

**THE ROLE OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY:  
IN SEARCH OF AN APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY**

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Dedicated to the many people who directly or indirectly participated in this search, making it a collective rather than an individual contribution to a more appropriate practice of psychology in South Africa.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to make suggestions for an appropriate community psychology practice in South Africa, and to explore the implications for the training of psychologists within this context.

In order to develop these proposals an understanding of the South African social context and the location of psychology in that context was sought. In addition it was considered necessary to gain an overview of the community psychology approach in other contexts. Thereafter an exploration of the views of various people on an appropriate role for the psychologist in the broader socio-political arena in South Africa was conducted. These included key community psychologists in other contexts, psychologists in South Africa, psychology students, members of other social sciences, members of the public, and community organizers. An exploration of theoretical issues and relationships fundamental to a community psychology was then pursued, using a Critical perspective as a basis. Based on all of the above and direct experience of working and teaching within a community psychology framework in South Africa, suggestions for practice and training were offered.

It became evident that particular interests and worldviews determined how terms such as 'appropriate', and 'community', were interpreted, playing a major role in defining an appropriate community psychology for South Africa. With this in mind, it was proposed that while community psychology in some other contexts was characterized by diversity, providing no prescription for the goals of its major aims of prevention and social change, in South Africa the issues of power and oppression needed to form a central focus for community psychology, with empowerment being the major framework for practice.

In the theoretical exploration, focusing on the process of social change and the individual-society and expert-society relationships, it was argued that a Critical stance, incorporating a number of critical theories and perspectives, should be used as a basis for exploring an appropriate

theoretical framework in South Africa.

With regard to an appropriate practice within this context, a number of roles and activities were suggested. The process of empowerment was considered to be an important underlying theme, specific strategies for facilitating this process being suggested. Related to this was the need to address values and power issues within the professional-client relationship. Furthermore, the need to address psychology's present role in South Africa, the ideological role it is currently playing in perpetuating and maintaining oppressive social structures, was emphasized. In addition, the need for a reconstruction of psychological practice, exploring how the psychologist could constructively contribute towards the broader social transformation process was raised. In this regard, the role of the psychologist in responding to short-term, medium-term, and long-term needs and goals in South Africa was emphasized.

The implications for the training of psychologists were considered. In this regard, the need for congruence between the philosophy and aims of a programme, and its educational structures and processes, was emphasized. Within that context, the programme should reflect the basic values inherent in the empowerment framework: within the overall structure, selection of students, staff selection and development, curriculum, teaching and learning environment, methods of teaching, and assessment procedures. In addition, it was stressed that the training programme needed to take cognizance of both market place needs and employment possibilities.

While the limitations of the present study are recognized, the areas of future research arising out of those limitations provide an opportunity for those who are interested to contribute towards the dynamic development of an appropriate community psychology in South Africa.

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Reference to the role of the psychologist in South African society points to the focus of the present study on the wider social context rather than on traditional intrapsychic issues. Psychology has traditionally been concerned with understanding and working with the individual, either on her/his own or within a group or family context. This particular thesis is concerned with exploring the psychologist's role in the realms of the social context not traditionally frequented by the psychologist, particularly the political, economic, and cultural spheres. This includes a focus on all the social system levels (Reif, in Iscoe, 1977), namely, the individual, group or family, organization, institution, community, or national/state levels.

Before exploring the role of the psychologist in South African society, it becomes necessary to gain a brief picture of some specific characteristics of this society. The psychologist's role can only be adequately defined when placed within the particular realities that constitute present day South Africa; and even more so for the community oriented psychologist who chooses to respond to the wider social context.

### 1.1 SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

At the outset it needs to be emphasized that the reality of South Africa is a pluralistic one; conflicts being complex in nature, and differences in perceptions of reality resulting in various ways of interpreting and therefore responding to these conflicts (Anon, 1986). Accepting personal limitations and the censorship of reality relating to the present State of Emergency in South Africa, an attempt will be made to give an account of the present socio-political situation in this country. While this will be historically restricted to a current analysis, historical factors and present trends not limited to current realities, will be referred to.

South Africa is characterized by apparent control on the one hand - in the form of a very strong military presence and action,

and a great deal of turmoil on the other. This turmoil is characterized by violence predominantly in black areas of the country between the police/army and community members, and between community members themselves; as well as by general disruption within black educational institutions, industry and certain geographical communities.

The above mentioned situation of turmoil can be seen to be partly a reaction to general economic and other hardships, for example, high unemployment, rapid rises in cost of living, poverty, and malnutrition and other social diseases, (British Council of Churches Report (BCC), 1986; Catholic Institute for International Relations Report (CIIR), 1986). In addition to the predominantly economic factors referred to above, resistance to apartheid, that is the forced separation of and discrimination between groups based on ethnic identity, and all its practical implications for the black populations in South Africa, has been steadily growing since its inception by the Nationalist Government in 1948 (BCC, 1986; CIIR, 1986).

Resistance has revealed itself in the black educational institutions, characterized by regular boycotts and protests since the 1976 Soweto riots; the development of the United Democratic Front during 1983 (in response to the inauguration of the Tricameral Parliament); consumer boycotts, resistance to community councils; work stayaways; varied union action; the proliferation of new community organizations in response to various broad and specific issues; and the upsurge of sabotage and public violence, aimed at the Government and its collaborators; throughout the country.

Government response to the resistance reached a peak when the military entered the black townships in the Transvaal in September 1984, culminating in the eventual declaration of the State of Emergency in mid-1985 (BCC, 1986; CIIR, 1986; Foster, 1986). This governmental act resulted in the widening of repressive powers of the South African authorities. This included police and military presence and action in the black townships; press and other media constraints; bannings; detention without trial of thousands of children and adults, and general harassment aimed at repressing the democratic opposition

developing within the country.

In addition to a general awareness of the State of Emergency and its consequences, one needs to be more deeply informed about the various groupings and major forces involved in the present struggle in South Africa. This is considered to be crucial for the psychologist who wishes to enter that arena; naive activities being potentially harmful in this regard.

Political activism occurs on the parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary level, the latter having substantially developed over the last few years. Within the formal political arena one finds the Tricameral parliament, introduced in 1983, which consists of three separate Houses - for the so-called Coloureds, Indians, and Whites, - each being responsible for its 'own affairs'. This Constitution therefore creates a formal structure for separate development. Within each of these Houses are groups which are either in support of present governmental reforms, or to the left or right of it, politically speaking. While this parliamentary platform has traditionally been well supported by the white electorate of South Africa, the extra-parliamentary movement has been steadily growing, with more and more whites refusing to make use of their vote for a parliament which excludes the majority of the citizens of South Africa from participation (that is, black population). The representatives of the House of Representatives (Coloured) and the House of Delegates (Indians) are not considered by the community to be representative of their people, as was reflected in the very low polls in the 1983 elections.

Outside of the parliamentary platform one finds a number of groupings within the general resistance to apartheid in South Africa. It should be noted that most of the resistance groups mentioned below are considerably constrained under the State of Emergency regulations, making overt protest activities almost impossible. However, they continue to function in one way or another.

The banned African National Congress (ANC) is considered by many to be the leading force in the national liberation struggle (BCC, 1986; CIIR, 1986; Matiwana & Walters, 1986), based on the alliance of class forces amongst the oppressed. Its aims are "to

forge a broad non-racial movement of all democratic elements pledged to the overthrow of the Apartheid State" (Matiwana & Walters, 1986, p96) and recognizes the special role of the working class in this regard. It is based on the belief that the wealth and basic resources of South Africa should be at the disposal of all people in the country. The ANC's programme of demands are conceptualized in the Freedom Charter (1956) which calls for a democratic state in which the people control the land and wealth. The Freedom Charter has been adopted as a basic blue-print for the future democratic South Africa by a great number of groupings in this context, its participatory and non-racial approach forming the guiding principles for many in the general liberation struggle.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) has emerged as a major force in the resistance movement. It was formed in 1983 in response to the Tricameral Parliamentary structures initiated at that time. Its aims are "to unite all freedom-loving people who reject apartheid into one national united democratic front" (Matiwana & Walters, 1986). The broad organization houses a number of community organizations who, while having many differences, tend to support the Freedom Charter of the ANC.

In overt opposition to the specific movements described above is Inkatha, a Zulu cultural association formed by the Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in 1975 (CIIR, 1986). This movement is very powerful in the KwaZulu/Natal region. In contrast to the emphasis on participatory democracy and non-racialism of the previously mentioned groupings, Inkatha has been referred to as an "authoritarian ethnic force" (CIIR, 1986, p8; BCC, 1986). Inkatha espouses a policy of dialogue and collaboration and change through peaceful and constructive lines, but is well-known for its violent coercive methods (BCC, 1986; CIIR, 1986), often in collusion with the police in the repression of the UDF and other democratic organizations and unions.

A further strong, although at this point in time, relatively small movement in South Africa is the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), incorporating a number of small groupings such as AZAPO, NEUM, National Forum and various student groupings. Since 1976/77, when a number of BCM organizations were banned, black

nationalism developed an increased sophistication of analysis of exploitation, particularly in terms of its economic roots. The black worker has therefore become a central focus for the liberation struggle in South Africa. The overall philosophy of this movement could perhaps be encapsulated in AZAPO's aims "to conscientise, politicise and mobilise black workers through the philosophy of Black Consciousness in order to strive for their legitimate rights" (Matiwana & Walters, 1986). The philosophical emphasis is on psychological, cultural, and economic liberation, and is characterized by its distrust of whites' involvement in the broader liberation struggle. Within the movement however, are two basic positions - one which emphasizes the exclusion of whites, and the other based on a non-racial class analysis (CIIR, 1986).

Sharing a similar ideology as the BCM are a banned grouping called the Pan African Congress (PAC) who, while being a minority grouping in the overall liberation struggle, do have some influence in this regard. They are committed to the eradication of apartheid, and the process of self-determination on the basis of one person one vote. They view democracy as a change in land distribution and acceptance of African majority rule, and promote an African socialist democratic economy for South Africa (Azania). While the PAC and ANC have had serious differences in their approach to the struggle in South Africa, there have been some moves towards unity on certain issues (SACC, 1987).

Last, but certainly not least, is the presence of the black union movement which has shown an upsurge in its militant opposition to racial capitalism (capitalism and apartheid having become virtually synonymous in the oppression of blacks: CIIR, 1986). While most of the unions' activities have been focused on direct worker issues, their involvement in the wider political arena has become increasingly evident. The formation of the Congress of South African Unions (COSATU) in 1985, and its subsequent direct confrontations over political issues relating to the well-being of the workers, has resulted in a great deal of repression, both of individuals within the union and the union itself.

It becomes evident therefore that the resistance to apartheid

is not an undivided one. The major groupings referred to above, are often in conflict over a number of issues and in a variety of arenas. There is disagreement about who the true leaders are, although there is some evidence (Orkin, in BCC, 1986) that Nelson Mandela (ANC), Bishop Tutu, Allan Boesak (UDF), and Chief Buthelezi (Inkatha) have a certain amount of support, the majority it seems being behind the jailed Nelson Mandela. The struggle for political power therefore wages strongly, particularly between the ANC and Inkatha (in Natal region); and between certain BCM groupings and ANC/UDF groupings (BCC, 1986; CIIR, 1986). The differences between these movements are mainly over issues of white involvement in the liberation struggle in South Africa; the process of struggle (participatory democracy versus authoritarian approaches); and the particular vision of a new South Africa, relating to economic structures (for example, capitalism versus socialism).

While most of the political activism within the resistance to apartheid has been within the major movements described above, it would be an incomplete picture if the increasing involvement of white moderates in the struggle to dismantle apartheid were not mentioned. In this regard, groups of prominent business persons, academics, professionals, and many others have strongly protested present government reform activities, and have called for negotiations with all major groups in South Africa.

While a full account of this context is not possible within this thesis, a few general comments about South African conditions will be made to enable psychologists' responses to be more fully contextualized.

On the political front issues of unequal power distribution, oppression of certain groups by others, and the effects of the apartheid system on all citizens, are a reality for all. South Africa is presently undergoing enormous changes, with the future being both hopeful and terrifying to its inhabitants.

Economic factors, which are intertwined with political ones, also play a large role in determining the particular reality of South Africa. The enormous inequalities of material resources, where "wealth, income and ownership are concentrated heavily in the hands of the white minority" (CIIR, 1986, p15), results in a

large proportion of the black population suffering from the consequences of poverty. Unemployment (which is conservatively estimated at three million or 9%: CIIR, 1986) is also a source of great concern for many South Africans - black and white, but particularly for the working-class. Sanctions (which are being imposed by an increasing number of countries in opposition to the apartheid structures), while being supported by most people in the black resistance, further exacerbates the unemployment and therefore poverty conditions (CIIR, 1986). Cost of living is high, housing is scarce for the black population, and generally, current and future economic conditions for South Africa are bleak.

As a result of the general dissatisfaction with political structures in South Africa, black educational institutions have been in constant turmoil since 1976 when the first major boycotts and protests occurred. The last twelve years have shown regular upsurges of violence in educational institutions (between students/staff and the police), boycotts, protests, and a general disruption of daily educational activities. As a result, students have been exposed to a long period of disturbance, parent-child relationships have suffered, teachers and students have been dismissed, thousands of teachers and students have been detained, and as a result, thousands of young people have suffered a loss of formal education over the last few years.

In addition to the educational institutions which form a major part of the complex of cultural institutions in any society, a brief comment will be made on the cultural make-up of South Africa society. The term 'culture' in South Africa tends to denote 'ethnic groups', probably as a result of the apartheid policy which has emphasized cultural differences between different ethnic and language groups. As a result South Africa is described (by the government and others) as being a country of minorities; a multi-cultural context. The need to protect these varied cultures is emphasized by dominant ideology, and at present this forms the basis for the apartheid policy. The political-cultural interface is expressed in the forced separation of different cultural groups which characterizes the present policies of South Africa. While these values are upheld

by the government and many others in the country who have been socialized within the apartheid system, there is a general anti-apartheid feeling amongst the majority in South Africa. Certain movements (for example, ANC/UDF) overtly confront division on the basis of race and are working towards a non-racial South African identity. The focus on the development of separate cultural (ethnic) group identities is therefore not acceptable to those groupings.

The areas of health and welfare in South Africa are in similar crisis to that of other spheres. The inadequate, inaccessible (for many), inappropriate, and discriminatory services presently provided are under serious consideration by many concerned professionals in those fields. Family life is suffering on all fronts, for example, by the forced separation of families through the migratory labour system (an apartheid structure); estrangement between parents and children as a result of the education crisis; increased violence within the family as a result of factors such as unemployment (Berger & Lazarus, 1987); effects of detention and jail on families of political activists, the general effects of the present violence on children (Richman, 1986); etc., all point to the present state of family life for many South Africans at present.

Clearly the above picture of present day South Africa is not a complete and unbiased one. It does, however, point to a number of issues and realities which are certainly true for many South African citizens; and is an attempt to grasp some of the realities facing the psychologist in South Africa today. It should show us that "social and historical contexts cannot be ignored in attempting to understand individuals" (Foster, 1986, p50). It is within the context described above that the implications for the psychologist must be confronted; and therefore that the question of the role of the psychologist in South African society must be addressed.

## 1.2 PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

At present the role and activities of the the psychologist in South Africa are predominantly determined by her/his area of

specialization. The professional psychologist has the option of working within five areas which are registerable with the SAMDC.

