructed in a particular political climate – that of apartheid. Various authors have discussed the racialisation of communities (see Butchart & Seedat, 1990; Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2001; Yen, 2007) and whether or not traditional psychology is applicable to the South African population. Seedat and his colleagues (2004) stated that clinical and counselling psychology are inaccessible, have an elitist orientation and only focus on pathology and one-on-one interventions. Pillay (2007) sums up the argument about the need for a more relevant psychology saying that it can no longer be denied that community psychology is a positive alternative to traditional psychology measures for most of the South African population.

The idea expressed by one participant on the race of community psychologists could refer to the ideas that someone will connect better with someone that it similar to them or that black people will be drawn to community psychology so that they may assist in the uplift of their own communities.

Personal perceptions of community psychology

Different students had the idea that community psychology would hold different value and challenges for them. This section will discuss these.

Participant 1 believed that community psychology and working in a community would be very challenging.

> It's just when you think about community and you think about going into a community, you think, gosh, there is so much responsibility and I think people are afraid of that… (Participant 1)

It is interesting that working in a community is seen as challenging to this participant but working with other client populations in traditional forms of psychology is not perceived as such a responsibility or challenge. The thinking behind this may be two-fold; the perceived participants in community psychology may be seen as having more problems than those who attend traditional forms of psychotherapy. For this participant, trying to work on an idea with a group of people is far more daunting than breaking down an individual's beliefs and perceptions. On the other hand, the idea of working with the community has not yet been realised and the participant may be fearful about doing all of the work for a large group of people. Van Wyk and Naidoo (2006) state that students often do not feel equipped to work in a community, regardless of the amount of training they have.

Participant 4 and 6 did not think that community psychology would fit with their idea of psychology or with them as a person.

> I have a very clinical view of psychology so I didn't think the course would pertain to my life or my world or my view of psychology, ya. (Participant 4)

> I didn't expect to grow on a personal level. (Participant 6)

It is important to note that the participants who did not believe that community psychology would fit with their view of psychology or with them as people were not black. This then may imply that community psychologists or people that practice community psychology are black. In turn, this returns to the idea that students have about who community psychology is aimed at and how they might not fit into these categories. Secondly, both quotes revolve around an individualistic way of thinking – Participant 4 discussed her life and her world while Participant 6 refers to personal growth. An individual is the product of the society which they find themselves in (Hamber et al., 2001). For young South Africans, the social and economic realities of today are ones of competition. Personal betterment is therefore important to succeed. This is a far cry from the values of community psychology – such as self-determination and collaboration (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Stevens, 2007) – and the traditional African ideologies, such as Ubuntu (Kruger et al., 2007).

Post-exposure perceptions of community psychology

This section discusses students' perceptions of community psychology on completion of the course.

Perceptions of community psychology changed over the course

Five out of the seven participants expressed a change in perceptions from before the course until the completion of the community psychology course. Many of the students changed to having a more positive view of community psychology. Over the seven interviews, only two factors were discussed as catalysts for this change – these factors will be discussed later in this section.

> Do you think that your interests have changed from the beginning of the course until the end? (Interviewer)
>
> I think they have, ya, on community psychology, I think they have, now that I know what this is all about. (Participant 1)
>
> There definitely was a change." (Participant 6)
>
> Well! Wow they changed a lot! I think about community psychology in a whole other light!" (Participant 7)

Perceptions of community psychology after completing the course

Participants 6 and 7 had a far more positive perception of community psychology after completing the course.

> I realised that there was a lot more to community psychology and it's a lot more relevant, versatile and applied and I actually realised that first of all it deals with a broad range of issues… almost anything can become community psychology… and um… it's sort of a lot more academic than I expected at first. (Participant 6)
>
> I guess that now I can see just how much work there is to be done in the field and how many roles there are for community psychologists to play. Although I don't think that I had a negative view of community psychology, my opinion certainly became a lot more positive. (Participant 7)

These quotes encompass the changes in students' thinking about community psychology. Students did not know what they would be studying when studying community psychology or what mode they would be expected to work in. There was a perception that community

psychology was a non-academic subject, which would not require much work on the part of the students – however this perception changed as the course progressed.

Students commented on the academic nature of community psychology as if it was surprising. This shows just how little is known of community psychology and how underrated it is as a subject. Secondly, many of the students did not think that community psychology would be relevant to them – in their minds it was only relevant to poor, black people. After studying the course, comments were made about the relevance of community psychology and the fact that it can be used in a variety of settings.

Reasons for change in perceptions of community psychology

As mentioned in the previous section, there were two factors which facilitated the change in students perceptions of community psychology. The lecturer had a profound effect on students' perceptions of community psychology.

> … the fact that the lecturer was passionate about the course and he taught the course… (Participant 2)

> …for me, I don't think I would have got as much out of the course if I didn't have that specific lecturer, I think someone who is so passionate and knowledgeable…(Participant 4)

> …when you think about the lecturer, I have to take my hat off to him; it was great to get that infusion of knowledge. (Participant 6)

Two characteristics of the lecturer are highlighted in this section – first of all, a lecturer who is knowledgeable on the subject – in terms of having worked in the field and contributing to the knowledge base of community psychology – is seen as a positive influence on the course. Secondly, a lecturer who is passionate about community psychology is able to share this passion with the students in the course. This may be summed up as a need of these students for a role model in the field of community psychology. This may be because the field is perceived as a difficult one – with theoretical confusion and difficult work (Carolissen, 2006) or because the students still need to place themselves within the field.

Secondly, the course content resulted in a change of student perceptions.

> …the fact that the content was different to what I expected. (Participant 2)

Once again, the students' lack of knowledge about the field of community psychology is highlighted. Students were not sure what to expect from the course or what would be covered. It is encouraging to note that they were not perturbed by the content in the course but appear to have been positively affected by the course work.

Experiences in the community psychology post-graduate course

After discussing what the students thought the course would be about and how these ideas changed, this section looks at the students' experiences of studying community psychology.

Previous exposure to community psychology

The amount of experience of studying community psychology varied across all of the participants. Some of the participants had studied community psychology for some length of time while others had not had any exposure to the subject.

> I think it was in second year, we did do social psychology and community psychology, but briefly…(Participant 1)
>
> I had an introduction of it in second year with another course, social or something. (Participant 2)
>
> …and I like community work, we did some in undergrad, but only a short introduction. (Participant 3)
>
> I hadn't done community psychology prior to honours. (Participant 4)
>
> Someone in the class reminded me that we had done the course in second year, combined with social psychology. (Participant 7)

At the University of the Witwatersrand all undergraduate students have the opportunity to study community psychology. Depending on the years in which they studied, this would have been either at a second or third year level. At a second year level, community psychology was combined with social psychology. Later, community psychology was moved to a third year level, but students had to elect to take this course.

It seems that the students that studied community psychology alongside social psychology did not remember much of the course and it can be said that the impact of the course on their decision to take community psychology in honours was minimal. This may be for a couple of reasons – firstly, covering two new subjects in just one quarter may have been

overwhelming and much of the subject matter covered may have been forgotten. Alternatively, the introduction of two subjects which are outside of the realm of individual psychology may have led students to believe that they were one and the same.

The difference between community psychology and other courses in psychology

All of the students drew a comparison between traditional psychology and community psychology. This comparison was either in response to the question of whether community psychology should be offered as a separate module or when discussing the experience of studying community psychology. This has been split into two ideas – firstly the differences relating strictly to the course and its contents and secondly, those relating to the application of the subject.

Community psychology was perceived as harder than other courses in psychology.