1. Clinical psychology: where, through the diagnosis and treatment of emotional and behavioural problems, the psychologist helps people who are seriously disturbed.
2. Counselling psychology: where people with less serious problems are helped at an early stage, thereby preventing the development of serious problems.
3. Industrial/organizational psychology: where the psychologist works with work-related behaviour in industrial and other organizations.
4. Educational psychology: where the psychologist, within the educational setting, focuses on the development of the child and the school environment.
5. Research/academic psychology: where the psychologist is engaged in teaching and research activities, aimed at understanding human behaviour and mental processes in a variety of settings.

In addition to the specialities described above, there is a growing interest in applied areas such as neuropsychology, medical and health psychology, and community psychology. While these fields are not yet represented at the registration level, training and practice in these areas are presently available within the other registration categories. Of course, in the research/academic areas, fields such as social psychology, experimental psychology, developmental psychology, cross-cultural psychology, biological/physiological psychology, cognitive psychology, etc., are also receiving a fair amount of attention.

Within all the applied fields the psychologist tends to work primarily with individuals and small groups/families and to be engaged in the three major activities of research (minimal in the applied areas), assessment, and counselling/therapy (Bourne & Ekstrand, 1985; Lefton, 1982; Manganyi & Louw, 1986; Tape on 'careers/job opportunities for psychologists in South Africa, UCT, 1985).

While distinctions between specialities are made at the professional level for the purposes of registration with the Professional Board of the South African Medical and Dental

Council (SAMDC), it should be noted that, in practice, the overlap of activities is enormous. One can find clinical psychologists in schools; educational psychologists conducting therapy with families; industrial/organizational psychologists doing vocational guidance, and so on. While the present registration is predominantly based on description-according-to-setting, in practice, psychologists of all kinds are found in all settings. Although particular specialization of knowledge and skills are recognized within each of the applied fields, their vast areas of common knowledge and skills result in many psychologists in South Africa feeling that there should be one generic training and registration as 'psychologist' rather than a compartmentalization which is considered by some to be unnecessary and even destructive to the profession as a whole.

The population of psychologists in South Africa are predominantly white, middle class, male, and Afrikaans/English speaking. In addition, the majority are clinical in specialization. They presently serve predominantly white, middle class clients (Bassa & Schlebusch, 1984; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1984; SAMDC Register, 1985; Strebel, 1983; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986).

With regard to the professional bodies which coordinate psychological practice in South Africa at present, the Professional Board of the South African Medical and Dental Council (SAMDC) and the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) are the two main bodies. The former oversees the registration of all psychologists, and is responsible for the provision of adequate standards of training and practice within South Africa. PASA is a voluntary association, providing psychologists with membership to the association as a whole (focusing around an annual congress where psychologists from all parts of the country participate in presenting papers and debates) and to specific institutes relating to the five specialities/registration categories mentioned above. Within these institutes, issues relating to that particular specialist area are addressed, both in terms of training and practice. All applied psychologists are required to be registered with the SAMDC and the majority are presently also members of PASA. At

present however members from the 'left' and 'right' (politically speaking) are abdicating their membership of these associations due to ideological differences relating to the socio-political crises in South Africa. This move away from PASA and registration with the SAMDC, particularly by members who would be considered to be 'radical', appears to be on the increase. It is hypothesized that the tenuous thread that presently keeps psychologists from different ideological viewpoints within one professional association, is very thin at present. The move of other professional bodies, for example, medicine, law, and journalism, to divide over fundamental political differences, could become a reality for the South African psychology profession in the future.

### 1.3 THE CRISIS

Although the traditional role of the psychologist both within and outside of South Africa is recognized as being of value in a variety of ways, it is becoming increasingly evident to many psychologists in South Africa that the present practice of psychology in South Africa is inadequate (Dawes, 1985; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1984; Moll, 1983; Strumpfer, 1981; Swartz, 1986). The heightened level of political conflict in this country has highlighted the dilemmas of the practising professional and thrown many psychologists into a state of insecurity, confusion and self-doubt. Psychologists, together with other social scientists and helping professionals, are faced with very real role confusion in the face of the turmoil and rapid changes which are presently the reality of South Africa.

Dissatisfactions and criticisms of present practice include the views that

1. Psychology in South Africa is based almost exclusively on theory and research findings rooted in Western culture and therefore not relevant to a multi-cultural context.
2. It serves only a small proportion of the population - almost exclusively the white middle-class sector.
3. The humanistic approach prevalent in many areas of psychology results in the reduction of conflict between different groups

without addressing issues of oppression within the system. Industrial psychology in South Africa has received particular criticism for its role in favouring management and unwittingly supporting oppressive structures (Nzimande, 1984). In this regard, Moll (1983) refers to the innocent humanism inherent in the strategy of conflict resolution used by many psychologists, particularly in an industrial setting, where conflict is deflected while economic exploitation of workers is maintained.

4. The profession is unable to contribute meaningfully to a society which is faced with a number of serious social crises.

5. The focus on the individual at the expense of social determinants of human behaviour and the resultant ameliorative practice without at the same time examining and confronting underlying societal root causes of conditions, is not appropriate. Psychologists in South Africa have been criticized for their lack of critical analysis of the structural societal conditions which are at the root of many problems considered important to address (Dawes, 1985).

6. Psychology is seen to be maintaining and perpetuating an oppressive economic-political system.

7. Mental health services reflect broader class, race, and gender inequalities in the society.

(Bassa & Schlebusch, 1984; Buhrmann, 1977; Dawes, 1985 & 1986; Fullagar, 1984; Holdstock, 1981; Ivey, 1985; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1984; Moll, 1983; Nzimande, 1984; Psychology in Society Editorials, Vol 1, 1983 & Vol 5, 1986; Savage, 1979; Solomons, 1980; Steere, 1985; Strumpfer, 1981; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986; Swartz & Foster, 1984).

The growing emphasis on cross-cultural research and work in psychological circles in this country has been challenged for a number of reasons (Dawes, 1985; Nzimande, 1986; Swartz & Foster, 1984). While the need to contextualize South African mental illness within cultural and social factors is recognized, it is argued that it needs to be analyzed in a far broader way, noting that the members of the groups occupy different positions in South African society. Dawes (1985) identifies the major flaws in the present cross-cultural approach in South Africa as being its reification of African culture; the support of

different treatment; the oversimplification of the black situation, and an ignoring of power issues in intergroup relations. He argues that the above factors amount to a perpetuation of the apartheid ideology, saying that

the notion of 'cross-cultural' work easily obscures the power differential between the members of the different 'cultures'. It also mystifies the reader by suggesting that the central problem in this area is one of culture rather than domination, the former notion being central to apartheid ideology. (p57)

One could argue therefore that in response to the question of whose interests are being served by psychology in South Africa, the answer would be the apartheid/capitalist policies and structures perpetuated and maintained by the dominant power elite of South Africa (Dawes, 1985; Moll, 1983). Social scientists have in fact been labelled as 'the servants of power' (Baritz, in Webster, 1986; Cochrane, 1987), perpetuating middle class, capitalistic values in the interest of those in power. In this context, psychologists in South Africa have also been labelled as 'servants of apartheid' (Webster, 1986).

The feelings of dissatisfaction and role confusion expressed above have been evident in the psychology profession as a whole in South Africa. The fourth annual congress of PASA was devoted to the theme of the role of the psychologist in changing South Africa (PASA Fourth Annual Congress Programme, 1986), revealing an overwhelming concern for psychology's identity in a changing society. Numerous meetings with psychologists around the country (Appendix A, and thereafter) have further highlighted the confusion and concern on the part of many in this country. In addition to the mainstream professional response to the present socio-political context, a number of groups of 'progressive' (aligning themselves with the broader national democratic movement in South Africa) psychologists have expressed discontent with the present practice of psychology in this context, and have begun to explore alternative models as a result.

As an extension of the general dissatisfaction with the present practice of psychology in South Africa, the training of psychologists has received particular attention (Dawes, 1986; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986; Holdstock, 1981; Lazarus,

1986a; Manganyi, in Cordes, 1985; Manganyi & Louw, 1986; Moll, 1983; Psychology in Society editorial, 1986; Steyn, 1985; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986). Although the specifics of the criticisms levelled at the training of psychologists are diverse, they all point to a need to re-assess our training at every level. Dawes (1986) argues that

it seems crucial at this time for South African psychology Departments to reflect on their role in becoming more responsive in terms of curricula and research to their African context and to the needs of the majority of the citizens. At the same time they need to reflect on the degree to which their endeavours act directly or otherwise in the interests of the apartheid state and industrial capital. (p29)

#### 1.4 THE RESPONSE

Dissatisfaction with current psychological training and practice in South Africa has resulted in calls for a more appropriate social theory, socially relevant research, and a wider and more relevant role for psychologists in this context (Abramovitz, 1984; Dawes, 1985 & 1986; Gilbert, 1985; Ivey, 1985; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1984; Moll, 1983; Strumpfer, 1981). Psychologists have joined other academics and helping professionals in questioning their role both now and in a future South Africa, leading to much positive debate and activity around the 'restructuring' of psychology and the development of appropriate social services. Concerned psychologists of all specialities and ideologies are re-evaluating their current practice in response to the needs and demands of a changing society. This search for a relevant role is evident in recent literature (e.g. Anonymous, 1986; Dawes, 1985; Lazarus, 1985; Moll, 1983; Psychology in Society Editorial, 1983), as well as in developments within the broader psychology profession as revealed in various PASA activities (e.g. PASA Fourth Annual Congress, 1986) and alternative professional groupings such as the Organization for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA).

While the general concern and response of psychologists has been an extensive one throughout South Africa, these responses have differed considerably. Foster (1986) has referred to two

broad responses to the present socio-political crisis relating to issues of values within the psychology profession: one position being the argument that psychology as a science ought to remain neutral in relation to the power struggles and political wrangles; and the other position which argues that the only solution to the present crises lies in abandoning the present 'bourgeois' discipline and turning fully to political activism. Interviews with psychologists around the country during 1985 (Appendix A) further revealed the differences in responses of the psychology profession to the South African socio-political crisis. These differences were revealed in the ways in which problems were defined as well as how appropriate or relevant action was formulated. This diversity is clearly a reflection of the ideological differences inherent in the population of psychologists in South Africa, and within the wider context itself.

With regard to more specific responses to the present societal conflict, we will briefly look at the development of OASSSA, the development of the journal 'Psychology in Society', PASA, and the general interest in community psychology over the last few years.

In 1983 the Organization for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) was formed in Johannesburg (Vogelman, 1987). This has seen the beginning of a united and coordinated response on the part of progressive psychologists and other people involved in the social services who have established a forum within which to debate, organize, and formulate appropriate practical interventions. It is an organization which involves itself chiefly with issues and practices related to mental health care under conditions of repression (Swartz, 1986).

OASSSA's position is outlined in their statement of principles:

As a group we are committed to the mental health and social welfare of South Africa's people, and to the development of appropriate social services. We are aware that in South Africa there are specific economic political structures which contribute to most social and personal problems. Apartheid and economic exploitation provide the base for poor living conditions, work alienation and race and sex discrimination which are antithetical to mental health. Our commitment as social service workers demands that we continually expose the

effects of these conditions and participate in efforts to change the structures that underlie them. We are committed to working together with other democratic organizations which are involved in the same or similar efforts.

We need to identify and overcome the limitations which restrict our efforts. These include restrictive and unjust legislation, the isolation of the various mental health disciplines and the control of skills by a professional elite. In order properly to serve our community, we must work for a broad and unified discipline, for the sharing of knowledge and skills with the community at large and, ultimately, for an economically just and democratic society.

#### WE THEREFORE AIM TO

- unite social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and other social service workers who are interested in working towards appropriate social services in South Africa;
  - to examine and research the causes of social and personal problems as extensively and as rigorously as possible;
  - service and aid progressive organizations;
  - reduce disciplinary isolation and define and work towards a unified discipline of social service;
  - provide a forum for the discussion of existing social services and protest actively against these where they are inappropriate;
  - share our knowledge and skills as widely as possible through workshops, conferences, publications, the establishment of a resource centre and involvement in the community;
  - develop models of appropriate social service and assist wherever possible with their implementation.
- (Vogelman, 1987, p29,30)

At present psychologists within this framework are struggling, with greater or lesser degrees of success, to adapt bourgeois theories and practices to the situation here in South Africa (Turton, 1986). On the practical front specific responses include individual and group counselling of victims of the apartheid/capitalistic structures (e.g. work with detainees and their families); community education in the form of, for example, workshops, public talks, and press statements, on issues such as stress management, effects of the present political crisis and detention on children, apartheid and mental health, etc.; legal work in cases requiring expert witness for victims of the present political crisis; community research; and internal or self-education, considered a crucial aspect of appropriate practice in present day South Africa.

On the theoretical front, ongoing debate has been stimulated through the development of an alternative, progressive journal of psychology, Psychology in Society, which was initiated in 1983. Theoretical issues relating to the dialectic relationship between psychology and South African society, as well as practical issues relating to the development of an appropriate role for the psychologist in South Africa, have been extensively discussed.

There are therefore a number of individuals and groups who are actively involved in trying to develop an alternative practice of psychology in South Africa, one which is clearly committed to a denouncement of present oppressive structures, and the development of a psychology that is both self-critical to its role in South Africa, and sensitive to the needs of the specific context in which it finds itself.

While there is a great deal of alternative psychology activity on the part of psychologists who are 'progressive' in orientation, theirs is certainly not the only response of the profession to its identity crisis in South Africa. Developments within the broader psychology profession have revealed a great deal of activity in the attempt to seek alternatives to conventional psychology practice in South Africa. This has included an upsurge of academic work in the area of the role of the psychologist in South Africa; in the development of alternative training models for psychologists of all specialities, resulting in new emphases on perspectives such as the community psychology approach, critical psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and prevention; and in alternative practices on the part of individual psychologists in the profession. These practices would include activities such as industrial relations and conflict-resolution between groups; attempts to influence public policy through consultation and relevant research; public statements against the general violence prevalent in South Africa; public education aimed at (a) raising the awareness of the public to certain psychological issues, and (b) disseminating skills that would facilitate prevention of problems in living, for example, parent training, teacher training, problem-solving and other life skills training, etc.; (c) work with handicapped groups within community

settings; etc. While the efforts, on the part of a number of psychologists from diverse ideological stances, to explore an alternative practice of psychology in South Africa must be recognized, Foster's (1986) caution in this regard should be noted:

In this absence of clear vision of appropriate practices, it seems that only through the cut and thrust of involvement within the struggles of a developing democracy, will the 'isolated' discipline of psychology begin to carve out the foundations of a practice which contributes towards the real, not imagined, social arrangements in which full human lives may be lived. (p65)

The link between psychology and society within South Africa is illuminated by the present upsurge of interest in community psychology within this context. The present identity crisis being experienced in many parts of the profession is directly related to the present socio-political climate, where the role of the psychologist in contemporary and future South Africa is under question. Amidst the crises and turmoil, psychologists are looking for ways to apply their knowledge to present day social problems.

Louw's (1986) historical analysis of the development of psychology in South Africa during the first half of this century highlights the process whereby professionals have transformed societal conflict into a field of psychological practice. In this regard Louw (1986) argues that the growth of fields of practice can only be understood when placed in context, stating that

at certain points in time problems would arise in society, for whose solutions concrete demands would be made on experts. Parts of the discipline will become relevant at the level of the practical solution of problems that are socially defined.

... Psychologists would then intervene via the application of their knowledge in those societal areas. (p23)

In this way, he argues, professionals have transformed societal conflict into a field of psychological practice.

Louw's analysis (1986) reveals a clear link between major social problems of the time, and the specific developments within

psychology itself. Psychology, alongside other professions and sciences, responded to demands for solutions to these problems and intervened with an application of knowledge in those particular problem areas. During the first half of this century psychology steadily moved away from being purely an academic discipline to providing services in the form of various applied fields; the sub-discipline/applied fields of educational, industrial, clinical, and counselling psychology emerging from this. As a result the issue of professionalism became a major one. Related to the psychologists' participation in the medical field (1940's), the need to become registered became increasingly urgent. Through a process of voluntary registration in the early 1950's to enforced registration with the SAMDC in 1974, professionalism became entrenched. This control of members of the profession and protection of the profession itself, resulted in the decreased 'psychological' work of the para-professional or non-professional, a situation relevant for the consideration of community psychology in South Africa

One could argue that psychology's response to social problems at present is to develop a further applied field which responds specifically to issues and problems prevalent at present, that is, community psychology. A problem of concern arising out of this awareness relates to the issue of professionalism inherent in this trend towards community psychology. Is this upsurge of interest in the role of psychology in the wider socio-political arena a further exercise of control and influence in society; a further removal of everyday problems and solutions into the realm of the expert and therefore away from dependence on indigenous resources? Louw (1986) comments that

by highlighting the value of their skills in the service of society as a whole, the experts are staking claims to public power and influence in society. (p27)

To what extent is the motivation to develop community psychology in South Africa a wish to extend professional control and validity, or a commitment towards contributing to social change and a future just society? Concerns about oneself and others are probably both present in the increasing interest in the community

approach in South Africa. What is important however is a need to confront these questions honestly if one is going to address the issue of an appropriate community psychology within this context.

### 1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of the present study is to contribute to the development of a model of practice in psychology that would be appropriate to the South African context. While the scope of this touches on all present specialities in psychology, the emphasis is on exploring the relevance of the community psychology approach within this context. The role of the psychologist in the wider social context is therefore emphasized. A further but related aim is to consider the implications of the above for the training of psychologists in South Africa.

Specific objectives identified as necessary for achieving the above aims include the following

1. An exploration of the ethical question of the responsibility of the psychologist to respond to the wider context in which individuals find themselves.
2. An in-depth look at the present and desired role of the applied psychologist in society.
3. An overview of how community psychology practice and training has been developed in other countries.
4. An exploration of the relevance of the community psychology approach for South Africa.
5. A discussion of the fundamental theoretical issues and relationships central to fulfilling the aim of developing an appropriate of practice.
6. Some suggestions for an appropriate community psychology for South Africa.
7. An exploration of the implications of this for the training of psychologists in South Africa.

In order to provide a clearer focus for the present study, it becomes necessary to define key concepts used and being pursued. With this in mind, we will now look at how the terms 'psychologist', 'role', 'appropriate', 'community psychology',

and 'Critical perspective' are defined within the context of the present thesis.

### Psychologist

For the purposes of this study the term 'psychologist' broadly refers to all psychologists in South Africa who are registered as 'psychologist' with the SAMDC as well as those who have received training in registerable areas but who have chosen, for one reason or another, not to register. This includes the clinical, counselling, educational, industrial/organizational, and academic/research psychologist. The term 'psychologist' is therefore used to refer to all practising psychologists, irrespective of their particular speciality. However, when appropriate, specialities will be referred to. The reason for focussing on all psychologists rather than just one group is based on the recognition of the commonality of the role played by the psychologist in society while acknowledging that within that broader role, there are clearly more specific roles and activities, usually relating to specific settings within which the psychologist finds her/himself. In addition, when considering the community psychology approach, it becomes evident that this perspective cuts across specialities, and is therefore potentially appropriate to all.

### Role

'Role' is a term which includes numerous meanings (Dictionary of the Social Sciences), many of which are central to the focus of this study. This includes a reference to the part meant to be played by a person; the dynamic aspect of status; a set of rights and duties with further characteristics which go beyond occupational requirements; the prescribed ways of behaving attached to a position; the obligations attached to a position; attitudes, values and behaviour prescribed for, and rights attached to, a status; a set of norms and expectations attached to a position; the actual behaviour of a status occupant; an individual organized system of participation; the enactment of

rights and duties attached to a status; a personal variant in carrying out the requirements of a particular status; any position whether or not institutionalized; and the part played by a player in a heuristic game.

The above definitions clearly include issues of responsibility and ethical behaviour, professional identity, broad role definitions relating to attitudes, values and behaviour, position, and specific activities. It therefore touches on a number of issues relevant to the relationship between the psychologist and society.

The traditional definition of role is brought into question by critical theorists (e.g. Henriques et al, 1984; Jacoby, 1975). The major critique relates to a definition which assumes a core person who is an actor taking on or performing the roles. Jacoby (1975) critiques this definition or understanding of role, emphasizing that "people not only assume roles, they are roles" (p68 - my italics). It becomes evident therefore that the very definition of role is dependent upon the social theory being held and must be addressed within that context.

With regard to the question of the psychologist's responsibility to react to wider social issues, it becomes clear that ethical issues such as one's duty or moral obligation become important questions (Bender, 1979; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Steere & Wassenaar, 1986; Strumpfer, 1981). Furthermore, the issue of accountability becomes a central focus. Abramovitz (1984) in his glossary defines responsibility as "being able to be called to account (to person, for things); ... morally accountable for actions" (p191). In this regard, the question of whom the psychologist serves is a fundamental one (Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Ingleby, 1974). Ingleby (1974) points out that both the applications and the forms of knowledge of psychology serve particular interests, and that the answers to the key questions of 'for whom does the psychologist work?' and 'what interests does he further?' very clearly reveal the role that psychology's theories, research, and practice play in society.

The question of accountability is a key one in the present study, and ultimately defines what is considered to be an appropriate community psychology in South Africa.

It should be noted that the exploration of the role of the psychologist in the South African context in the present study focuses on two aspects. Firstly, the focus is on providing a self-critique of the role that the psychologist is presently playing in South African society, both wittingly and unwittingly. The emphasis here is on identifying the ideological role performed by the psychologist in South Africa, that is, the unconscious assumptions, attitudes, values, and behaviour that typify the psychologist's role in this context. Secondly, the emphasis is on looking at the potential, constructive role that could be played by the psychologist who wishes to focus on addressing social issues and become more directly accountable to society.

### Appropriate

Concepts such as 'appropriate', 'relevant', and 'socially responsible' are terms which cannot avoid reflecting a particular ideology or worldview (Dawes, 1986; Masters, 1984; Swartz, 1986). They need careful definition for the purposes of clear usage and interpretation of meaning. It is, in fact, the central purpose of the present study to explore the particular meaning of these central concepts and to emerge with recommendations of how these terms should be used to define a community psychology in South Africa.

While these meanings will be clarified within the process of the present study, and their relationship to my personal view and therefore theoretical biases, made clear, a broad definition of the term 'appropriate' for the purposes of the present study will be briefly attempted. Within this context therefore the term is used to denote

1. An indigenous community psychology for South Africa, the realities of this particular context defining how it is interpreted in terms of theory, research, and action.
2. A community psychology that is sensitive and responsive to issues that are inherent in this context.
3. An identification of clear priorities arising out of an understanding of major issues in South Africa.

## Community Psychology

The community psychology division 27 of the American Psychological Association has defined this approach as one which seeks to broaden the perspective of applied psychology to include not only the individual, but also the relationship between the person and her/his social environment and the ecological interaction between settings and systems. It acknowledges that problems in living may be most effectively alleviated and prevented by changing the environment or system in which the individual exists. Prevention at the level of social change is therefore emphasized (APA, Div 27 Statement of Aims, 1984).

A recent pamphlet produced by Division 27 (1987) states that

Division 27 is interested in ... prevention ... innovative community mental health services ... social action ... methods for extending services ... competency building ... social support ... social systems analysis and modification ... ecological models and intervention ... and more.

In the context of the present study the term 'community psychology' refers to an applied psychological practice, going beyond the traditional curative and individual-orientated practice of psychology. It is a practice which focuses on the role of the psychologist in the processes related to the transformation of society. In contrast to traditional roles of the psychologist, the community psychologist enters the socio-economic-political arena, intervening in a way that is hoped to contribute towards constructive social change in society. The focus of this thesis is therefore on identifying the broad role and specific activities that can be pursued by a psychologist wishing to contribute directly to social change in South Africa.

## Critical Perspective

The approach adopted in the development of an appropriate community psychology in this thesis is a 'Critical' one. In this context, this refers to neo-Marxist theoretical perspectives. 'Critical theory', which developed out of the Frankfurt School in

the early part of this century and which has been comprehensively developed by Jurgen Habermas in recent years, is used as a springboard for exploring the relevance of a Critical approach to community psychology. However, it should be noted that this does not infer an acceptance of this approach as the most appropriate within the neo-Marxist debates around the key theoretical issues forming a foundation for community psychology. Other Critical perspectives espousing a more structuralist approach are also considered to provide important insights and guidelines in this regard. A 'Critical' perspective in this context therefore refers to a number of Critical perspectives arising out of the various debates within a broad neo-Marxist approach.

### 1.6 PERSONAL LOCATION

The role of values in science has been debated by various people within the social sciences. For the moment the assumption that science and applied science are not value-neutral is taken as a starting point. It is acknowledged that the biases in this study are revealed in the overall choice of the focus; in the definition of key concepts, for example, appropriate, community, etc.; in the decision to look at some theoretical frameworks and not others; in the methods employed to explore the research question; in the issues emphasized for discussion; and so on. Accepting this, the next step is to address the question of what one does with these inevitable biases and inclinations. In this regard it has been argued (Goodstein & Sandler, 1978; Howard, 1985; Rappaport, 1977) that the professional/scientist is required to examine her/his values and then to present them clearly or explicitly so that all concerned may not be deceived. With this in mind, the purpose of this section is to briefly identify my own values and interests as they pertain to the focus of this study. In the light of that, the reader can place the work within a particular context.

My own historical development (in terms of issues relating to this study) is pertinent to understanding why community psychology and not another aspect or practice of psychology has become a focus. Furthermore, this development or particular

socialization process has a direct bearing on why I have chosen to use a Critical perspective as a basis for developing an appropriate theory and practice for community psychology in this context. It is to the more salient parts of this socialization process that I will refer, insofar as they illuminate important issues about both the possibilities and problems inherent in pursuing a community approach.

Firstly, it is recognized that my particular location as a white, middle-class female in the South African context has had a pervading influence on my identify-formation. However, while most of my childhood was what one might call a 'normal' socialization of a white, middle-class female South African, exposure in my late teens to a relatively radical interpretation of Christianity (primarily through a lengthy and deep involvement in the now banned Christian Institute) exposed me to experiences beyond my own class and race. Direct exposure and involvement with black working class people coupled with the influence of the 1960's and 70's civil rights movement of the USA, resulted in a zealous commitment to change in South Africa. This commitment was primarily to the development of a country where all people would be treated with justice. As part of the Christian Institute in Cape Town from 1970 until its banning in 1977 (along with 17 other organizations) I was exposed to the black consciousness movement as well as the womens liberation movement. During that time, when I participated in the 'change' process as an activist/non-professional community educationist, I felt the need for further training to equip me to be more effective in my community activities. My aim and motivation for entering university, therefore, was to build on my practical experiences in the community context, integrating academic studies for the purposes of improving action on the ground. (I mention this specifically because I believe that the motivation for entry into the psychology profession has a major impact on how the socialization that follows is integrated and utilized in the final analysis.) After some years of study through a correspondence univeristy (UNISA), where I pursued my interests in psychology and education, I reached the point of having to decide which aspect of the psychology profession I should pursue.

It was at this point that I realized that throughout my university career, I had kept psychology and my political activities separate. I had not been exposed to any approach which showed any connections between the two. When faced with having to choose a career in psychology (at masters level), I found that I could not pursue any of the traditional specializations as they did not address the individual-social relationship in a manner that was congruent with my experiences. Soon thereafter I was accidentally introduced to community psychology. For the first time, I felt that there was an approach to applied psychology which attempted to address the individual-social relationship in a way that both aspects of this relationship were taken seriously, and that the interface constituted the domain of the applied psychologist. It was at that point that the beginnings of the present study emerged.

This brief historical account is presented for the major purpose of identifying a particular socialization process which, I believe, played a major role in my present position in psychology. Because of unusual exposures for a South African (intimate exposure to other races and classes); because of my particular motivation to enter university studies (to become a better activist); and because of my long-distance relationship with the university training me to be a psychologist, my socialization as a white, middle-class psychologist was 'incomplete' in the normal sense. This issue will be raised again when considering the training of psychologists in South Africa, as I will argue that the development of an appropriate community psychologist is dependent, to some extent, on a breaking through of the normal socialization process, both in South Africa in general, and in the psychology profession itself.

The decision to use a Critical perspective as a basis for exploring an appropriate community psychology is linked to my past experiences (some of which are briefly alluded to above) and the values arising out of that. By values I mean those fundamental assumptions and guiding principles which inform my everyday actions. In this regard, it is perhaps important to identify some of these: (a) an activist view of human agency while recognizing that individuals are fundamentally socially

constituted; (b) a concern for issues relating to all levels of oppression; (c) a respect for diversity and differences; (d) the need to make partisan/value stands; (e) the need for self-reflection and critique; and (f) a belief in a collective philosophy which takes seriously the needs and goals of individuals. These are all fundamental assumptions which influence the way community psychology is interpreted and practiced. I would probably be seen to straddle the radical-liberal positions, on the one hand upholding liberal values such as freedom, justice, human rights, respect for others' points of view, the need for self-determination, and the belief that individuals do have some control over their lives and can therefore effect change in society. On the other hand, the marxist view of the individual as being socially constructed is considered to be an important one, pointing to the limits of human agency and autonomy stressed by the liberal approach.

It is evident therefore that my favouring of a Critical approach is an expression of values which seek to address the individual-society and the area of social change in a way that takes seriously the dialectic nature of this relationship. Furthermore, it is an approach which attempts to bring together the 'scientific' and the 'political' in a comprehensive and integrated manner: an approach suited to an 'activist' looking for more sophisticated ways of approaching social change in this country. However, the suitability of the Critical approach to adequately address these issues is offered as an hypothesis. It is the purpose of the theoretical section of this thesis to explore this hypothesis, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the critical approach to provide an adequate and appropriate framework for pursuing community psychology in South Africa.

### 1.7 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

While the major aim of the present study is to contribute to the development of a community psychology practice that would be appropriate to the South African context, with a particular emphasis on the community psychology perspective (chapter 5); and on the implications for the training of psychologists in this

regard (chapter 6); it was considered necessary to provide a firm basis for this by (a) identifying the particular context in which this professional exploration is being conducted (sections on South African society and Psychology in South Africa in chapter 1); (b) exploring how psychologists in other contexts/perspectives have addressed these questions (chapters 2 and 6); and (c) eliciting the opinions of others about the relevance of the community psychology approach for South Africa, and generally, the role of the psychologist in this broader social context (chapter 3).