> …this one is like I mean community; it's more of a challenge… (Participant 1)

> …I think especially compared to the other courses that I've done this year…a lot more challenging… (Participant 6)

The reasoning behind the thought that community psychology is more challenging than other courses in community psychology may be due to the workload in the course which was discussed as much more than other subjects in the honours year. Due to the positioning of the course in the first half of the year, it was the first time that students experienced a student-led course – presenting their own seminars and teaching the class certain aspects of the course. On the other hand, it may be related to the content covered in the course.

Participant 2 felt that community psychology dealt with a broader range of topics in a number of different ways.

> I think a lot of the other modules we've done are very boxed…When you think of community psychology, I thought of pathology, I thought of socio-economic status, I thought of people's backgrounds and all of these things that play into people's pathology. (Participant 2)

Stevens (2007) lists some of the influences on community psychology as religion, indigenous knowledge systems, liberalism, social and critical psychology and politics. This may be the reason for the wide array of topics covered in community psychology and in relation to this, the perception of other modules as being boxed. Participant 2 listed socio-economic problems

as one of the things she thought of when thinking of community psychology; this is again related to the client population that students perceive community psychology as serving.

Participant 6 believed that community psychology is more open and led by their ideas in comparison with other courses in psychology.

> …I think very much lead by our ideas and our own sort of conception of things; I mean half of the course is the interventions where you get to choose your own topic. So I think especially compared to the other courses that I've done this year… that was definitely a lot more open…(Participant 6)

The literature pointed to ideas of student-led learning versus lecturer-led courses in community psychology (Pillay, 2007). The participant is referring to the task given to students in the second half of the course – designing their own community psychology intervention. In honours, it is a new experience to choose your own topics for assignments and essays, as they are prescribed in undergraduate courses. But it seems that the community psychology course goes beyond this new experience and is more student-led than other honours courses. This may be to expose the class to the community psychology practice of involving the community in interventions and action, as well as the acknowledgment of the community's local knowledge. In this case, the community is the class.

Now the section moves on to discussing the differences highlighted by students in terms of the application of community psychology versus that of other subjects in other subjects. When comparing community psychology to other branches of psychology, certain students felt that community psychology would reach more people and in a different way.

> …you actually feel like you are reaching out to people, to the community. (Participant 1)

> I think that community psychology is a lot more hands on so I think that along with the different theory and along with the different way of working, it's almost like you can actually make a difference. (Participant 4)

> …you know I think things can't always be put down to group functioning. I think community bridges that gap between the individual and the group. (Participant 5)

> …besides the obvious difference of the client that you are targeting; things like the way you think about the problem differ from community psychology to more traditional psychology. (Participant 7)

The need for a more relevant psychology in South Africa has been touched on previously. The above quotes support community psychology as the answer to this problem (Pillay, 2007; Seedat et al., 2001). The students' reasons for this include new ways of conceptualising problems, intervening with client populations and greater impact.

Many of the students felt that community psychology was more relevant to the South African context than traditional forms of psychology. The following quotes show this idea. It is as if community psychology is a more realistic reflection of what is needed in South Africa.

> I think it's also very relevant in South Africa, whereas clinical psychology tends to be very idealistic and I think people have an idea of psychology based on what they see on T.V. and what they see in the movies, which isn't necessarily true. I think community psychology is more realistic, it's more relevant to South Africa. (Participant 4)

> I realised that there was a lot more to community psychology and it's a lot more relevant…
> (Participant 6)

Media has a great influence on the lives of young South Africans. Participant 4 refers to the role that media plays on people's perceptions of psychology. Movies and television shows represent psychology only as psychotherapy. Although psychotherapy is part of psychology, it is not the only function that psychologists perform (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Added to this is the perception of who utilises psychotherapy. The media may add to the perception that psychotherapy is a fashion statement for the richer population and is not utilised optimally, especially in urban, private practices.

Certain participants felt that community psychology opened up a wider range of job opportunities for them in the future when compared to other forms of psychology.

> …I saw that I could work in an NGO and do something other than consulting on a counselling level etcetera. (Participant 2)

The employment opportunities that are open to psychology students on completion of an honours course are important. Students were surprised to find that there were many different opportunities that they could pursue in the community psychology realm. The different roles of community psychologists are detailed by various authors (Kelly, 2006; Mann, 1979). With so many possible roles, community psychology offers a wide range of employment

opportunities. These new opportunities are in comparison to the traditional psychologist roles of researcher, counsellor and psychometrist.

Experiences of studying community psychology

For some of the students, the entire community psychology course was a positive experience – Participants 2, 4, 6 and 7.

> I learnt a lot of other things, like how to write up a proposal and an intervention and things so I really enjoyed it. (Participant 2)
>
> …it was certainly a very positive experience… (Participant 7)

The students' perception that community psychology is different to other courses has been discussed. Participant 2 points to this difference again, when she says that she learnt "other things". This difference was seen as something positive by the participant. However, the community psychology course was not an entirely positive experience for all of the students who were interviewed. Certain students did not enjoy specific parts of the course while others – such as Participant 1 – did not enjoy the course at all.

> I wouldn't say that I enjoyed the course… (Participant 1)

The experiences of community psychology have been divided into two sections – course-specific experiences and personal experiences.

Course specific experiences

Different students enjoyed different parts of the course – certain concepts, values or assignments.

> …certain aspects like aspects empowerment, empowering people with knowledge and skills that I had never known about and learnt about. That was interesting. I think that was what I really enjoyed. (Participant 1)

The concept of empowerment is one unique to community psychology. In traditional psychology, the power is with the psychologist; it is not shared or transferred. It may have been refreshing for students to discover new ways of relating to client populations.

For some participants, there were aspects which the students could not be related to.

> …like the strategy and the phenomenology and some of the historical context, I couldn't really grasp all of that. (Participant 1)

Although the participant does not specify which part of the history of community psychology she found difficult, much of the historical component is made up of South African history. This is the first indication that students are not aware of South Africa's history or how it is intertwined with psychology. This may be a desire on the part of the students to ignore that which they find uncomfortable.

Participant 4 felt that some of the aspects which were covered in the community psychology course were repetitive and had been done in other subjects before.

> …you have to look at things like apartheid and it gets a bit monotonous because you've done it before… (Participant 4)

Because this was the first exposure that many students had to community psychology, it was necessary to give a comprehensive overview of the history of community psychology, the events leading to the birth of psychology as well as a brief introduction to each of the community psychology models.

Again, the lecturer was discussed as a positive component of the course.

> I also really like the fact that the lecturer was so passionate and really I fed off his passion, really I did. (Participant 2)

> …for me, I don't think I would have got as much out of the course if I didn't have that specific lecturer, I think someone who is so passionate and knowledgeable, someone who is experienced, you can only grow and develop from having him as a lecturer. (Participant 4)

The idea of a lecturer has already been discussed but there are also some concerns about the lecturer having such a great impact on the students' perceptions of community psychology. The charisma of the lecturer may have attracted the students to the course and not the actual content of community psychology – the attraction may not move beyond this. It is important that students connect with something within the field and not only the people that they associate with it. Participant 2 found that the course was challenging but enjoyed the challenge.

> It pushed me, I liked the challenge… (Participant 2)

Participant 4 and 6 believed that presenting their own seminars was a positive experience.