In order to adequately address the issue of community psychology practice, a brief theoretical exploration was also considered necessary (chapter 4). In this regard it should be noted that the purpose of this section is not to offer an appropriate theoretical foundation for a South African community psychology. Rather, the aim is to identify and briefly discuss the major theoretical issues which need to be addressed; identify the theoretical foundations of my own personal perspective on community psychology; explore the potential of a Critical approach as an appropriate framework; and suggest ways in which an appropriate framework could be developed.

The decision to investigate the community psychology approach in relation to the role of the psychologist in South African society is based on the understanding that it is an applied area which specifically aims to explore the role of the psychologist in the broader social context. It is acknowledged that other perspectives could have been pursued. In this regard, it is recognized that the broader question of the role of the psychologist in South Africa is being explored by many other people, in varied ways. This thesis is one contribution to the wider attempt to find an appropriate place for the psychologist in a rapidly changing and violently torn South Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

### 2.1 WHY COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY?

As outlined in previous discussion an exploration of the relevance of the community psychology approach for South Africa is one attempt to address the professional identity crisis facing South African psychologists. It is part of a broad attempt to look for more appropriate models of psychological practice in this context. This includes the development of more appropriate social theories which could act as a foundation for psychological interventions.

The question of the role of the psychologist in South Africa can be and is approached in a number of ways. The choice to explore the relevance of the community psychology approach in this regard is not based on a belief that it is the most appropriate approach. Rather, it is based on the hypothesis that it could offer some useful suggestions for models of practice that would address some of the pressing issues facing psychologists and South Africans generally. An overview of the origins and development of the community psychology approach in the USA will highlight the similarities in terms of issues facing psychologists, particularly in terms of the search for a meaningful role in a society in crisis. This suggests that there may be some lessons to be learnt from experiences in that context, both from the weaknesses and strengths that have been identified.

It should be noted that it is not the purpose of this thesis to import an American model. However, the search for an indigenous response does not preclude reference to and reflection upon other country's attempts to address similar issues. What is important is that one's attempt to develop an appropriate approach within this country does not uncritically accept any models developed in other contexts. In addition one should not only rely on reflections of what other people have done. An exploration of appropriate models within this context is also required. This thesis has taken this requirement very seriously,

both in terms of its empirical exploration (chapter 3) and in its emphasis on praxis.

## 2.2 OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

### Community Psychology in the United States of America: An Historical Overview

In the 1960's when the USA was undergoing social turmoil and rapid change, many psychologists were concerned about their role in that society. They were faced with an increasing awareness of the impact of social forces on the individual, and with the inequality of the distribution of mental health services to members of the community. As a result of discontent with existing psychological practice, which was curative and 'individual' orientated and generally inaccessible to many Americans, a group of psychologists (predominantly clinical in speciality) came together in 1965 to discuss an alternative approach, one which would address the social issues prevalent at that time and provide accessible services to the community. The issue of the training of psychologists in this regard formed a focus for the meeting. The field of community psychology was thus born (Rappaport, 1977).

### Aims, Values, and Assumptions of Community Psychology

Community psychology Division 27 of the American Psychological Association has outlined its aims as being

to explore the relationship between individuals and their community environments through theory, research and practice;

To promote the application of social and behavioral science for the well-being of people in their communities; and

To encourage thought and participation in innovative programs that promote human effectiveness.

(1987 Pamphlet)

Bender (1976) has described community psychology as an approach which is concerned about a larger role for psychology on the social problems of the day, attempting to fuse the psychological

and sociological/political traditions. It draws on various disciplines in its attempt to understand the social context in which the individual is situated and in order to implement effective data-based interventions. Its emphasis is therefore on all three aspects of the discipline: theory, research, and practice, attempting to create a synthesis between these.

Because of its interdisciplinary nature, many people are confused about the specific professional territory of community psychology. Although separation of this approach from sociology or other social sciences, for example, would be considered as counterproductive to the aims of community psychology, it could perhaps be pointed out that it is an approach which differs from most other social sciences in that it is both theoretical and applied in its approach, and is specifically 'psychological' in nature. It differs from other psychology sub-disciplines in that it specifically focuses, in theory and practice, on the relationship between the person and the (social) environment, and intentionally acts in the broader social context. Having made these distinctions it becomes necessary to emphasize that within other disciplines and psychology sub-disciplines, there are many professionals approaching their work with a similar perspective, and acting in similar ways. While the thin line dividing the helping professions and social sciences may cause concern for many who wish to protect their professional territory, Bender's (1976) comment that the society that so many social scientists are trying to serve values the doing of real jobs more than it does the identification of professional territoriality, is pertinent.

It should perhaps be pointed out that for many in the USA and elsewhere, community psychology is a perspective rather than a discipline, an attitude rather than a body of knowledge (Rappaport, 1984). In this regard therefore it can be adopted by any psychologist, affecting the particular way in which s/he practices within her/his speciality.

Perhaps one of the distinctive features of community psychology is that it is overtly value-based. While it is not easy to identify a unified value-framework within this approach, which is why multiple models have developed (Rappaport, 1984),

there do appear to be some major values which characterize the field. According to Rappaport, the hallmark of community psychology is in fact its self-consciousness about its values.

The overall aims of community psychology as described above reveal the following overt emphasises: a focus on the individual-society/environment relationship within an ecological framework; prevention; an emphasis on social change; an emphasis on competency building in the community; provision of accessible and innovative community mental health services; social action; social support; and a synthesis of theory, research, and practice.

Values arising out of these aims include the following major emphases:

1. Ecological perspective (to be discussed in more detail below): which emphasizes the understanding of the individual within her/his context, and views the individual-society relationship in an interactional manner (Heller et al, 1984).
2. Prevention: with an emphasis on primary prevention, which concerns itself with preventing problems before they have had an opportunity to occur. Prevention approaches tend to be either person-centered or environment centered; the former being an emphasis on developing individual strengths and competencies, and the latter focussing on the reduction of environment stressors (Heller et al, 1984).
3. Empowerment: which, in contrast to the medical preventative approach which focuses on pathology, moves away from a deficit towards a competency framework. It focuses on identifying and utilizing present competencies and resources in the community and enhancing possibilities for people to control their lives. Poor functioning is viewed as being a result of social structure and lack of resources. It is argued that people therefore need to gain access to resources in order to control their own lives (Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977 & 1981).

The empowerment perspective challenges inequality and states that it can only be overcome by altering imbalances in wealth and power. (Serrano-Garcia, 1984, p174)

4. Professional-client collaboration / citizen participation:

The empowerment approach of community psychology raises the question of role relationships to dependent people and requires a breakdown of the typical psychologist-client relationship.

Empowerment suggests that the two work as partners, that both act as resources for the understanding and solutions of problems (Rappaport, 1981). Citizen participation in community action is therefore emphasized (Heller et al, 1984).

5. Oppressed/powerless groups: Community psychology has frequently espoused its commitment and accountability to socially devalued, disadvantaged or powerless groups in society (Appendixes B & C; Davidson II, 1986; Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977; Serrano-Garcia, 1984).

6. Social action: Relevant to the above is the concern with inequities. Social action aimed at facilitating oppressed groups to organize and place demands in relation to resources is therefore considered to be important. The goal of this action is usually a shift in power relations in order to ensure more equitable distribution of resources (Appendixes B & C; Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977 & 1981; Serrano-Garcia, 1984).

7. Social policy: In recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on the role of psychology/community psychology in the realm of public policy and government (Bird, 1984; British Psychological Society, 1984; De Leon et al, 1984; Goodstein & Sandler, 1978; Heller et al, 1984; Kraut & Duffy, 1984; Marriage, 1985; Masters, 1984; Pion & Lipsey, 1984; Rickel, 1985; Russell, 1984; Sarason, 1984; Seidman, 1986; Shinn, 1986). While limitations of the psychologist's present insights and skills are very clearly recognized, many are feeling that primary prevention at the level of structural change can be fruitfully served by attempting to influence policy.

8. Action research: The need for research that is both theoretically sound and socially useful has been increasingly emphasized in recent years (Appendixes B & C; Division 27 Pamphlet, 1987; Heller et al, 1984; Kelly, 1983 & 1985; Pion & Lipsey, 1984; Repucci, 1986; Shinn, 1986). The value of research as a tool for change has therefore been stressed. In addition the question of research accountability (to the community) and the research process, has undergone significant

change (Appendix C; Kelly, 1983, 1985 & 1986).

9. Diversity: Community psychology is particularly characterized by its wide-angle lens in respect to differences in values and modes of operating (Attneave, 1984; Rudd & Engquist, 1987). Diversity is supported in the way in which problems are viewed - a multi-level approach being favoured; in approach to different cultural groups; in the development of different models for understanding and responding to problems; and in the acceptance and exploration of paradoxes and need for a paradigmatic dialectic in order to understand complex problems and provide divergent solutions (Appendixes B & C; Rappaport, 1981 & 1984).

10. Cultural relativity and diversity: The value of diversity is specifically reflected in the emphasis on cultural relativity and diversity (Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977, 1984 & 1986; The Community Psychologist Vol 19, 1986; Thomas, 1984). This refers to an individual's and group's right to be different, yet to have equal access to resources in society. Rappaport (1984) states that community psychology

calls for multiple criteria for success and competence, equitable rather than status quo distribution of resources, and multiple views of reality (cultural pluralism). (p210)

Watts (1986) refers to the integration of the value of cultural relativity and diversity through three models: (a) the socio-political perspective, where cultural minorities are viewed in the larger political/economic context and interventions are aimed at empowering powerless populations to address issues of oppression; (b) the cross-cultural perspective, where the emphasis is on an understanding of cultural and ethnic differences, and interventions tend to focus on, for example, counselling within different cultures, with socio-political dynamics being de-emphasized; and (c) the ecological perspective which is neither political nor person-centered but rather focuses on understanding characteristics and resources in the environment which sustain and affirm cultural identity, and emphasizes the preservation of cultural diversity.

11. Sense of community: The development of a sense of community

is seen as a major aim for many within community psychology (Heller et al, 1984; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sarason, 1974). McMillan & Chavis (1986) define sense of community as being

a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together. (1986, p9)

12. Self-reflection and critique: Within the community psychology approach there is an emphasis on professional self-critique, both within the specific field of community psychology and within the broader profession of psychology itself (Appendix C; Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1984; Serrano-Garcia, 1986). An attitude of self-reflection on the role of the psychologist in society is therefore valued in this approach.

Community psychology has been noted for its influence on facilitating a paradigm shift within psychology, for providing a framework for reframing questions, thinking about problems in new ways, and allowing new solutions to emerge (Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977). Its emphasis has been to move away from person or victim blame (Ryan, 1971) towards an understanding of the individual within an ecological framework. This perspective focuses on the relationship of the individual and the environment, and provides guiding principles for a practice that addresses change at all levels. The ecological perspective is based on the general systems approach which emphasizes the need to take all system levels into account in theory, research, and practice. Some of the major characteristics of the systems approach in this context are: the interdependence of levels and components of the system and therefore inter-relatedness amongst components of social problems and concerns; that systems function according to rules; an emphasis on wholeness and complexity of a situation; that systems resist change and attempt to maintain themselves; and that some parts of the system have more influence than others.

The ecological perspective developed by community psychologists in the USA is based on four major principles which facilitate both understanding and action: the principles of

interdependence, cycling of resources, adaptation, and succession (Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977). We will briefly look at these principles, noting how they guide the practice of community psychologists.

1. Interdependence: The point made here is that components of a situation affect each other and change in any one component affects the others as well as the system as a whole. For practice this means that one must intervene at multiple levels; that an understanding of the links between the parts must be gained before intervening; and therefore, that the consequences of a change effort must be anticipated.

2. Cycling of resources: The principle here is that the transfer of resources is important for functioning; that resources are distributed via rules (norms); that a system creates, develops and utilizes new resources in a change process; and that interventions modify the distribution of resources. For practice this means that the psychologist must understand the resources, roles, and rules for distribution in a particular setting; must look at how roles can be changed in order to redistribute existing resources; and mobilize and help in the process of resource redistribution.

3. Adaptation: The basic principle here is that every environment requires specific adaptation skills. This means that one must assess the adaptation skills required for a changed situation, and then strengthen existing resources and help to develop others to facilitate the adaptation process in a changing environment.

4. Succession: Here the principle is that change is an orderly process; that it results from the modification of the environment by the community; and culminates in the establishment of a stable ecosystem. The emphasis here is on the fact that change is a continuous process. In practice this means that the direction of natural or existing change processes must be taken into account; that one can anticipate change; and that a time perspective (particularly a historical view) is necessary for full understanding of a situation.

In conclusion, the ecological perspective, central to the community psychology approach, views the individual in context;

has an interactional view of the individual-social relationship (Heller et al, 1984); emphasizes the need for multiple-level analysis and action; and builds on an understanding of the process of change to exercise social change. It is therefore evolutionary or developmental in its approach to social change.

It should be noted that while the ecological perspective is a very popular theoretical framework in the USA, diverse theoretical frameworks are used to enable the community psychologist to understand and intervene.

### Models

As a result of the diversity of approaches within community psychology, a number of models form the basis for analysis and intervention (Elias, 1985; Mann, 1978; Rappaport, 1977). These tend to fall into either a person- or environment-centered approach (Elias, 1985). The person-centred approach focuses on the development of strengths in the individual through, for example, stress management, reduction of vulnerability through rehabilitative therapy, improvement of coping skills, increase of perceived support and development of self-esteem. The environment or community-centered approach emphasizes the reduction of environmental stressors and harmful factors, and the improvement of socialization practices and social support structures; the value of empowerment being a central focus.

Mann (1978) has identified four major models, namely, community mental health, organizational, social action, and ecological models. While these specific models are not often referred to in recent literature, community psychologists do appear to be operative within one or more of those frameworks. The emphasis in recent papers does appear to stress the need to work in a multi-level manner, with the emphasis being on complementarity at all levels and within different frameworks (Elias, 1985).

For the purposes of future reference (in this study) a brief overview of these models will be given. The four models tend to differ in both analysis/theoretical orientation, and often in methods of intervention utilized.

1. Community Mental Health: Community psychologists working within this approach tend to operate from a prevention paradigm, relating to the medical model usage of this term. The overall aim of this approach appears to be to help the individual to adjust and change; the emphasis still being individualist in nature. The issue of service delivery is important in this framework, with an emphasis on providing mental health services that are accessible to all. Psychological practices that are prevalent within this approach include crisis intervention, consultation, training, and the development of community mental health centres.

2. Organizational Model; This framework emphasizes group work, with communication and personal growth being key values. Democratic participation of all members is also emphasized. To-date, this approach has been predominantly management-orientated but some attempts have been made to make this approach more relevant to unions, community organizations, etc. (Keys & Frank, 1986; Shinn, 1986).

3. Social Action: In contrast to the two previous models which still tend to be individualistic in orientation, albeit within a family, group, or organization, the social action model focuses on social/structural change. It's approach is usually 'bottom-up', the empowerment of oppressed people to gain access to resources being a key focus. The participation of the people in the process of change is emphasized. Justice, particularly in the area of distribution of resources, and therefore a focus on social issues is central to this approach. Issues of power and oppression are particularly important within this approach. Within this perspective, a political/economic view of society tends to be favoured. Psychological practice would include community organization, political activism, public education, action research, and advocacy.

4. Ecological Model: Within this perspective a systems view of the individual-environment relationship is usually adopted, further supplemented by the ecological principles described above. Multi-level analysis and intervention is emphasized and an evolutionary or developmental view of change adopted. Activities of psychologists working within this perspective tend

to include activities such as systems analysis, programme planning, and programme evaluation.

While the community mental health model has been included in the overall umbrella community psychology approach, and while the majority of psychologists calling themselves 'community psychologists' in the USA tend to operate within the community mental health framework, some writers have overtly distinguished between community mental health and community psychology (Goodstein & Sandler, 1978; Heller et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1984). Heller et al (1984) have described community mental health as being a predominantly individualistic health model, mainly addressing the issue of delivery of services. The community psychology approach, in contrast, is described as the study of the effects of social and environmental factors on behaviour. Rappaport (1984) suggests that the community mental health approach questions the traditional medical model of service delivery but accepts the goals of mental health as defined by society. Furthermore, he states, it fosters adjustment and is directed towards stability rather than change. Community psychology, in contrast, is clearly oriented towards social change. Goodstein & Sandler (1978) also differentiate between community psychology and community mental health, suggesting that community psychology uses a social system level of analysis, is targetted at formal institutions of society; and acts as a change catalyst. In contrast, community mental health is targetted at troubled individuals and key people in a community and is concerned with mental health service delivery.

Goodstein & Sandler (1978) suggest that community psychology should disengage from the community mental health movement in order to fulfil its important function of interfacing with the social systems of deviance control and of socialization and control. Community psychology, according to these authors, should focus on responding to social concerns.

### Roles and Activities of the Community Psychologist

In practice the role played by the community psychologist is characterized by diversity; its specific nature being determined

by a number of factors such as setting, speciality, and ideological framework adopted.

In broad terms the community psychologist's role reveals the following characteristics: (a) a tendency to be generalist, but often combined with some form of specialist skills, for example, clinical, educational, social, organizational, developmental, etc.; (b) a change agent, often including political activism; (c) a participant-conceptualizer, working in a theory-practice dialectic; (d) a critic, imbued with, and engendering, a critical consciousness and acting as a critic of the psychology profession itself; and (e) a striving to work with 'clients' in a collaborative or partnership manner, reversing the traditional professional-client top-downwards power relations.

More specifically the roles of consultant, trainer, facilitator, evaluator, researcher, planner, negotiator, mediator, administrator, educator, advocate, and organizer, are usually ascribed to psychologists working within the community psychology approach (Thomas, 1984).

Specific activities of community psychologists include community or action research, for local groups or broader social action; the creation of alternative settings; community organization and action with various oppressed groups; influencing legislation or public policy through lobbying, consultation, research, etc.; programme planning and evaluation; public education on a variety of issues; identification of and prevention programmes with high risk groups; identification and mobilization of social support systems; stress management and other life skills training; non-professional training of caregivers; crisis intervention; group work; teacher/parent socialization skills training; consultation with key community leaders; etc.

Diversity is further revealed in the settings within which community psychologists can be found. These include schools, mental health agencies, hospitals, courts, government, business, voluntary community organizations, unions, neighbourhoods, community mental health centers, self-help programmes, etc.

#### Structure of the Community Psychology Profession in the USA

Community psychology is a recognized constituent of the American Psychological Association, being the 27th division of that professional body. It is therefore recognized as a psychology specialization by the overall psychology profession, and has approximately 2,000 members at present. It has however resisted licensing (registration) so as to avoid the trappings of professionalism and overt control (Davidson II, 1986; Newbrough, 1986).

There are at present very few 'free-standing' community psychology programmes in the States, the predominant structure being a combination of community psychology with other sub-disciplines, for example, clinical, industrial/organizational, and social psychology. In this regard psychologists emerge with a traditional specialization but with a 'community' orientation and additional skills.

### Community Psychology in Other Contexts

While community psychology, as a specialized field, arose in the USA, it is in varying degrees also active in other parts of the world. The most prominent geographical areas where it is practised under that label in one form or another are Latin America, Australia, and Britain.

The flavour of this approach within the different contexts does not differ in any major way from the USA models, but some differences do appear to exist. A brief overview of the community psychology approaches in these contexts should give us some insights into their specific natures.

In Britain community psychology has not become an overt field on its own, with proponents of this approach apparently wishing to keep it that way (Bender, 1976). In that context 'community psychology' appears primarily to take place in the field of primary health care, where psychologists work together with general practitioners to provide a wholistic health service. In this regard traditional clinical roles tend to be used but there has been a call for the development of alternative roles in prevention, education, and research (McPherson & Sutton, 1981;

Spector, 1984). Community psychology has also developed within the social services departments (Bender, 1979; Brown, 1981). Bender's multi-level approach appears to form one foundation for community ventures in that context (Bender, 1979). He refers to three levels which he argues should form the basis for interventions: (a) working with clients (direct interventions); (b) working with staff (staff development and training for the purposes of extending services into the community); and (c) working with managers and other policy makers (to facilitate institutional change). He emphasizes the need for the psychologist to work at all, or at least two of the above levels.

In an interview with Mike Bender which I conducted in November 1985 in London, the following major points about community psychology in Britain arose. Within that context community psychology referred predominantly to an extension of psychological services into non-hospital settings; main activities consisting of staff training and work with the mentally handicapped within community settings. While work with general practitioners was evident, this was not considered to be of great importance. Psychology's involvement at a political activist level was very low. Bender referred to the external constraints which made it very difficult to challenge social structures; the fact that psychologists in Britain were socialized into serving their own interests, having internalized the conservative socio-political climate; and the inadequacy of the training of psychologists which did not equip them, either in terms of knowledge or skills, to work effectively at a social change level. Finally, Bender referred to the problem with the term 'community' in community psychology. He suggested that it presently allowed such a broad definition which resulted in confused interpretations of what constituted the field of community psychology. He called for a more specific definition of the term, particularly for the South African context.

In Australia, where community psychology developed in the mid-1970's, the American community psychology approach influence has been strong. However, it has developed some characteristics which are particular to that context, particularly its commitment to collaborative, facilitative rather than confrontational

interventions, and process- rather than product-based research (Veno, 1982). As a result of community psychology initially being associated and therefore confused with community health care in Australia, there has been a move away from the prevention model to that of community development (Veno, 1982). Community psychology in that context has been particularly active in the educational, political, judicial and social arenas.

Another major area where community psychology has developed has been in Latin America, particularly in Cuba and in Puerto Rico (where some community psychologists were interviewed: Appendix C). Although the USA community psychology influence has been strong, psychologists in those areas have developed their own priorities, theoretical perspectives and methods of working. For example, in Puerto Rico, the empowerment perspective has received a major emphasis and is used as a basis for many interventions. The emphasis has been on the need to challenge inequalities and overcome present imbalances in wealth and power. Community development - developing individuals' and groups' sense of personal power, a critical consciousness of the realities of Puerto Rican society, and strategies for gaining access to basic resources - forms one major intervention in that context. Intervention research, where the process and the product of the research are used as tools for individual and structural change, is a further intervention method emphasized in that situation (Serrano-Garcia, 1985; Serrano-Garcia et al, 1985). Theoretical frameworks in the Latin American context tend to differ from the mainstream USA community psychology's ecological or systems emphasis. The theories used as a basis for the Latin American community psychology approach appear to be more European in nature, providing a dialectic, critical analysis of society (Serrano-Garcia et al, 1985).

The dialectical approach favoured by community psychologists in that context reflect a general tendency of psychologists in that context. Ardilla (1982) identifies the two main characteristics of psychology in that context as being (a) an emphasis on practical aspects and applications to the social reality of the country, and (b) a close relationship to other disciplines. Psychologists there, he says, realize that the roots of problems

are in political, economic and social issues. Areas such as social psychology, community psychology, cross-cultural, and dialectic materialistic psychology are considered to be most advanced and important in that context (Ardilla, 1982).

### Psychology in Developing Countries

Although one may not find the term 'community psychology' being used in developing countries, there are certain developments within psychology in those contexts that pertain directly to the community psychology approach. The focus of this particular thesis however limits the extent to which the status of psychology in developing countries can be explored. However, an exploration of a community psychology approach within South Africa without at least a cursory look at this would be incorrect. South Africa is a country which straddles the first and third world realities. Furthermore, its large non-Western culture calls for a psychology that is indigenous to that reality. It is not the purpose of the present study to explore this in depth but rather to attempt to gain a very brief global picture of issues in psychology in developing countries that pertain to the development of a community psychology approach.

Although there is not much known about psychology in developing countries it appears that it plays a relatively minor role (Abdi, 1975; Connolly, 1985; Dawes, 1986; Ward, 1983). The psychology that exists tends to come from a western frame of reference; most psychologists being trained in either the USA or Britain. This results in an exportation of Anglo-Saxon psychology into the developing contexts (Abdi, 1975; Ardilla, 1982; Dawes, 1986; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986; Semaj, 1981; D Sinha, 1984; P Sinha, 1984).

Certain aspects of psychology and issues have received more emphasis than others, for example, testing, applied research, self-improvement, national planning and social policy, cross-cultural work, problems relating to instability, social change, education, and development issues such as poverty, motivation, etc. (Ardilla, 1982; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986; D Sinha, 1984; Ward, 1983). These and other areas and contributions have been

viewed as valuable and relevant by many (also Abdi, 1975; Connolly, 1985; Dawes, 1986; Semaj, 1981; Sinha, 1973).

Many criticisms have been levelled at psychology's role in that type of context. These include queries over cultural understanding and relevancy, linguistic knowledge, appropriateness of research instruments and relevance of hypotheses, irrelevance to social problems, non-existence of trained native psychologists, dualism or parallelism of the traditional and modern sectors of practice, Western psychology's service to its own needs, the use of psychological technology as an instrument of oppression, inappropriateness of Western models of theory and practice, and a lack of tangible returns (Abdi, 1975; Connolly, 1985; Dawes, 1986; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986; D Sinha, 1984; P Sinha, 1984; Ward, 1983). The relevance of psychology for developing countries is therefore under question (Russell, 1984; D Sinha, 1984).

Colonialism has been a major issue arising out of the present importation of western psychology into developing countries (Abdi, 1975; Dawes, 1986; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1986; Semaj, 1981). Psychologists in these contexts have often been viewed as colonial exploiters, and their psychology of no relevance to the colonial subjects. The colonial mentality, that is the psychologist having the advanced and superior view and the subjects of developing countries being backward and in need of upliftment, is criticized. Psychology is seen to be serving the interests of European-American society by maintaining, consolidating, and expanding their domination over other people.

Despite these criticisms, psychology is perceived by many in developing countries as having a potentially positive contribution to society. Certain criteria for appropriateness to that context emerge from the literature. Moghaddam & Taylor (1986) outline some criteria for assessing the appropriateness of psychology to the third world: self-reliance, needs responsiveness, cultural compatibility; institutional feasibility, economic stability, and political practicality. They emphasize the need for an applied problem centered approach, and the need for an indigenous development of psychology within its particular context. The need for an indigenous approach and

relevance to practical realities is also emphasized by D Sinha (1984). He adds that the role of the psychologist in understanding factors that facilitate change and increase the likelihood of constructive social change, is very important in countries undergoing rapid change. He further highlights the need for psychologists to conduct research on socio-economic development issues. What appears to be important is the need for psychology to respond to the developing countries' requests for tangible returns for psychological work. It needs to be seen to be contributing directly to the social issues considered to be important to the society of which it is a part.

### The Future of Community Psychology

With regard to the future of community psychology, an empirical study conducted with a small group of key community psychologists in America (Appendix C) revealed a general feeling that it would continue to exist but was likely to remain a marginal field, possibly absorbed into other sub-discipline areas. The wider socio-political climate of the USA was considered to be a major predictor in the direction community psychology would take.

In addition to specific predictions, participants expressed their views on the desired direction of community psychology. In this regard the major needs expressed were for other professions and people to be enlisted to fulfil the aims of community psychology; for applied and academic community psychologists to work more closely together; for community psychology to expand its research approach, methodologies, and conceptual frameworks; and for empowerment rather than prevention to become more of a value and action focus for community psychology.

Various other community psychologists have expressed their views on the future of community psychology. These include Wandersman (1986) who suggests that foci in the future will probably be on the relationship between the individual and community; relationship between informal and formal systems; on interventions and the ecology of systems; and on the science of the process of research. Heller et al (1984) and others (e.g. Linney, 1986; Shinn, 1986) suggest that consultation to social

regulators and therefore influence of social policy will receive a great deal of attention in the future.

Linney (1986) presents the results of a survey partially aimed at eliciting community psychologists' views on the future of the field, finding that the following areas were perceived to be high priorities for the future: prevention, health, and discussion with policy makers. Others (not receiving as high a frequency support in this survey) included an emphasis on competencies and coping; ecological understanding of settings; citizen advocacy and public policy; law; community psychology paradigms; practice and research interdependence; organizational psychology collaboration with schools and work places; qualities of community life; collaborative research; and multi-disciplinary training.

Shinn (1986) discusses the expansion of roles of the community psychologist within the twin aims of prevention and empowerment. She suggests that further utilization of schools, work sites, religious settings, voluntary organizations, and governments, should be explored. Within these settings she suggests a number of innovative roles for the community psychologist.

It is clear from recent literature that the field of community psychology, while recognizing its limitations, problems, and past failures, has an ethos of hopefulness for the future. Having conducted a 20-year reflection in 1985, they have arrived at some sense of firm identity and commitment to the future. Their roles in influencing social policy and exploration of action research in that and other arenas is likely to prove an important contribution to 'psychology-in-the-80's in the USA.

### 2.3 A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

The purpose of this critical evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the community psychology approach, as perceived by those within the field itself, and from a general sociological and philosophical critique of the fundamental assumptions underpinning this approach. This critique is considered to be an essential aspect of the exploration of the relevance of this approach for the South African context.

Implications for the development of a community psychology approach in South Africa will then be highlighted.

### Internal Critique

During 1984 and 1985 an empirical study (Appendixes B & C) was conducted in order to explore the development of community psychology in the USA, Latin America, and Britain. The goals of the study were

1. To gain a critical awareness of the community psychology approach in the USA, (a) to explore its historical, contemporary and futuristic development; (b) to understand its theoretical perspective; (c) to look at its relationship with other 'radical' or critical perspectives in psychology; (d) to understand the predominant research paradigm and methodologies used in community research; and (e) to look at the process and content of training provided in the community psychology approach.
2. To explore the participants' views on the relevance of community psychology in the South African context; and
3. To elicit the participants' comments on specific issues arising out of a study conducted with South African psychologists on their views of the role and responsibility of the psychologist in the South African context (refer Appendix A).

Before interviewing a number of community psychologists in the USA, a questionnaire was sent out to 70 key (as defined by Division 27 itself) community psychologists in that country. The names and addresses were obtained from Division 27 of the APA. Of these, 21 questionnaires were returned, constituting a 30% return.

The questionnaires were content analysed and summarized under categories emerging out of the written responses to the various questions asked. Areas covered by the questions included (a) the role and responsibility of the psychologist in response to socio-political issues that are implicated as partial causes or aggravators of problems in living; (b) definition and aims of community psychology; (c) present applications of this approach in the USA; (d) an evaluation of its effectiveness to-date; and

(e) comments on a community psychology that would be appropriate and relevant to the South African context.