> …he made us present the seminars ourselves, I think that, while challenging, gave us a good academic standing because that is how we would do things for the rest of our careers and I think when we do the masters courses. (Participant 4)

> …in opposition to what I just said, the fact that it is student driven um… it's really fantastic, it teaches you how to take a topic and do it, you have to support everything that you're doing with fact… (Participant 6)

The practical skills learnt during the community psychology course are ones that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their academic careers and they can use some of these skills when they practice as psychologists. Gibson and her colleagues (2001) support the training of psychologists in both traditional and community psychology. Even if the students do not continue in the field of community psychology, they can incorporate the skills that they have gained in this course to become successful practitioners. The intervention was an aspect of the course that was mentioned often by the students. The students' opinions of the intervention assignment were varied. For some of the students it was a positive experience.

> When I look back at it, it's the piece of work that I am most proud of in my academic career, knowing that I have done it makes me believe that I could do it again in the future. (Participant 4)

> I loved it during the interventions part of the course, just being able to do something that interests you and hear about such a wide range of topics that was awesome. (Participant 5)

> I think I liked, I liked especially the second part of the course. People came up with things that were very interesting. (Participant 6)

The challenge of creating their own interventions was a positive experience for students for a number of reasons – first of all, they enjoyed the freedom they were given in terms of what topics that they could cover. Secondly, the students felt that they were given a taste of what they would be expected to do in a Masters course and later in their own careers. This experience would have given the students confidence in their own abilities and initiative.

For some students, the presentation factor was daunting and for them the fact that they had to present their work to their class was a negative experience.

> …the whole presentation factor – I didn't like that, kind of like when you come to honours, they kind of throw you in the deep end ya and we never did seminar presentations… (Participant 3)

The idea of being "thrown in at the deep end" comments again on the way in which the course was taught. As a student-led course, most of the course work was presented by students. Participant 3, 5 and 6 would have preferred to have more input from the lecturer. Even though different authors are pushing for a student-led course, students feel safer in the comforts of a lecturer-based module.

> I'm not being funny to them or anything but it's like… I don't know like just give us more. He didn't discuss any modules, so give us more so I have a foundation of understanding and then you know bring everything else in. (Participant 3)

> …you know I think when we were in the course, the first couple of weeks we didn't feel that there was enough lecturer input and we found it difficult lecturing each other and for the first couple of weeks this was a concept that we weren't familiar with and we wanted more of the lecturer. (Participant 5)

> I think, I think a lot of us felt like we had been thrown in at the deep end. Ah… and it felt like we were missing out a lot on the lecturer component – especially when we were looking at basic concepts (Participant 6)

Jozefonicz-Simbeni and her colleagues (2005) commented on the theoretical confusion faced by community psychology students. For these students, there is documentation to refer to when learning about many of the basic concepts as two South African text-books aimed at this level and were published since 2000 (Duncan, Bowman, Naidoo, Pillay, & Roos, 2007 & Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001).

Participant 2, 3 and 7 did not enjoy the amount of work which had to be covered in the course.

> I just didn't like, when it came to the workload, there was a lot of work. (Participant 2)

> …and the workload was hectic. (Participant 3)

> I think the workload was hectic, it was like nothing that I had experienced before! (Participant 7)

Again, it is important to note that community psychology was a course offered in the first half of the honours course and the jump from undergraduate to post-graduate courses is quite large – especially in terms of the amount of work that they were expected to cover each week.

Personal factors

For Participants 2 and 4, community psychology is closer to their realities. This may be due to their backgrounds, cultures and heritages or simply closer to their own personal values.

> We talked about things that I deal with on a daily basis, which hadn't been my experience up until now. We used to speak about things like psychopathology and things which were not my immediate reality. (Participant 2)

> I think that it's more relevant to the South Africa that I've grown up in than clinical psychology would have been. (Participant 4)

The students who commented on the relevance of community psychology to their own lives are black students. It is interesting that white students did not comment on this, which may further enforce the idea that community psychology is not for white people.

For some of the students the role of the psychologist was important for them and both the way that it was explained to them and the way that they saw themselves in the role were a positive experience.

> …it's about what you as a psychologist can do in the community. (Participant 2)

> …we were aware of how we would fit into the subject ourselves and what our role as a psychologist would be. So during every seminar we would have to look at the theory behind the seminar and the role of the psychologist and that gave me a way to say that a community psychologist can fill… (Participant 4)

The class had different impacts on each of the students. For Participants 2 and 7, the class discussions and the way which the class was open to different opinions was a positive experience.

> …I liked the fact that the class was very accommodating when it came to some people having a lot to say. (Participant 2)

> I think I was quite lucky with the class that I had because we all got on well and so we supported each other and helped each other out a bit. (Participant 7)

The students did not only grow on an academic level but also on a personal level. For Participant 1 this included gaining confidence in herself and her opinions.

> …I am not really comfortable to speak out a lot in class, so I was actually challenged to express my opinions more and not really worry about what people would say. So that has really got me going, in terms of the following semester. You know give me more confidence in my work. (Participant 1)

This shows that the community processes at work within the community psychology class have worked. Participant 1 now feels empowered to express her opinion, where she was struggling to do so at the beginning of the course. Participant 1, however, does not want to invest this new found confidence in the field of community psychology – shown here by the reference to the following semester.

Participants 1 and 7 felt that the values of community psychology were in line with their personal values.

> …I agreed with the values. (Participant 1)

> …a couple of things really resonated with me in terms of the theory, the principals around empowerment and prevention and the models that talk about prevention, those were very interesting, there was just something that went off in my head to say you know this makes sense. (Participant 5)

> I think the ideas of empowerment, concentisation and power-sharing were huge for me, they gave words to ideas that I have played with for ages. I think that the values of community psychology sit well with me as a person…(Participant 7)

Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) commented on the connection of the personal life and the professional life. If someone wants to practice community psychology, there must be cognisance between the values in someone's personal life and those that they put into practice at work. The above quotes show that the course laid a good foundation for students to continue with community psychology in the future – possibly even into their careers.

For many of the students, the course changed their minds about their role as a professional.

> So that's the biggest change, it's completely shifted where I see myself professionally. (Participant 5)

> I think that it is the course that had the most impact on my professional development that I have ever done. (Participant 7)

In opposition to this, Participant 6 became frustrated by the fact that she did not achieve as much as she would have like to in the community psychology course.

> …it stretched me further than I ever wanted to ever be stretched and I still feel like I didn't reach my potential – I didn't get as far as I would like to go. Um…so I think it's frustrating. (Participant 6)

The students studying community psychology are future-orientated, thinking firstly about getting to the next level academically – as shown by Participant 6's concerns about marks and reaching potential. Secondly, the first two quotes show the concern for their professions and careers. Participant 5 and 7 are discussing this change in a positive light – they want to continue in the field.

Participant 6 was "pushed further than [she] ever wanted to be" showing the initial perception that community psychology would be less rigorous then other courses in psychology (Carolissen, 2006). This quote shows how incorrect this statement is.

Reasons for taking community psychology at a post-graduate level

This section covers a number of different ideas – whether or not the student chose to take the course in community psychology and if they did chose the course, why they wanted to take the course. Related to this, the students suggestions to make the course more appealing to a larger student body are discussed and finally, whether there should or should not be a practical component in the community psychology honours course.

Student's choice of course

Some of the students chose to take the course in community psychology, however it depended whether this was their first or second choice. Participant 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 chose community psychology as their first choice. While the others either did not choose to do community psychology or put it further down their list of choices.

> I saw community psychology and I like community work, we did a bit in undergrad…the subject was in my mind from undergrad and I thought okay, this is something that I would like to do. (Participant 3)

> I took it; it was my first choice as an honours elective. (Participant 4)

> It was my first choice… (Participant 5)

It is positive to see that a large portion of the participants chose to take the community psychology course. Even Participant 2, who chose community psychology as her second

option, rated it highly among her possible electives. Participant 1 did not choose the course, she is also the one participant who did not enjoy the course at all and does not see a future in community psychology for herself. It is possible that Participant 1 never had an interest in community work and her disappointment in not doing the courses that she wanted to, had an impact on her perceptions of community psychology.