In-depth taped interviews were then conducted with 13 key community psychologists (holding key representative positions within country). These included 5 women, 8 men, and 3 of whom were representative of 'minority' groups in the USA. Participants were representative of a number of geographical regions (ranging from north to south, and east to midwest), and programme bases (clinical, industrial, and social/community combinations). Furthermore, participants represented three generations of community psychologists, ranging from 1960 founders to 1980 'rising stars'. Participants were selected from the APA Division 27 lists of key people (consisting of executive members, regional, task, and programme directors). Geographical areas which were considered to reflect similar social issues as South Africa and which were demographically densely populated with community psychologists were chosen. Individuals interviewed were finally selected because of their regional or task area representation, as well as their accessibility. The one regrettable lack of representation was from exclusively applied community psychologists. Although all the academic-based participants were also involved in applied work only one of the sample and some of the groups reflected an exclusively applied (away from the university) context. The lack of more applied community psychologists' views must therefore be taken into account when viewing the findings of this study.

In addition to the formal interviews I met with other individuals and groups at the various centers, and through informal discussions and observations was able to extend my insights. A daily diary was kept for this purpose.

The interview transcripts were content analysed, the questions used in the semi-structured interviews providing the framework for categorization of responses. Under each category predetermined by the questions asked, a number of emergent categories of responses or themes were formulated, representing trends and similarity of responses. The predetermined categories consisted of (a) community psychology in the USA: a critical evaluation, the future, theoretical framework, and the

relationship with other radical/critical psychology perspectives; (b) community research; (c) training in community psychology; (d) community psychology in South Africa; (e) issues arising out of South African survey (Appendix A): the psychologist's contribution to social change, the role of the psychologist, the politics-psychology relationship and issue of value-neutrality.

The critical evaluation of community psychology in the USA provided by the participants revealed the following major points.

The community psychology approach is believed to have had a strong influence on other psychology sub-disciplines, particularly in terms of expanding the individualist view towards a wider ecological perspective. It is perceived to have influenced psychologists in the way they view persons, how they define problems, and the way in which they seek solutions. Secondly, community psychology has opened up new role options for many psychologists wishing to go beyond traditional roles. School programmes, services to women, and community development are areas within which some participants have seen specific developments in this regard. Finally, research is perceived by some to have become a very useful and effective tool for social change.

On the less positive side, it was also argued that research has not been sufficiently utilized as a tool for change. Further limitations and shortcomings identified included (a) the split between academic and applied psychologists; (b) the problem of obtaining funding for programmes; (c) resistance experienced in response to interventions; (d) the difficulty of substantiating programme effectiveness; (e) the lack of a clear conceptual base for community psychology; (f) relationship problems between the universities and community; (g) the lasting effects of the clinical roots of the community psychology approach particularly in terms of its personalistic and medical perspectives; (h) the confusion caused between the community mental health and community psychology approaches; (i) publishing restrictions in terms of non-traditional or radical research; (j) a discrepancy between the radical rhetoric of community psychology and its liberal-conservative practice; (k) reservations with the strong emphasis on prevention and therefore a medical ideology which is

perceived to perpetuate professionalism and a deficit view of problems; (l) pressure from the academic institutions to fulfil 'scientifically' valued expectations; (m) grappling with professional identity issues; (n) job insecurities; (o) a perceived shift of community psychology as a critical and marginal voice in psychology towards a professional guild; (p) the lack of a common value theme and therefore lack of often necessary collective action on the part of community psychologists; (q) the difficulty of working within an interdisciplinary framework; (r) the problem of cooption into the status quo and watering down of a critical stance; (s) the lack of support amongst psychology colleagues within the university departments; and (t) a number of constraints relating to conducting community-orientated research (publication constraints, a lack of training in alternative models, and difficulties experienced in trying to conduct research in a participative or collaborative manner).

In general, the sub-discipline of community psychology was considered to be presently in a period of contraction. Many participants related this directly to the relationship between community psychology and the wider socio-political climate. In this regard, the shift from the 'radical 60's' during the time of President Kennedy, and the 'conservative 80's' of the Reagan Administration were seen to be clearly linked to the move from a radical to a more conservative climate within community psychology itself. In addition, a move away from a community mental health focus towards an emphasis on environmental change has also been perceived by participants of the study. Related to this is the perceived move from programmes that are tertiary and secondary prevention-orientated (rehabilitative and crisis or high-risk identification) towards attempts to conduct programmes within a primary prevention framework. On the research-front, a move away from purely positivistic research towards a more innovative and 'community-sensitive' research approach was identified. The process of the research as well as the product was increasingly receiving attention, with an emphasis on (a) the need for a participatory or collaborative approach, where the issue of the research relationship was considered to be of

fundamental importance, and (b) the need for action research, where the social usefulness and action emphasis of research was stressed.

Finally, many participants referred to the high level of diversity which characterized the field of community psychology: in terms of its roles, activities, settings, training, programme-base, speciality combinations, and theoretical frameworks. In this regard participants stressed that community psychology was well-known for its umbrella approach and therefore tolerance of differences.

While community psychology may not have been at the forefront of addressing social issues in the USA (according to many participants), and had obviously encountered a number of limitations and problems in its first 20 years of existence, it had made a considerable contribution, possibly in more indirect ways, to the development of an applied psychology which was more sensitive to 'person-in-context', and to the movement of 'prevention is better than cure'.

The critique and trends arising out of the empirical study discussed above are largely supported by current literature. Of particular interest is Key's (1987) comment that in the USA

society's capacity for absorbing differences, adapting to new positions, and integrating part of the difference into the cultural mainstream makes it difficult to maintain a following for radical positions over time. Strong anti-communist sentiment, the increasing links of universities to external public and private funding sources, the relative success of capitalism for many, the Horatio Alger myth, and a strong bias toward individual attributions all contribute to create a climate that is not hospitable to radical criticism.

Related to this comment, Bogat (1986) suggests that "very little of the 'political' nature of community psychology remains" (p27). She queries whether in fact community psychology is not becoming like clinical psychology: "a profession of the middle class and its values" (p27). Sarason (1984) refers to political-economic obstacles which have tended to exert pressure on the field of community psychology, emphasizing its continuity with rather than its differences from clinical psychology. He adds that that kind

of subtle pressure does not nurture radical thinking and actions. Finally, Rappaport (1981) refers to a loss of urgency and a temptation to settle for security and mediocrity which has resulted from the changes in the American environment over the last 20 years.

Clearly all of the above authors (and many others) are acutely aware of the dialectic relationship between science and the helping professions (specifically community psychology), and society (specifically American society). The interplay of these is evident in the way in which community psychology has developed over the previous two decades. The discrepancy between its initial and even current rhetoric, and practice; the limitations, problems and even successes it has experienced; its aims and values; its professional structure; and its present and future foci, are all a reflection of the society within which it has developed. At the same time, its contribution to the development of the psychology profession as a whole and to society itself - in direct and indirect ways - is evident.

### General Critique

While sociological or philosophical critiques of community psychology are not very evident in that literature, the philosophical foundations reflected in the community psychology approach are mainstream sociological positions which have received critique from a number of quarters. It is these critiques to which we will now turn, for the purpose of identifying espoused sociological flaws in the position taken by the majority of community psychologists. It should, of course, be remembered that while the majority of community psychology work would fall into the categories discussed below, there are exceptions to this, particularly in Latin America.

Community psychology is underpinned by humanistic values (e.g. freedom, justice, human agency, individualism, and a commitment to emancipation of the disadvantaged in a process of evolutionary change, (Cloete & Pillay, 1988)). It is primarily reformist (Heller et al, 1984) and liberal in orientation (particularly in its emphasis on tolerance of diverse ideological positions).

Critiques of liberal humanism which would therefore apply to the community approach include the argument that wholeness, autonomy, and freedom, values espoused by that position, are not in evidence in society. The argument that individuals are not free from constraints is a major one here. The emphasis on human agency or the capacity of people to take responsibility for themselves and their actions is a position which has been heavily critiqued by approaches which favour social determinism. These issues are discussed in some depth in chapter 4 so will not be pursued here.

An interactionist approach to the individual-social relationship is also evident in this approach, the emphasis being on how the one affects the other rather than on how the individual is formed by the social (the latter being a position favoured by social determinists, e.g. within the marxist tradition). Community psychology, which openly focuses on the underdogs in society, would also be open to the same criticisms levelled at interactionists such as Goffman and Becker who are criticized for their 'defend-the-underdog' sociology which avoids macrostructural emphases in favour of microscopic interactionism (Gouldner, in Fisher & Strauss, 1978). The interactional approach is therefore criticized for its underemphasis on social structural factors and overemphasis on voluntary action.

The community approach tends to emphasize roles, rules, etc., a characteristic of an interactional view. Inherent in this perspective is the assumption that actors can take on and discard roles (Henriques et al, 1984). As Wexler (1981) points out, this approach admits effects (for example, of the environment on the individual) without specifying social-relational processes. This approach is inadequate because it underestimates the extent to which individuals are socially constructed (Henriques et al, 1984; Jacoby, 1975). Jacoby (1981), for example, argues that individuals are roles, meaning that these roles are not superficial conditions which can be discarded or dropped at will.

Systems theory, the basis of much of community psychology in the USA and in Australia, has been criticized on a number of fronts. A major criticism has been levelled at its acceptance of a system as a given, with the focus being on integration. This

results in a glossing over of societal conflicts (Moore, 1978), and a succumbing to the absolutization of cultural tradition (McCarthy, 1978). The built-in conservative bias (relating to the absolutization of cultural tradition) functions as an ideology, social life processes being seen as a matter of self-maintenance of social systems. This perspective can therefore not adequately analyse social conflicts and social change, failing to perceive conflict and its source of systemic change (Moore, 1978). Finally, the biological origins of the systems approach, which uses cybernetic concepts, has also been criticized for its inappropriateness to social systems. It is argued that it is inappropriate to draw an analogy between units of society and parts of the human body (Moore, 1978).

It should be noted that, while many criticisms have been levelled at the systems theory approach, its strengths have also been recognized, particularly by Habermas who has entered debates with Luhmann, a major proponent of the systems approach. While many of the critiques referred to above are recognized by Habermas, he sees the value of incorporating certain elements of this approach, particularly if a normative-analytic, historical, and practical approach is adopted (McCarthy, 1978).

Community psychology's utilization of an ecological approach, which is based on a systems approach, favours an evolutionary or development approach to the social change process. Change is seen as inevitable and progressive, and as a process of active social control. Criticisms of this approach to change, emerging particularly from marxist, revolutionary perspectives, are extensive. Some major issues relevant to this will be highlighted (in chapter 4).

Positivism, while often criticized within community psychology, still tends to dominate, particularly in the emphasis placed on policy science and the use of theory and research for the purposes of predicting and controlling the environment. The technological character of community psychology as expressed in its behavioural approach, emphasis on prevention, and the importance placed on influencing policy decision-makers, would be open to the many criticisms levelled at the policy scientific approach. In this regard, the major critiques are levelled at

its support of the basic features of industrial society; its reification of social institutions and customs; the fact that questions which are not accessible to technical analysis are seen as irrational and therefore not included in decision-making procedures; its claims to being non-ideological or value-neutral; its employment of techniques for organizing society; the reliance on 'expert' scientists for major decisions affecting society; and its positivistic and inadequate 'cause and effect' approach used, for example, in the prevention approach to problems in society (see Fay, 1975 & 1987; McCarthy, 1978).

### Community Psychology and the Critical Perspective

While community psychology's fundamental philosophical position can be criticized from a Critical point of view, it should be noted that there are some common foci and goals. They both aim to move away from an individual-oriented analysis towards a more wholistic view of the individual. They furthermore share some similar values which generally challenge oppression, injustice, and unequal distribution of resources. However, despite these apparent broad similarities, there appears to be a lack of debate between these two approaches.

The question of the relationship between community psychology and Critical psychology was pursued with the community psychologists interviewed in the USA (Appendix C). In these interviews I shared my observation that, despite the apparent commonality in broad aims, there appeared to be virtually no debate or cross-fertilization between community psychology and other radical/critical perspectives. Participants were asked if this was in fact the case and, if so, what they would hypothesize to be the reasons for this lack of communication. The majority hypothesized that this was probably a reflection of the USA psychologist's tendency towards parochialism; that community psychology in the USA was at present conservative and therefore possibly uninformed and/or threatened by certain critical theories (particularly those with a marxist perspective); that its aims - while radical in some aspects - did not fundamentally question the capitalistic society of which it was a part; and

that the gap was perhaps an expression of different cultural factors existing between American and European traditions. The feeling was expressed that there needed to be more communication between community psychology and other critical approaches.

When comparing the dominant theoretical approach of American community psychology with a Critical psychology approach, the following major issues are noted. Firstly, the predominant systems theoretical approach adopted by community psychology provides an interactional view of the individual-social relationship, focusing on the effects of the environment on the individual (Heller et al, 1984). The Critical perspective, in contrast, would favour a dialectic view of this relationship, stressing the socially constructed nature of the individual.

The values of community psychology which emphasize the control of the individual over her/his environment and the need to fight for human rights would be criticized by many Critical psychologists for its overemphasis on the power of the individual to change society, and for its individualist approach to human rights.

While community psychology values theory, it has to-date shown a certain lack of a clear conceptual base, and has very strongly presented itself as an applied field. In sharp contrast, the Critical perspective is almost totally theory-orientated, with very few guidelines for practice.

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between the two approaches is reflected in the economic systems they overtly or covertly support. Community psychology reflects the values of capitalism in the USA, and, although it is concerned about the victims of this system, it does not question the capitalist system of which it is a part. It is interesting to note that while community psychologists in the USA are apparently very conscious of their own development in relation to the historical and current socio-political forces in America, there appears to be a lack of critique of their position in a capitalist society, and the ways in which their actions might be perpetuating that reality. They do not apply a class analysis either within their framework for practice or in their own self-critique. From a Critical perspective, therefore, a criticism could be levelled

that community psychology, together with psychology as a whole, perpetuates capitalistic values and therefore the consequences of that in society. It works within a humanistic framework which overlooks certain oppressive structures, and even helps to perpetuate it by making people superficially happy without confronting certain fundamental structural exploitation. While race, gender, age, disabled, etc. oppression is often confronted within the community psychology approach, class oppression is minimally addressed.

### Some Positive Points

While the limitation and shortcomings of the community psychology approach are acknowledged, it would be unfair, in my opinion, to say that its present theoretical and philosophical thrusts are totally inappropriate when considering an appropriate community psychology approach in South Africa.

While the humanistic interactional approach is considered to be inadequate, its impetus for social change, resulting from the locus of social control in individuals, is felt to be an important reminder of the role of individuals in the change process. The emphasis put on empowerment by community psychology is considered to be important. It is believed that the development of personal power in conjunction with access to economic and political power, is appropriate. This calls for a need to work at both levels simultaneously: individual and social/structural change. This position is emphasized in community psychology's multi-level approach to change.

While community psychology's liberal value of respect for diversity and tolerance of differences is fraught with problems, particularly in a country such as South Africa, it is suggested that diversity and differences of positions (both theoretically and ideologically speaking) are important. Habermas's concept of communicative competence is central to this issue (see discussion on this in chapter 4). In the search for appropriate theories and practice in South Africa, a variety of approaches need to be developed and tested for validity within this context. All theories, research, and practice should be challenged in terms of

the ideological role it is playing in society, and its appropriateness for a particular context. However, those theories and practices which facilitate the goals of liberation should be given precedence in community psychology (and, for that matter, in all social sciences).