Reasons for taking the community psychology course

This section has been organised into three subsections – reasons relating to the course, either its content or those involved in the course; reasons relating to other parts of psychology and more personal reasons.

Course specific reasons

Many of the students who chose to take the community psychology course did so because of the lecturer and the way that he presented the course to them during the honours orientation.

> …because when the community lecturer was standing up in front of the class to sell the course, he was probably the best spoken of all the lecturers that came that day… (Participant 2)
>
> A lot of us took the course because of the lecturer, the presentation of the course… (Participant 4)
>
> Definitely the course introduction, the lecturer just did really, really well… (Participant 6)
>
> First of all, I really enjoyed the presentation by the lecturer… (Participant 7)

Only half of the students had been exposed to community psychology before the honours course in community psychology, making the initial interaction between the lecturer and the students of vital importance. The students appear to appreciate the straightforward nature of the presentation by the lecturer and were excited by the manner in which the course was presented.

It seems that students have a consumerist approach towards choosing which subjects they should study. This is linked to the Marxist idea of "commodity fetishism" (Hamber et al., 2001). It is as if they are making a rational decision on what will benefit them in the long run based on the presentations given by lecturers. These long-term benefits will allow students to reach fulfilment by enabling them to provide for themselves in the future.

Participants 2 and 6 were attracted to the critical aspect of community psychology and took the subject more because it had a critical dimension.

> I wasn't going so much for the community aspect but for the critical aspect. Based on the breakdown that the course co-ordinator gave us for community psychology in the introduction, It was the only course the offered you any sort of critical aspect. (Participant 2)

> I had done critical psychology in third year. And that sort of gave me a basic introduction to theory and a lot of that I found interesting, a very interesting way of thinking. So that was one of the things that community psychology was more of. (Participant 6)

One of the influences on community psychology is critical psychology (Stevens, 2007). This is predominantly due to the idea that community psychology was introduced as an alternative to traditional psychology, critiquing what was seen as problems with applicability. Initially, students were not as excited about doing community psychology as they were about other aspects of the course – this highlights the low level of importance given to community psychology or again, how little is known about the subject.

Participant 6 commented on what would be covered in the course and that the topics which they believed would be covered were very interesting. For some of the students, the course content made them want to take the community psychology course.

> Also he said that we would cover very interesting topics like human trafficking and child sex abuse. (Participant 6)

Reasons relating to other parts of psychology

Participant 5 believed that community psychology would be different to anything that they had studied before and she was looking for something different.

> I was ready for something new; I hadn't done community psych before… (Participant 5)

It is interesting that on various occasions, students commented that they did not know anything about community psychology but chose to take the subject at an honours level. The idea of looking for something new relates to the idea that traditional psychology is not offering what the South African student population believes is needed by the public.

Students believed that the community psychology course was a compliment to the other courses that they were doing in their honours year.

> For me I was looking at the different courses and I was thinking in terms of what else I was going to take, like psychological interventions and developmental psychology, so I was thinking in terms of people, like not your psychological assessment, psychopathology. I was thinking in terms of how you help actual people, like intervention strategies and I knew that community psychology would look at that. (Participant 1)

> Like, ya and so I chose things that somehow linked, like I'm doing developmental… (Participant 3)

These students express a similarity and discuss the complimentary nature of community psychology and traditional psychology. Different authors (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Gibson et al., 2001) have commented on the need to combine skills to produce effective psychologists. These participants seem to have a similar opinion to them with regards to linking subjects in order to become well-rounded.

Even though Participant 1 sees the need for different types of intervention, she goes to the extreme of finding intervention strategies outside of traditional psychology – avoiding psychological assessment and psychopathology. According to her, these ideas do not apply to the general public.

For Participant 5 and 7, the way the year was structured allowed them to take the community psychology course. It is unclear whether their subject choice would have been different of the order of subjects had been changed – so although they chose community psychology, there is still a level of chance involved in their placement in the course.

> …It just worked out that the other courses I wanted to do were in the second half of the year
> (Participant 5)

> …there were more subjects that I wanted to take in the second half of the year and only community in the first half… (Participant 7)

Personal reasons for taking the course

One of the participants believed that community psychology would give them an understanding into what was happening in the South African context.

> I was also thinking that I don't have enough of an idea of what's happening in the real world, you know? Especially in South Africa, what the social conditions are and I wanted to get a bit of background information first. (Participant 6)

Community psychology is seen as a remedy to many of the problems faced by the South African population (Pillay, 2007). It would have been expected that students concerned with fixing problems in our society would have an understanding of this society. Participant 6 admits that she was not aware of the South African context; this may be due to the fact that she was planning on leaving the country after finishing honours.

It is necessary to have a Masters degree to become a psychologist in South Africa. Participant 6 and 7 spoke about this.

> … he made it out that it would be something that would help us become successful psychologists. (Participant 6)

> …basically he said that if you want to get into masters, you need to take this course. Maybe that was a bit shallow or self-serving… but I did want to do masters. (Participant 7)

This relates to the consumerist approach discussed above, students have an attitude of investing in their futures, as if they were shopping around for what could benefit them in the long run. Even though, the students frame the choice of subject as a benefit for the future, it is interesting that they take the lecturers opinion again of what will benefit them.

It is important to note that the masters programme which is most likely being discussed by the students is the Masters in Community-based Counselling (MACC). As suggested by the title of the course, this programme has a strong community orientation. Community psychology is also covered in the Clinical and Educational masters courses – although to different levels.

Recommendations to get more students to take the course

There are not a large number of students choosing to study community psychology. The students that were interviewed all had an opinion on how to make the subject more appealing to a wider range of students.

The first suggestion to make community psychology more appealing is to allow the students an opportunity to work in a community setting.

> I think the practical work; I think that when you actually go out there and see myself there in the community and the experience, it would really make a difference to the course. I think that would help. (Participant 1)

Practical training is not part of any of the honours courses at The University of the Witwatersrand. The debate about including a practical component in community psychology courses is discussed later in this section.

Secondly, it may be helpful to have past students sharing their experience of community psychology with the class. Participants mentioned that having a lecturer who is passionate about the subject and knowledgeable on all aspects of the course was an asset to the honours course. They believed that having someone such as this introduce the course at an earlier stage would make the subject more appealing.

> …You can really get a lot out of that, you can really learn a lot from him.(Participant 1)

> So it's quite good to have a lecturer who has experience in community work? Who can share that experience with you? (Interviewer)
> Ya, ya that would. And even students who have done the course, those who have actually gone out there into the community. (Participant 1)

Every one of the students that were interviewed thought that community psychology should be introduced at an earlier point in students' careers. This introduction should take place as early as possible – either in the introduction to psychology at a first year level or as a stand alone course in second or third year.

> I think that in undergrad, there should be more emphasis on it. I don't know of there is a course, like just a community psychology course. If we get a taste of it at undergrad, then people may be more open to it at an Honours level. (Participant 1)

> I just think that you need to get to people younger than honours level, so that we get more people in, like people who go into social work, people who go into… I think anyone in the humanities would be interested in this sort of thing. I think that we should get to people at a much earlier stage. (Participant 4)

> If people had an introduction to it, they would want to take it at an honours level. (Participant 6)

> I guess the best way to get people interested is to have it introduced earlier in their academic career, just because it's not in Weiten, doesn't mean that we can't talk about it in first year when we discuss the history of psychology. (Participant 7)

All of the participants in this study were undergraduate students at the University of the Witwatersrand, as well as completing their Honours course at this university. This means that although an early introduction is recommended to encourage students to take community psychology courses, all of the students had an opportunity to do community psychology at an undergraduate level.