The ecological approach which is being developed in community psychology has some strengths which could be incorporated in the development of an appropriate community psychology approach in South Africa. These are perceived to be (a) its pragmatic attempt to develop practical guidelines for social change interventions (albeit that it is limited to an evolutionary or developmental analysis and approach); (b) its emphasis on a multi-level approach to both understanding and practice; (c) and the emphasis on a need to analyze or understand, before, during, and after acting. The respect for the complexity of social problems and the need to understand these before interfering is considered to be very important. These three aspects are congruent with a Critical approach.

When considering alternative theoretical frameworks and practical models for psychology practice in South Africa, therefore, it is argued that while an imposition of an American community psychology would be inappropriate for this country, there are aspects of its theories and practices which could be indigenously developed within this context. The important issue is to be critically alert when considering the different possibilities which have been explored in other contexts. As with any other perspective, if the approaches adopted are laid open to criticism from both theorists and community practitioners, and are utilized within a framework of praxis, there can be no harm in exploring the relevance of the community approach in the face of a crisis in which alternatives seem to be few and far between.

CHAPTER THREE  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY  
FOR SOUTH AFRICA:  
AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION

3.1 THE SEARCH

Report on Research Journey

The purpose of this section is to report on how the exploration of an appropriate community psychology in South Africa was conducted. What will become evident is that the empirical work conducted was of both a formal and informal nature. While formal studies were conducted in order to fulfil the aims of the research, informal 'methods of research' were also employed to gather the necessary information and to highlight and explore pertinent issues in more depth. This was done through informal meetings, workshops, lectures, seminars, debates, as well as various direct activities within various communities within South Africa. The research period, 1983-1988 was within a period of history within psychology and South Africa that facilitated a meaningful exploration of the role of the psychologist in South African society. As has been referred to previously (chapter 1) the climate was ripe for a genuine and intense investigation of this question with many people throughout the country.

The research journey began with a conviction that there was a role for the psychologist in society, and specifically South Africa; that the profession had a great deal to offer citizens in trying to change social structures; that the American community psychology approach provided hope for a different kind of practice, away from exclusive work with individuals towards strategies for social change within psychology; that one should approach it openly, phenomenologically, with tolerance of differences of values and practice; and that through the process of talking with varied people within and outside of the profession in South Africa, and community psychologists in other contexts, practical issues and recommendations for practice in South Africa would emerge.

Without any doubt, issues of a highly controversial nature were raised and repeatedly debated throughout the research period. With regard to the initial conviction of the relevance of psychology and the psychologist in South Africa, the self-importance and optimism with which this belief began soon became tempered with a realization of the perceived lack of importance of psychology in the realm of social change. For many, particularly outside of the profession (see Appendix D) its limited view of reality; its lack of consciousness of its ideological role within society; its limited skills beyond working with the individual and small groups; its limited knowledge of the individual within the South African context; and its relative lack of involvement in social change in South Africa, were all characteristic of psychology in South Africa and therefore initially limited any thoughts and suggestions on how we could contribute. At the end of the day (1988), the conviction changed to one of a more realistic view of both the potential and limitation of the psychologist's contribution to society.

A further major development during this time was the realization, through exposure to marxist (Critical and otherwise) psychologists, activists, and literature, that looking for a role 'out there' in society, was the wrong place to start. The typical motivation of 'wanting to help others' was replaced with 'what are we presently doing'. The need for a self-reflective critique of the psychologist's present role in society therefore emerged as an emphasis, with the aim of (a) identifying whom the psychologist is presently serving, that is, whose interests are being served by current psychological practice in South Africa; (b) whose interests do we wish to serve; and (c) how can we do that.

A further widening of consciousness occurred while exploring the historical context of psychology in South Africa. An awareness of the link between society and psychology was heightened; a realization that this was not the first time that psychologists were considering their role in society and how to apply their knowledge to social problems of the day. I came to realize that community psychology could become another attempt to

turn an area of societal conflict into a field of practice so as to extend its professional influence and viability (Louw, 1986); and that the present emergence of increasing interest in community psychology within South Africa was directly related to the broader socio-political context of South Africa, and resultant professional identity crisis being experienced.

While the initial hope expressed in connection with the community psychology approach of USA is still glimmering, the perceived inadequacies of its predominant theoretical framework (the ecological perspective) were highlighted during the research process. As a framework for understanding and acting at the broader societal level, it was found to be inadequate in explaining issues of oppression and power within South Africa. While these inadequacies have not meant a complete rejection of this approach, they have resulted in a search (in progress) for a perspective that incorporates a more critical analysis.

Related to the above point was the move from an exclusively pragmatic position (characteristic of the community psychology approach in the USA) towards a position which not only recognizes the need for theory, but which urgently advocates the fundamental and crucial importance of an appropriate social theory for community psychology in South Africa. What became evident very quickly, was that, in searching for indicators of an appropriate theoretical framework, one needed to delve into the comprehensive and mystifying world of philosophy and sociology. It became evident, therefore, that my training as a psychologist had totally ill-prepared me for this task. This raised a major problem facing psychologists wishing to enter the realm of social change, pointing specifically to the need for a very different form of training or socialization for the psychologist wishing to pursue this path. However, while the need for theory has been heightened in this process, the pragmatism is still present. The concept of 'praxis' has therefore become an important one in this context.

With regard to the question of whether problems and solutions should be approached in an open or phenomenological manner, allowing the 'community' to provide the analysis of and solutions to problems, or whether situations should be analyzed and

addressed from a particular theoretical framework, there has been a development away from an initial phenomenological approach to a recognition that both are necessary. In this regard the Critical theoretical approach is relevant (refer chapter 4). It is believed that the use of social theorems can be very useful in analyzing situations and facilitating a self-reflection process, but it is emphasized that these should be offered in an open and non-arrogant manner, allowing genuine transformation of both theory and practice to occur. In that way, the psychologist who makes this kind of theoretical contribution acts as one resource in the defining of problems and planning of solutions, taking seriously the process of democracy that is considered to be central to any 'community' action.

While the above mentioned developments are in no way comprehensive they do highlight some of the personal transformations relating to the present research that have become central factors in the search for an appropriate community psychology in South Africa.

#### Overview of Research Methodology

Before outlining the aims, methods, and findings of the formal empirical work conducted within the present study, a brief description of the informal aspects of the research process will be presented. These are believed to have contributed as much if not more to this investigation, and therefore need to be presented as an important context within which the present suggestions for practice and training were developed.

The beginning of the present study really began during 1981/82 within an action research project conducted in an alternative education programme in a black setting in Cape Town (Lazarus, 1985). Within that context the realities of conducting action research of a politically sensitive nature in South Africa were confronted. The issue of a white middle class researcher working in a black, working class, politically militant context, was also addressed.

During the period 1983 - 1988 I was extensively involved in the development of community psychology training within various psychology departments in South Africa, mainly in Cape Town, and

latterly, in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The main involvements were at the University of Cape Town where undergraduate, honours, and masters programmes in community psychology were developed. The masters level programme developed into an option (recognized by the Professional Board of the SAMDC) for community psychology 'specialization' within the Research category, and included core training courses for all present registrable areas of psychology, the first of these having been conducted in 1987. This first attempt at providing a core training module, comprising 120 hours of training in areas relevant to community psychology; for research, educational, and clinical masters students, as well as post-graduate students from the University of Western Cape (black/open university), proved very successful.

The overall teaching experience with thousands of students and staff during the period 1983-1988 contributed considerably to the present study. While some formal empirical research was conducted in this regard, the most valuable contributions emerged within the many debates within lectures, seminars, and workshops.

In addition to the formal teaching situations mentioned above, debate and mutual exploration of the role of the psychologist in South African society occurred within various workshops, meetings, seminars and conferences with a variety of psychologists around the country. This wide exposure to a number of psychologists of differing ideological standpoints made it possible to highlight the varied interpretations of community psychology; its inherent contradictions, paradoxes, and controversial issues; and the emerging trends within this approach in South Africa.

Regular contact with other psychologists (and social workers) who were 'progressive' in orientation, committed in different degrees to the broader democratic liberation movement in South Africa, was made possible through my involvement in the Organization for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) both in Cape Town and Durban. Within that context, the exploration of a more appropriate psychological practice was a mutual one.

In addition to the above experiences, my involvement in a number of direct community activities facilitated a 'hands-on'

exploration of the research question. These activities include various community research projects; work with community organizations at the level of facilitating effective organization and team work; consultation with these organizations and other political activists and community workers on a variety of issues; community education, primarily at the level of planning, running, and evaluating workshops in various skills areas (e.g. group effectiveness, counselling, research skills, leadership training, planning and running of workshops); the planning and development of various community projects, for example, community mental health projects, alternative education programmes, etc.; and an involvement with various groups on issues relating to the development of an alternative education system or 'peoples' education within South Africa.

My most recent long-term involvement in a combined university-community unit at the University of Natal has contributed considerably to my experiences in this regard. While the focus of the Education Projects Unit is on the education crisis in South Africa (and therefore with no direct 'psychological' focus), working in a setting where academics and political activists have formed a structured relationship, in the staff, the controlling bodies, as well as the constituencies of the Unit, has facilitated a number of learnings which bear directly on the role of the community psychologist in South Africa. Issues such as the role of the academic/researcher, democratization of research and theory, academic versus activist traditions, etc. have all had to be confronted.

All of the above exposures and experiences have not only added depth to the present investigation, but are largely responsible for directing it. The reality of being a 'community' psychologist in the current South African reality has penetrated the theoretical debates at all levels. It is for this reason that it could be argued that there is some mandate for the suggestions for practice offered in this study.

### Empirical Studies Conducted

The overall aim of the present research has been discussed

(chapter 1). In order to identify the issues that are raised by the question of the role of the psychologist in South Africa, and to develop an indigenous model of community psychology for South Africa, a number of empirical studies were conducted.

Table 1 : Empirical Studies Conducted

Participants	Number	Aims of Study	Methods Used
South African psychologists	165 47	Role of psychologist in SA; relevance of community psychology for SA; implications for training.	Questionnaires Interviews
Psychology students (UCT)	160	Role of psychologist in SA; relevance of community psychology for SA.	Essays
Psychology students (UDW)	68	Role of psychologist in SA; relevance of community psychology for SA.	Essays
Community psychologists abroad	21 13	Critique of USA community psychology; relevance of community psychology for SA; comment on issues arising from study with SA psychologists.	Questionnaires Interviews
Other disciplines	7	Role of psychologist in SA; relevance of community psychology for SA.	Interviews Debates
Members of public	17	Role of psychologist in SA; relevance of community psychology for SA.	Questionnaires
Community organizers (Capetown)	20	Relevance of psychological practice in SA; role of psychologist in SA.	Interviews

With regard to the question of the role of the psychologist in South African society and the relevance of the community psychology perspective for this context, a variety of views were sought: South African psychologists, undergraduate and post-graduate psychology students from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of Durban-Westville (UDW), community psychologists in the USA, Latin America, and Britain, members of

other academic disciplines and helping professions, members of the public, and community organizers from progressive organizations in Cape Town area.

### 1. South African Psychologists

The aim of this investigation (Appendix A) was to explore South African psychologists' views on their role and responsibility in the South African social context; their opinions about the relevance of the community psychology approach in this context; and the implications of this approach for the training of psychologists in South Africa.

A questionnaire was mailed to a sample comprising all psychologists registered with the Professional Board of Psychology of the SAMDC, reflected in the Register of Psychologists as of April 1984, N=1350 (excluding psychologists residing outside of South Africa). The decision to use the Register for the purpose of identifying psychologists in this country was based on a pragmatic need to have access to names and addresses of psychologists in South Africa, and to prevent a biased sampling process. However, it is recognized that there are some psychologists in South Africa who have not registered with the SAMDC (for political and other reasons) and that these were not included in the study. The sample used for analysis constituted 12.2% of the total population of registered psychologists in South Africa. All psychology registrations/specializations and major geographical areas in South Africa were represented.

Semi-structured taped interviews were conducted with 47 registered and unregistered psychologists. An attempt was made to select psychologists from various groupings in order to explore different views of psychologists in South Africa. A research trip around the country was conducted, incorporating twelve universities. Psychologists from different groupings in terms of geographical regions, registration categories, race classification, and language were included.

The psychology departments in each of the universities on the travel route were contacted. Interviews were requested with psychologists, in or outside of the department, who would be

prepared to talk with me about the research topic which was outlined in previous correspondence. Where necessary, this was followed up with phone calls, and appointments made. Participants were given the choice of having an individual or group interview. Of the twelve universities visited, participants in six of these were interviewed in small groups (comprising 2-5 members at a time). The same questions were posed irrespective of the nature of the interview. Where specific quantitative responses were required, individual members of the group interviews were asked for their particular response to the question.

With regard to the analysis, the questionnaires were qualitatively content analysed by an independent researcher, while I conducted a content analysis of the interviews. Summaries of both the questionnaire and interview findings were then compiled. The questions used in both methods provided the predetermined categories for these analyses. Within each of these predetermined categories, emergent categories were developed, reflecting the similarities and trends in the responses given to the various questions. Where appropriate, frequencies under these emergent categories were noted. The predetermined categories used in both analyses were (a) the responsibility of the psychologist to respond to social issues in South Africa; (b) the psychologist's role in responding to social issues; (c) the issues in South Africa which should be addressed; and (d) the relevance of the community psychology approach to the South African context. Two further areas were explored during the interviewing process, providing the additional categories of (e) the relationship between psychology and politics; and (f) the implications for the training of psychologists in South Africa.

## **2. Psychology Students : University of Cape Town**

The question of the relevance of the community psychology approach in South Africa was pursued with 160 second and third year students who attended a 24 lecture module in community psychology at UCT during 1983.

Students were asked to write an essay on the relevance of the

community psychology approach in South Africa and to submit it at the end of the 24 lecture module. The essays were content analysed, with only high frequency responses being noted. The major categories emerging out of the content analysis were (a) the role of the South African psychologist; (b) the theoretical contribution of community psychology in South Africa; (c) central issues to be addressed in South Africa; (d) the target for community psychology in South Africa; (e) strategies of intervention considered to be appropriate for South Africa, and (f) problems and limitations of this approach for South Africa.

## **2. Psychology Students : University of Durban-Westville**

During the early part of 1987, 68 students from UDW, a predominantly black/Indian university in Natal, attended a 35 lecture course in community psychology. At the completion of the course, students wrote an essay on 'Community psychology in South Africa'. The essays were then content analysed. The major categories arising from the analysis were (a) whether the community psychology approach was relevant for South Africa; (b) perceived problems and limitations of developing this approach within this context; (c) priority aims and values for a South African community psychology; (d) roles and activities for the South African community psychologist; and (e) social issues which should be addressed in South Africa.

## **3. Community Psychologists in the USA**

The methodology employed in this study (Appendixes B & C) has been discussed previously (chapter 2).

## **4. Other Social Scientists/Helping Professionals**

The focus of this preliminary study was to begin to explore the views of a variety of other social scientists and helping professionals on the role and responsibility of the psychologist in the South African social context, and the relevance of the community psychology approach in this regard.