Participants 2, 5 and 7 believed that students do not have enough information about the paths that they can take at a post-graduate level and later as a professional. This idea was discussed at various stages of the interviews when participants expressed their surprise at the roles that they could perform as future community psychologists. The students seem to be suggesting that if students realized that there was a masters course rooted in community psychology, more people would be attracted to the subject.

> …I think that I should say that in undergrad you think that there are only two pathways that you can take, you think that there is industrial or there's clinical and that's all. So if we could have a course that tells you what the MACC programme deals with and what challenges you will face. I think that I should say that in undergrad you think that there are only two pathways that you can take, you think that there is industrial or there's clinical and that's all. So if we could have a course that tells you what the MACC programme deals with and what challenges you will face. (Participant 2)

> I think the difficulty with the under-grad course is that in third year you don't really get pitched those courses, so unless you've done your own investigation, you don't know what the courses are about. So I think improving it at a third year level. (Participant 5)

> I also think that more information needs to be given to under-grad students about careers in psychology and the best way to get to get there. People are unaware of what different master's courses offer and what kinds of things are looked at in master's selections. I think that a short talk at the beginning of second year would help a lot, then you can catch people for the third year course and they would at least focus in any kind of introduction to the subject. (Participant 7)

Participant 4 felt that the lecturer has an impact on whether the student takes a subject or not and believed that a passionate, knowledgeable lecturer would encourage more people to take a community psychology course.

> I think you need a passionate lecturer, I think you need someone like our lecturer, who has a driving passion, who will get the people in and find people who are able to work in the field and take it from there. (Participant 4)

Due to the fact that community psychology is available at an under-graduate level and the students appear to have been unaware of this, it may be said that a good presentation by the lecturer is more important than the characteristics of the lecturer.

Practical component in the course

As mentioned earlier in the section, there is a debate in the community psychology field as to whether a practical component should be included in students' training. The participants had mixed reactions to the idea of having a practical component included in the honours course.

Participants 4, 5 and 7 believed that there should not be a practical component in the course.

> I don't know if you're ready for it at that level. I think it was so difficult to do the intervention and I think it would have been especially difficult to put it into place, based on the limited experience we've had because we've only had 6 months by the end of it. So I think it would be very difficult, number two, I think it would be very early to get people disillusioned because I think that… I don't think it's easy to go somewhere and see something not work… (Participant 4)

> I think as much value as we could have gotten, it might have been detrimental to some of those communities because we wouldn't have been ready to actually engage with the communities. And I mean you don't want to harm or do any serious harm… (Participant 5)

> No ways! I would have been way too nervous! I think that I was nowhere ready to do work in the community that would have benefited them. I think that I still have a lot to learn before I am set loose on a community. (Participant 7)

As suggested by the literature, students have a fear of community work (Carolissen, 2006; Gibson et al., 2001). This is interesting because the perception of many honours students is that by amassing a large amount of practical work they will stand a better chance of getting into masters – a goal for many of the participants. It seems that a community psychology intervention has the reputation of hard work – long hours, difficult problems in communities with limited resources. Students may seek practical experience in sheltered environments where structures are already in place for them to work in.

Participant 4 seemed quite certain that an intervention led by the students would have failed. While Participants 5 and 7 believed that they may have actually had a negative impact on the communities that they entered. This may be due only to lack of experience but may be due to a deeper concern about the feasibility of community psychology interventions – even though they are better suited to South African communities than other forms of intervention.

Another point to consider is the perception of young South Africans about the potential to solve many of the problems that South Africans face. Problems such as unemployment, lack of education and the issues which result from these may seem insurmountable.

Participants 1, 2, 3 and 6 felt that a practical component would add value to their learning.

> I think that I could have, more. Like actually going out into the community, yeah. (Participant 1)
>
> So definitely, definitely ya. I think that practical experience would really help put things into perspective. And or help to see how far you can push yourself and whether you are ready for that. (Participant 2)
>
> …yes but I'd like to see what we did and a practical module as well. (Participant 3)
>
> …just the opportunity to go out and spend some time in the field doing the work – it would have been fantastic. I mean it would have been fantastic. (Participant 6)

The idea of communities was established by the apartheid government to legitimise differences between race groups (Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). It appears that the idea of difference is still very much at play when considering working in communities. None of the students considered work in their own communities but discussed having to leave their comfort zones in order to do community work. Alongside this is the idea of readiness to do community work, there is a perception that you have to be ready to work in a community. Participant 6 placed a positive spin on these ideas – an excitement to perform the work that the course had covered.

The ways that students plan to use community psychology in the future

It is important to understand whether students did the course in community psychology in order to take the amount of courses which they needed to take or whether this course would have an impact on their futures. In this section, the students' plans for the future which include community psychology or which have been affected by the course in community psychology will be discussed.

Student does not want to become a community psychologist

Participant 1 did not believe that she could be a community psychologist. She has a set idea of what type of person becomes a community psychologist and she can not find a way to fit

herself into this description. The characteristics of the lecturer may have had a great impact on this student's perceptions of a community psychologist. The lecturer has been described as passionate and excited about community psychology, added to this he was perceived as confident and outgoing. It seems that the student is comparing herself to the only example of a community psychologist that she has encountered.

> …a community needs like a person, a community needs I think it would need a very structured, outgoing person so um ya… So I think that for me, I am more your one-on-one, not really your outgoing person, I can't take charge and empower a community. (Participant 1)

The participant is concerned with what she thinks a community needs and not necessarily what she would prefer to do. This suggests a lack of confidence in her abilities as a potential community psychologist. Finally, Participant 1 enjoyed the concept of empowerment in the course – however she has not yet fully understood the idea as she felt that she still needed to have some power in order to empower community members.

Student plans to use some parts of the course in the future

Although students may not have wanted to become community psychologists or pursue community psychology in the future, they would like to incorporate certain aspects of community psychology into their work.

> Okay and as a psychologist, I definitely, when I have a client, I would definitely want to empower them and challenge them to change and become better people, and also show them that they can help others and that its an ongoing thing. (Participant 1)

> I realised that I didn't want to do clinical psychology; I realised that I am more of a people's person. That I am more hands on in a sense that I felt that I could do more than just counsel people. (Participant 2)

> I think for me, even the way that I want to work with individuals has been changed, it's not only about them and me; it's about so much more. (Participant 7)

Participants 1 and 7 show the fear which students have of moving completely away from traditional psychology and the set idea that they have of a psychologist – concentrating primarily on one-on-one work. This may be related to the ideas that unless you are practicing traditional psychology, you are not a legitimate psychologist. The idea of incorporating some of the ideas from community psychology into this individually orientated work is noble but

re-emphasises the marginalisation of community psychology within the discipline of psychology.

Participant 2 expressed the want to leave traditional psychology behind in order to do more. The participant thinks of community psychology as quite a practical field and possibly contrasts this to the theoretical roots of psychotherapy.

Student has a specific plan for the future involving community psychology

After completing the course in community psychology students constructed a plan for their future of which community psychology formed a significant part of.

> It changed so much to the point that I applied to do Masters in Community based Counselling. (Participant 2)
>
> In the end I chose to do the community masters course so… it definitely made an impact on my life. (Participant 4)
>
> I started thinking well actually this is for me. Um… so for me, MACC became much more important, community work on the side became much more important and so that became my focus which is why I applied for the MACC course and that's where I am going. (Participant 5)
>
> Um… personally it clarified what I wanted to do, career wise. And even though I didn't have a preference for clinical but it really had a big impact to show me what I want to do with my life and that's where I want to go. (Participant 6)
>
> I think that it gave me some direction as to what I want to be doing and how I want to be doing it. It certainly influenced the master's course that I applied for… …As I said earlier, I hope that one day I can define myself as a community psychologist; I could put therapy on the back burner and concentrate on this kind of work. (Participant 7)

These plans include applying for and in some of the participants' cases, studying a Masters in Community Based Counselling. For some of the students the course changed them as a person and for some even resulted in changes to their personal plans for the future.

> It's really helped in the sense that you know, I am more aware of myself as well, I grew a lot, emotionally. (Participant 2)
>
> For one thing, next year, I plan to go back down to Cape Town to work with my aunt and stuff like that, to do those workshops. (Participant 3)
>
> It has made me think about staying in the country a lot more, I had planned to travel after university, see what's out there but um… ya I mean it means that I'll definitely be staying in the country for the next five or six years…(Participant 6)

It is no coincidence that students who study community psychology at an honours level wish to pursue it at a Masters level. If people are not exposed to community psychology, it is impossible for them to have an interest in it. Having said this, exposure at an earlier stage of their academic careers may provide them with more opportunities to consider how they want to incorporate community psychology into their careers.

Secondly, it is important to note that the community lecturer is also the course co-ordinator for the Masters programme in community-based counselling. It is possible that the students' positive experience of his course would give them a good perception of the masters course.

CONCLUSION

This section has given an overview of the themes generated from 7 interviews with honours students that have completed a course in community psychology. The themes were organised into sections: Pre-conceived perceptions of community psychology, post-exposure perceptions of community psychology, the experience of studying community psychology at a post-graduate level, motivations to study community psychology and the impact which community psychology has had on the students' future.

Participants believed that community psychology and traditional psychology have many differences – the type of work done and the problems dealt with in these two fields of psychology. These assumptions led to various pre-conceived perceptions of community psychology – for example the belief that it was either far easier or harder than other branches of psychology. An important perception was predicted by the literature and upheld in the interviews – this is the racialisation of community psychology, the population which it serves and the people which practice it.

Many of the students had a change in perceptions concerning community psychology – for some it was a positive change, while for others the course confirmed that they did not want to work in the field of community psychology. After completing the course, participants believed that community psychology could reach a large amount of people in a variety of settings, using different interventions. In turn, community psychology provides learners with a great selection of job opportunities. Finally, students found community psychology to be relevant to the South African population.

As mentioned above, the community psychology course was a positive experience for some of the participants, while others had a negative experience while studying the course.

Positive experiences in community psychology included the attainment of many new practical skills – such as writing up an intervention and presenting a seminar. However, many students experienced theoretical confusion. Participants believe that this was due to a lack of foundation in the branch of community psychology and the lack of input from the lecturer.

Students took up the course in community psychology for a number of reasons – given the theoretical understanding of this research report, two of these results worth mentioning are: students were drawn to community psychology because of the critical slant and not due to its content per say. Secondly, students saw community psychology as a means to an end – community psychology at an honours level was seen as a way to become eligible for the Masters course in Community-based Counselling, which in turn leads to a qualification as a counselling psychology. These themes show how students used the course to further their personal interests.

Finally, the participants suggested ways to encourage more students to study community psychology. The idea which was mentioned time and again was that of introducing community psychology at an earlier stage than honours level. The results section has discussed that this is already the case at the University of the Witwatersrand. This led to the next suggestion – the branch needs to 'sell itself' to undergraduate students. This may be achieved by lecturers and past students sharing their experiences in the community psychology field with prospective students. Finally, both the literature and the interviews expressed mixed views on the idea of inserting more practical tasks into community psychology courses.

The ideas introduced in this section will be drawn together in the next chapter – namely: 'traditional' psychology versus community psychology, the relevance of community psychology to the South African population, ideas of race and racialisation, poor knowledge of community psychology and ways to increase the numbers of students studying community psychology.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the results are organised in a way that makes sense of the students' perceptions and experiences of a course in community psychology. The chapter contains five main sections: 'traditional' psychology versus community psychology, the relevance of community psychology to the South African population, ideas of race and racialisation, poor knowledge of community psychology and ways to increase the numbers of students studying community psychology. Throughout the discussion, reference will be made to the difficulty that students had when speaking about certain topics. The limitations of this research have been pointed to at different points of the research report, in this section; these limitations will be outlined and discussed. Following this, the recommendations for further research and praxis will be outlined. The chapter ends with a conclusion, which summarises the discussion, limitations and the recommendations. The discussion departs at the point of difference – those between traditional and community psychology.

'TRADITIONAL' PSYCHOLOGY VERSUS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Community psychology declared that it would make more than a small departure from traditional psychology (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). As a field of psychology formed in opposition to many of the ideas and practices of traditional psychology, people are quick to draw comparisons between traditional psychology and community psychology. Carolissen (2006) states that students view community psychology through an individualistic lens. This is most likely due to the fact that a large amount of the course work taught in psychology courses originate within the traditional school of thought. Psychology in South Africa is more similar than different to psychology in the rest of the world (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Various authors have confirmed that traditional theories will never be fully relevant in the South African context (see Anonymous, 1986). Suggestions have been made to incorporate both an individual way of thinking and a broader approach that takes the broader social context into account (Naidoo, 2000). Even though the literature suggests a combination of these two types of psychology, students saw more differences than similarities between traditional and community psychology.

Students identified many differences between the two fields of psychology such as situation within the academic world, job opportunities, problems that are dealt with, possible

interventions and target populations. Firstly, there is a question whether community psychology even fits into the field of psychology. Participants compared community psychology to social work and at times gave the idea that they found it similar to community service or charity work with poor populations. This relates to the belief that 'traditional psychology' is for white, wealthy people whereas community psychology is directed towards poor, black people living in townships. This is not a new idea and was suggested in much of the literature (see Butchart & Seedat, 1990; Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2001; Yen, 2007).

Students seemed to rationalise this differentiation by suggesting that different population groups experienced different problems. Many of the students struggled to put this idea into words, continuing to refer to "real problems". In different population groups there are different causes of psychological problems, some which are based at an individual level and others which are based at a group or community level. Hamber and his colleagues (2001) highlight the fact that many of the groups that were marginalised during apartheid, continue to face marginalisation and re-victimisation in South Africa today. This may be exactly why community psychology is seen as more relevant in South Africa today – these authors suggest that social positions need to be changed in order to transform the realities of South Africans, thus making them less susceptible to certain psychological problems.

It is important to reiterate what constitutes an individual and knowledge, based on the theoretical basis of this research. An individual and knowledge are both products of political, economic and social circumstances (Hamber et al., 2001). Those in power therefore have a great impact on the prevailing knowledge base of any society. This says a great deal about why traditional psychology – both theory and practice – have continued to be dominant in South Africa today.

THE RELEVANCE OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION

Before discussing the relevance of community psychology to this country's population, it is necessary to discuss the students' connection with South Africa. Participants discussed their perceived disconnection to the country's history. This may be explained by the idea that different people have different realities based on their social and economic environments (Hamber et al., 2001).

Alternatively, it is important to note that some of the participants, as well as the interviewer are white – even the non-white participants most probably come from a middle

class background. There may still be shame involved in accepting the history of South Africa for young white or privileged South Africans. This is most likely the reason behind the perception that working in communities is difficult. Given that these students have defined communities as something different to who they are and where they come from; it is difficult – even for black students – to confront this other reality. There may be feelings of guilt for what they have and the privileges awarded to them (Pillay, 2003) Again, students had difficulties in expressing this idea, possibly due to the fact that they wanted to appear 'good' in the eyes of the interviewer, as she had worked in a community as part of the masters course. Some time must be spent within a community psychology course encouraging students to accept who they are and what they are born into (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005), as this is necessary to initiate change in society.