In the context of two separate public debates, members of other professions were asked to give their views on the above questions. In the first debate, the participants consisted of a

black nonprofessional rural community worker, an economist, a social worker, and an academic psychologist. In the second debate a community health medical practitioner, a sociologist, and a clinical psychologist participated. All participants in the debates were briefly interviewed before the debate, for the purpose of outlining and clarifying the community psychology approach so that the participants could participate meaningfully in the debate.

The taped debates were transcribed verbatim and then content analysed under the following categories (a) the responsibility of the psychologist; (b) the role of the psychologist in terms of specific contribution and general role issues; (c) major social issues that should be addressed in South Africa; and (d) the relevance of the community psychology approach to the South African context.

#### **5. Members of the Public**

The purpose of this study was to elicit the views of some members of the general public on the role of the psychologist in response to socio-political issues in South Africa, and the relevance of the community psychology approach in this context.

The participants were 17 members of a group who attended an extramural university extension course on community psychology at UCT during 1983. The participants were all white; 15 female and 2 male, primarily English speaking, and ranging in age from 31 to 50.

Participants were invited to complete a questionnaire near the end of the 6-lecture course. 17 (constituting 34% of the total number attending the course) voluntarily submitted the questionnaire as requested. The questionnaires were content analysed and summarized under categories formulated by the questions asked. Major areas covered were (a) the role of the psychologist in response to socio-political issues in South Africa; (b) the relevance and viability of community psychology in South Africa; (c) the problems and limitations of this approach in South Africa; (d) the major issues that need to be addressed in South Africa; and (e) psychological services needed by the participants in their community setting.

## 6. Community Organizers : Cape Town

This study (Appendix D) investigated the relevance of psychological practice for certain groups in South Africa by exploring the views of people involved in community organizations challenging the present political system.

The participants were 20 community organizers (13 women, 7 men) involved in different progressive organizations in Cape Town. The term organizer in this context refers to people active in Christian, grassroots (working more directly with the community), trade union, and general resource organizations - 5 participants being drawn from each). The term 'community' in this study refers to people involved in local organization and collective action within the broader liberation struggle in South Africa. They were all in some way or another working for social change and a fundamental restructuring of the political and economic system, with the vision of a future non-racial democratic South Africa. Participants spoke in their personal capacities; it was felt however that their experience within the organizations and the community it represented allowed them to speak with some authority about the experiences, feelings and perceptions of members of their communities.

After discussions with various people involved in community work in Cape Town, telephonic contact was made to set up interviews with the 20 participants. The taped interviews were semi-structured, lasting approximately one and a half hours each. They were conducted in a uniform manner over a period of seven weeks during June/July of 1985. In addition to the interviews, a diary was kept by the interviewer (S Berger) throughout the research period. At the time of this study the State of Emergency was declared for the first time, and the general crisis of the country made it particularly difficult to meet with the organizers for research purposes.

Interview responses were content analysed, predetermined categories being established on the basis of the interview questions. Trends in responses were noted, formulating further 'emergent' categories. The analysis therefore consisted of a qualitative summary of responses. The three major areas covered

in this study were (a) identification of problems and utilization of 'helping services'; (b) views on psychologists and psychological practice; and (c) framework for a relevant practice of psychology.

### **General Comment**

A brief comment about the content analyses performed on all the qualitative data received through the different studies follows. An attempt was made to codify responses in a descriptive manner, summarizing points made, and grouping together similar responses so that potential trends could be noted. At no point was a deeper, critical analysis based on any theory performed. The aim was to elicit different peoples' views on the different issues raised, and to present them as accurately as possible. It is recognized that deeper analyses need to be conducted if the findings are to be used as a basis for developing alternatives practices in this context.

It should also be noted that at no point in the empirical work referred to above was scientific representation sought. While it could be argued that a variety of views were explored and that samples included a fair representation of different viewpoints within the particular populations sampled, scientific generalizations cannot be assumed from any of the findings to be discussed below. The purpose of the empirical work was not to generalize about views held on the issues discussed, but rather to extensively and intensively highlight and explore the inherent issues, controversies, and debates arising out of the question of the role of the psychologist in South African society, and to search for an appropriate community psychology practice within this context.

### **Summary of Findings**

#### **1. The Role of the Psychologist in South African Society**

A summary of the findings of each of the empirical studies described above will be presented under the categories of (a) the responsibility of the psychologist to respond to broader social issues in South Africa; (b) the broad role of the psychologist,

in that regard; (c) specific activities of the psychologist; and (d) social issues to be addressed in South Africa.

(a) The Responsibility of the Psychologist to Respond to Broader Social Issues in South Africa:

South African psychologists who participated in the empirical study indicated that the psychologist in South Africa had some responsibility to respond to social issues believed to be implicated in some way as causing or aggravating problems in living. Various reasons were given for this, the major factors being that (i) the individual can only be viewed within the framework of her/his social context and is affected by this environment within which s/he lives; (ii) the psychologist has some special skills and understanding to offer in this regard; (iii) prevention at the level of social change is important; and (iv) psychology needs to be more relevant to society. A further point was made that there was a responsibility to respond to these issues as a citizen, but not necessarily as a psychologist.

In the interviews the issue of involvement of the psychologist in politics was raised. In this regard a number indicated a clear support of involvement in politics but there were also many who were not in favour of this. Those strongly in favour indicated that direct involvement in shaping public policy and the conducting of relevant, scientific research were important contributions in this regard. The main reasons given for this support for involvement in the political realm were that the psychologist had a responsibility if there were clear indications of political factors affecting the individual; and secondly, it was pointed out that the psychologist in fact had no choice as to whether or not to be involved as one's actions as a psychologist were always informed by one's values and political stance, either in support of or against the status quo. Participants who were against the psychologist's involvement in politics felt that the psychologist could not be politically aligned because of the need to adopt a value-neutral position, and that responsibility should therefore be taken up as a citizen rather than as a psychologist.

Within the debates with other social scientists and helping professionals, there appeared to be consensus that the

psychologist had a responsibility to respond to socio-political issues in South Africa, but the questions of (i) whether or not psychology is committed to that ideal; (ii) whether the psychologist is adequately trained for such work; and (iii) whether it should be the individual psychologist or the profession as a whole that had this responsibility, were raised.

(b) The Role of the Psychologist in Responding to Social Issues in South Africa:

With regard to the role of the psychologist in attempting to respond to social issues, the study with the South African psychologists revealed the need for the psychologist to work within an interdisciplinary context, providing corporate action with other disciplines and psychology sub-specialities. The interviews highlighted the problem of professional territoriality in this regard. Within the context of interdisciplinary cooperation, there was a strong feeling from the participants that the psychologist had some special skills and perspectives that would constitute a valuable contribution to society. In this regard, the major contributions identified were (i) the understanding of individuals and groups from a psychological perspective; (ii) skills with which to help individuals and groups; (iii) research skills and expertise; (iv) the development of theories related to the context and process of social change; and (v) analyses enabling the deconstruction of ideological slants.

A number of participants indicated that psychologists needed to work at all levels of society, that is, individuals, groups, communities, institutions, and state/national structures, and that the actual level of intervention chosen should depend on the particular problem being addressed. However many felt that although one should be aiming to change the structures and therefore be engaged in social rather than individual change, the most realistic starting point was the individual level.

A number of roles were ascribed to the South African psychologist wishing to contribute to the broader socio-political arena, by the UCT psychology students. These included change agent, skills transmitter/trainer of non-professionals,

consultant/resource sharer, participant-conceptualizer, and political activist. There was strong support for intervention at both individual and structural levels, and towards short- and long-term goals. It was further suggested that the community psychologist work together with other professions, extending an interdisciplinary service to the community. Finally, it was argued that the psychologist in South Africa should examine her/his own values and always be conscious of personal limitations.

Students tended to see a valuable role for the psychologist in the area of theoretical exploration and dissemination of knowledge. The areas of theory considered important included (i) the development of a psycho-sociology, with particular emphasis on power issues in South Africa; (ii) identification of problems and their effects on the individual and findings of such research publically disseminated; (iii) a theoretical understanding of the dynamics of social change; (iv) an exploration of the concepts of positive mental health and 'community', both theoretically and practically; and (v) the development of a relevant psychology for South Africa.

The majority of the students at UDW stressed that the psychologist in South Africa could not play a value-neutral role; that within this context it was not realistically possible. However there were some who argued that the value-neutral role was an important one. With regard to the psychologist's relationship with other disciplines or professions, it was stressed that an interdisciplinary approach to social problems was the most appropriate. The psychologist's role in the change process received an emphasis, suggesting that s/he had a valuable contribution to make in that regard. Other aspects of the (psychologist's role in the broader socio-political) arena included (i) the need for the psychologist to get involved in the community, that is, to avoid an arm-chair approach; (ii) that s/he would need to be committed to social change; (iii) that the role of political activist was appropriate for the psychologist at this level; (iv) that it was a good strategy to work with people in power in order to effect change; (v) that one should work in a democratic fashion, working with rather than for the

people; (vi) that the psychologist should share her/his professional resources with communities; and (vii) that the psychologist wishing to work with oppressed groups would need to develop trust and credibility with those groups if her/his involvement was to be acceptable and successful.

The interviews with the USA community psychologists revealed a recognition of the problem of professional territoriality, but this was not considered to be a serious problem, particularly in a crisis situation. A number of specific contributions of the psychologist were identified, the major ones being (i) research expertise; (ii) group skills; (iii) the ability to conceptualize complex issues, particularly the change process; (iv) understanding and intervention strategies related to attitude change; and (v) an intervention or action orientation.

When commenting on issues arising from the question of the role of the psychologist, it was generally agreed that the ideology of empowerment or liberation was fundamental. In this regard, it was considered necessary to recognize and utilize the competence and resources present in the community, and to work in a horizontal or partnership relationship.

In response to the issue of the psychology-politics relationship and specifically the issue of value-neutrality, the community psychologists who were interviewed were in unanimous agreement that the psychologist was not able to be value-neutral, and that a value-neutral stance amounted to an unwitting support of the status quo. What was required was a self-consciousness and openness about one's values, without imposing that on to others. However it was suggested that a value-neutral stance might be appropriate in certain situations. In this regard the role of the psychologist as a mediator-negotiator was considered to be feasible, but needing to be redefined outside of the traditional industrial conflict-resolution model used. With respect to the issue of alignment with one or other group or ideology, the majority of participants expressed the view that the psychologist was often put into a position where this could not and should not be avoided, particularly in such a charged and polarized situation as South Africa. The issue of citizen-psychologist role split was discussed in this regard, and

although generally disagreed with, it was suggested that one should play the most effective role determined by the appropriateness of the situation.

The debates between members of other professions and social sciences revealed the opinion that psychology had a valuable contribution to make. Specific contributions suggested included (i) 'relief' or ameliorative work at an individual level; (ii) a particular angle on social problems, specifically their effect on the individual (the comment was made that the psychologist had a particular insight but not necessarily a different or specific way of responding to issues); (iii) an understanding of the transformation process; (iv) leadership of preventive interventions; (v) an academic status that could be used as a tool for change; (vi) research, developing information and understanding; (vii) the planning of environments; (viii) acting as a catalyst rather than as a director; and (ix) helping people to reflect on their oppressive roles.

It was generally felt that the psychologist should work as a part of a multi- or interdisciplinary team, bringing her/his special insights and orientation into the situation and thereby playing not a central but nevertheless important role in the political arena. It was emphasized that both the ameliorative role and involvement in structural change was necessary. However the concern of the psychologist's role in merely helping individuals to cope and therefore often just to conform, was raised. Finally, it was argued that psychologists should offer their services on a democratic basis, not as experts with all the answers. Related to this was the suggestion that psychologists slot into existing organizations rather than initiate programmes. It was noted that psychology was not alone in many of the issues facing it when attempting to define its role and responsibility in the South African context.

Members of the public who attended the extramural course in 1983 referred to three major roles for the psychologist with regard to her/his response to socio-political issues in South Africa: (i) that of adviser to influential people in public and government circles; (ii) the execution of socially relevant research; and (iii) facilitation of self-help amongst the 'have-

nots'. In addition the roles of the psychologist as educator or conscientizer and mediator or negotiator were emphasized.

A number of criticisms relating to the psychologist's present role as perceived by the community organizers in Cape Town were revealed in this study. These included their present inaccessibility, negative stereotype (mental illness stigma), distance from and apparent unconcern for working-class problems, and therefore general irrelevance to the majority of South Africans. (ii) Psychologists were also seen to be helping people to adjust to society, ignoring the need to change broader social structures. However, community organizers in this study saw a potentially valuable role for psychologists in South Africa. The psychologist's approach to work was considered to be of central importance. In this regard it was suggested that psychologists (i) make themselves and their resources known to progressive organizations; (ii) educate the public about their work and thereby break down negative stereotypes; (iii) 'deprofessionalize' while utilizing their valuable skills; (iv) work in clinics and organizations rather than in private practice; (v) re-evaluate their own affluent life styles; and (vi) basically move with the people rather than 'help' them.

The issue of credibility, that is, acceptance in the community, was raised. It was felt that the psychologist needed to show, in action, her/his commitment, and then either work directly with community organizations or attach themselves to trusted and geographically accessible institutions. It was also stated that more black psychologists needed to be trained. Lastly, the relationship between the psychologist and social change was discussed. It was strongly recommended that psychologists provide immediate relief to individual suffering, and help ease the traumas experienced by activists. In addition, psychologists should help individuals to see their problems in the context of the wider context, drawing links between their own concerns and broader social issues. Thirdly, psychologists could help people to reflect and act. With regard to political involvement, it was stated that one could not divorce oneself from the political situation and that the psychologist must define her/his role and social responsibility in helping to bring

about change in South Africa. It was suggested that the psychologist become actively involved in progressive political movements but not as psychologists. However, it was considered important for the psychologist to use her/his skills and insights to help strengthen the democratic movement. A solution offered for the dichotomy between political activity and professional work was the suggestion that the psychologist put political content into her/his work; be engaged in political activity; be available for consultation, group work, training, etc.; and possibly help to change present legislation. While considering the psychologist's potential contribution as valuable, it was felt that basic needs and therefore political and economic change were still of primary importance.

(c) Specific Activities for the Psychologist Wishing to  
Address Broader Social Issues in South Africa:

In addition to the broader roles for psychologists mentioned above, specific activities for the psychologist wishing to address social issues in South Africa were suggested. In the study with South African psychologists the major activity was that of conducting socially useful research, and the dissemination of findings as a means of conscientizing the public. Other major activities included the provision of accessible services to the community; consultancy to key persons in the community and policy makers; public education; the training of non-professionals; the planning and running of community programmes; conflict resolution and intergroup mediation; identification and utilization of community support networks; and working within settings such as schools and industry.

Psychology students at UCT referred to various strategies for intervention. These included relevant action research and information dissemination; public education or consciousness-raising of powerless and powerful groups in South Africa; mobilization and organization of community action groups; coalitions with and support of existing community action; skills training; empowerment programmes and development of self-help groups; programme planning and evaluation; assessment of needs;

crisis intervention; creation of alternative settings; and consultation with key community leaders.

Specific activities referred to be the UDW students included education or conscientization of the public; facilitation and negotiation, particularly between oppressed and oppressor, the government and the people, and between groups in South Africa; consultancy with leaders in the community; advocacy; action research; training community members; sharing knowledge and skills; and the provision of community mental health centers.

Members of the public in the extramural course