Students believed that community psychology is relevant to the South African population for a number of reasons. Firstly, community psychology deals with general issues – examples given by participants include racism and xenophobia. The idea of difference in terms of problems dealt with in community psychology has been discussed. However, the idea of 'general' needs to be explored further. 'General' may refer to problems that affect a large number people. In South Africa, these cited examples do affect a large portion of the population because of the diverse racial groupings of those living in South Africa.

Secondly, the students realised that community psychology could be utilised in a number of settings. This idea, however, has not transcended to the definition of a community, which is predominantly a group of black people within a township. In turn, this is related to the larger amount of roles and job opportunities seen by the students in the sphere of community psychology. This idea was predicted in the literature (see Naidoo et al., 2007). The definition that people have of a community will in turn define the scope and praxis of community psychology (Carolissen, 2006). This implies that if students can broaden their view of what constitutes a community, they could realise an even larger number of settings for the practice of community psychology.

IDEAS OF RACE AND RACIALISATION

The idea of race and racialisation has been dealt with at various points in the discussion section – with regards to the make-up of a community as well as the race of community psychologists. Authors have highlighted the use of the term community as a code for race (See Ngonyama Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). The literature review has discussed this idea in more detail but it will now be discussed in terms of the results of this research.

Although community psychology speaks out against defining a community as a group of black people within a certain area, it is difficult to move away from working with this particular population group. Psychologists have to acknowledge that there is a need to work with groups that are continuously victimised and must therefore work with marginalised groups (Hamber et al., 2001), at least in hope of changing these groups' social positions.

If possible, community psychology should make use of class instead of race when looking at groups which need intervention, as the composition and positioning of racial groups within society. Hamber and colleagues (2001) reiterate the idea that a class revolution is necessary to change society. It is important for people who have been oppressed – for whatever reason – to regain the power that they lost during oppression (Gibson, 2002).

It has become clear that the ideas of community psychology, race and politics are intricately linked. In the past, psychology has been used as a way to maintain ideas and systems of those in power (according to Marx – ideas of capitalism) (Hamber et al., 2001). The idea of politics explains some of the roles of a community psychologist – for example an activist (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005), lobbying for change within society. However, these authors go on to say that a community psychologist has a difficult job as they can not situate themselves within a specific political agenda. In South Africa, psychology was criticised in the past for keeping politics out of psychology (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). This criticism came about because psychology did not want to acknowledge the oppressive practices of the apartheid government – practices which they were condoning by objectively and rationally studying differences between the races (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) are calling for a different type of a-political practice, one in which oppression is recognised and fought against. However, by not aligning themselves with a particular political agenda, community psychologists are able to then serve different populations and lobby for what that community is fighting for.

POOR KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

The participants' pre-conceived perceptions showed that there is a poor understanding of what community psychology is. First and foremost, there is a misnomer that community psychology is non-academic. Among other pre-perceptions discussed in the results section, this idea points to a poor understanding of community psychology – both in terms of definitions and practice.

This chapter has pointed out many of these misunderstandings – the idea that community psychology is only for black people, by black people. On completion of the

course, participants believed that community psychology could be applied in a variety of settings. Students may believe that community psychology is for black people, by black people because as a discipline, community psychology has done little to confront race and class (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Community psychology may have only itself to blame for this misconception, as there is a difference between what they theorise and what they practice. In textbooks prescribed to students, many of the examples of interventions are those involving black or coloured populations (see Duncan et. al., 2003; Naidoo et al., 2007). In South Africa, working with marginalised and oppressed populations would most likely imply working with black people.

Secondly, students expressed the idea that community psychology was an easy option than other courses within psychology. This idea is most probably due to the lack of exposure to community psychology at an undergraduate level, some of the participants did not know what community psychology was so they could not make a real assessment of the level of difficulty of the course. Again, this perception was proved to be incorrect on completion of the course. Many of the students found the course to be difficult due to the fact that it was a student-led course. This was a topic that was discussed at various points of all the interviews and will be picked up in the next section which suggests ways to increase the numbers of students studying community psychology.

WAYS TO INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS STUDYING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Many of the participants – and the literature – suggest an early introduction to the subject as a way to increase student numbers in community psychology at a post-graduate level. This idea has been discussed in the results section – including the fact that community psychology is introduced at an undergraduate level at The University of the Witwatersrand. It therefore becomes necessary to look at other ideas to increase student numbers.

The participants had high regard for the lecturer of the community psychology course and suggested that a lecturer with similar characteristics. The characteristics which were found to be important are knowledge of and passion for community psychology.

The second suggestion is to increase the exposure that students get to community psychology – this may occur at any level during community psychology. Carolissen (2006) suggests that community psychology should be incorporated from a first year level. Accessible role models seem to be scarce within the community psychology field. The importance of this idea can not be stressed enough. At an undergraduate level, students have

the chance to gain as much as possible from the lecturer before embarking on a student-led course in honours.

The students had a negative view of community psychology before beginning the community psychology course. Carolissen (2006) suggests that this may be due to various reasons including a belief that work in the community psychology field is scarce and pay for available work is poor. It is necessary to change students' perceptions of community psychology. This may be achieved in a number of ways – either through the lecturer (as suggested by the participants) or by buying into the consumerist nature of many of the students by advertising the masters course which focuses on community psychology. There seems to be a lack of knowledge about the possible paths which students can follow at a post-graduate level and students are predominantly aware of doing either clinical or industrial psychology. Instead of labelling subjects at a third year level as either clinically orientated or industrially orientated, universities may do well to rid themselves of these labels so that students may choose freely without fore-closing other options. The theoretical basis has shown that people are motivated by consumerism fetishism (Hamber et al., 2001). Students at a post-graduate level are future orientated and will then take courses that they believe will stand them in good stead for the future. This was suggested in the introductory speech by the lecturer.

Although the students were divided on the suggestion to include a practical component in the course, some literature (see Pillay, 2003) suggests that practical work will peak students interests in community psychology. The community psychology course is only six months long at the University of the Witwatersrand – this amount of time does not provide the opportunity to cover the necessary amount of theory and a practical project. A large amount of theory needs to be covered in the honours course because students have not all had an exposure to community psychology and the class needs to understand basic concepts before moving on to a masters level. This means that unless the university was to restructure their entire honours' programme – to allow courses to continue for a year, practical work would not be possible at this level of study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although practises were put in place to limit the amount of problems with the research, all research has limitations. This report has highlighted three of the shortfalls of the research already – the connection of the researcher and supervisor to the masters in community-based counselling course, the timing of the interviews and the characteristics of the researcher.

These will be discussed further in this section. Finally, the section will discuss the populations to which these results may be generalised.

Firstly, it has been pointed out that the researcher is a student in the masters in community-based counselling course – many of the students in the honours course knew that this was the case. Added to this was the position of the supervisor as a lecturer in this masters course and someone who sat on the selection panel to the course. Although precautions were taken to hide the identity of the participants, participants may have wanted to answer in a way which made them seem good enough to the researcher. This may have included positive comments about community psychology and their plans for the future. Another confounding factor is that the community psychology honours lecturer is in a similar position to the supervisor – as course coordinator for the Masters programme. This may have influenced the participants' answers, especially in terms of the impact that the lecturer had on their experience of community psychology.

The second limitation is that of the timing of the interviews. Interviews were conducted once the participants had completed the honours course in community psychology; this was after June each year. This time of the year coincides with masters selections. Although their identities were hidden, participants may have seen the interviews as a helping hand to gain entrance into a Masters programme. They may have believed that they would be seen in a positive light by the researcher and the researcher could then pass information on to someone who selects Masters candidates. The timing of the interviews had a second effect on the research – questions about perceptions of community psychology on entering the honours course could only be answered in retrospect. This means that participants may have forgotten some of the beliefs that they had about community psychology or they may have been too embarrassed to mention some of their beliefs as they now know how incorrect they were.

Finally, the personal characteristics of the lecturer may have had an impact on the interview process. As mentioned before, the researcher is a young, white female. These attributes may have led participants to avoid topics such as race and characteristics of a community psychologist. Again, participants may have wanted to be seen as good enough in the eyes of the researcher and answered questions accordingly – as they believed she expected them to answer.

The research took place in a specific environment – all of the participants had completed the same course in community psychology and were students at the same university. This means that these results are typical of honours from the University of the Witwatersrand. This being said, the recommendations which have arisen from the research

may be applied to varying degrees across the community psychology discipline in South Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section outlines various recommendations which can be made as a result of this research. The section will cover three main sections: recommendations for further research, recommendations for teaching community psychology and recommendations for the praxis of community psychology.

In terms of further research, it may be recommended that more research needs to be done at an earlier level in psychology or at least before participating in a course in community psychology. Many of the participants stated that they either chose not to do community psychology or were not aware that it was offered at any level before honours. This brings about two issues – why do students not know their options at an earlier level and secondly, if they are aware of their options, why do they ignore the chance to study community psychology at an earlier level? This links to the recommendations for teaching community psychology.

Decisions need to be taken on the part of both the lecturer and the student in community psychology courses. Firstly, many of the students believed that they were not given enough support during the course. Either students need to be given more support – especially during the early stages of the course – or the lecturer must make it clear that community psychology is a student-led course. It seems that many of the positive aspects of the course may be lost if any initiative was to be taken away from the students.

Secondly, community psychology should not be afraid to 'sell itself' to students. It seems that although the option is available to study community psychology at an undergraduate level, many students are still unaware of this. Information needs to be given about the possibility of continuing to study a Masters course based on community psychology ideas so that students will take an interest in the subject. Currently, students see two options at a post-graduate level – clinical psychology and industrial psychology. This perception needs to change so that students see that psychology has many other opportunities and areas of practise.

It has been established that there is not enough time to include a practical task in the honours course. It does not seem likely that the University of the Witwatersrand will restructure their honours programme to have year long courses as opposed to half year

courses. This is largely due to their commitment to academics and ensuring that the students have a solid theoretical grounding, in a variety of psychological disciplines, by the end of the honours year.

In terms of teaching, a final recommendation has arisen from the research. For students to work to their full potential as community psychologists, they need to accept who they are and where they come from. If a person feels guilty for who they are and the privileges afforded to them by their class and race, then it is impossible for them to act to their full potential. Courses in community psychology need to give students time to explore their identities and ultimately accept themselves. Students and lecturers alike need to start a dialogue about race and class so that students are not opposed to recognising these traits and the impact that they may have on their work.

Community psychology sets up a great task for itself in the literature – these ideas need to move off of the pages of textbooks and into practice in South Africa. Literature has argued that community psychology is relevant to the South African population and will go a long way to solve some of the problems faced by the population (see Anonymous, 1986) but it has not been thrust into the limelight of academia. Painter and Terre Blanche (2004) argue that by increasing the focus on community psychology at an undergraduate level, these students may become the force for change – leading to an overhaul of the discipline of psychology at South African universities.

CONCLUSION

This research has important implications for the sub-discipline of community psychology. The results were discussed under five main headings - ideas of difference between community and traditional psychology, the relevance of community psychology to South Africa, ideas of race and racialisation of the discipline and ways to increase numbers of students wanting to study community psychology have been discussed. The limitations of the research have been discussed and the report has gone on to suggest ideas for further research, teaching of community psychology and the praxis of community psychology.

The importance of community psychology cannot be overstated. As a relatively young field, it still has many hurdles to overcome before reaching full fruition. This discipline should live up to the great promises made in the literature as a solution to many of the problems faced by the South African population.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMATION SHEET

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Dear Student,

My name is Lauren Fitchet, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Community-based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I approached you earlier in the year to participate in my research.

My area of focus is postgraduate students' perceptions of community psychology, experiences of studying community psychology and perceptions of the ways in which this subject has informed their future career choices. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. With your permission the interview will be recorded to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study.

If you participate in the study, your identity will only be known by myself and will be kept confidential. No information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview tapes will be processed by myself. The interview transcripts will only be seen or heard by anyone but my supervisor and myself and all transcripts given to my supervisor will not have any identifying information. You may refuse to answer any questions that you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. Interview tapes will be kept in a secure location in the psychology department with restricted access during the research process. Interview tapes will be destroyed when the research report has been completed and accepted for qualification. Results will be reported in a research report which will be available in the library and may also be written up in the form of a journal publication. A one page summary of the results will be made available on request.

If you choose to participate in the study please fill in your details on the informed consent form below. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at (011) 326-1481 or 082 353 4308 or via email at lfitchet@gmail.com. My supervisor, Ms. Tanya Swart can be contacted on (011) 717 4586 or via email at Tanya.Swart@wits.ac.za.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. While the study has no individual risks or benefits, your participation in this research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on student perceptions of community psychology.

Kind Regards

Lauren Fitchet

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

Participant:

I, _____ have read the information provided to me about this research project. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged for participating in this study. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions that I prefer not to. I understand that I will not be identified in the research report, and that no information that may identify me will be included. All of my responses will remain confidential. I understand that my identity will only be known to the researcher and will not be revealed to the researcher's supervisor or any other person. I am aware that the research report may contain direct quotes that will be chosen as not to reveal my identity. I understand that participating in the research does not involve any direct benefits or risks.

I agree to participate in this study, by participating in an interview.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO TAPE RECORD

Participant:

I, _____ have read the information provided to me. I understand that I am not obligated to give consent for the interview to be audio taped. I understand that all the taped material will be kept in a secure location in the department of psychology with restricted access during the research process and will be destroyed once the research is complete and has been accepted for qualification. I understand that my identity will be protected and will be kept confidential by the researcher

I hereby give permission for my interview to be taped.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1) Did you chose to take the community psychology course?
2) Before you began your Honours course in community psychology, did you have any previous experience of community psychology?
3) (If they have had experience) Please can you describe that previous experience and what you thought of community psychology?
4) (If they have had no experience) What were your expectations of community psychology before beginning the course?
5) In what ways do you find community psychology different to other psychology courses that you have done?
6) Do you think it can be infused into another module?
7) Describe the factors which influenced you taking community psychology in honours?
8) Please describe your experience of studying community psychology; this may include personal and academic factors. (Please discuss the things that you found challenging as well as those which you enjoyed)
9) What did you enjoy about studying community psychology? (you may include different aspects of the course as well as concepts which connected with you as a person and student)
10) Is there anything you disliked about studying community psychology? If so, what?
11) Which aspects of the module did you find important?
12) Would you have enjoyed a practical component to the module?
13) How did you find the political nature of the history of community psychology?
14) Since beginning the course, have your views about community psychology changed? If so, please can you tell me how?
15) What value does community psychology offer in the South African context?
16) Can you think of ways to make community psychology more appealing to a larger number of students?
17) Has community psychology and any of the concepts that you have learnt informed your plans for the future? Please expand
18) Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX E: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE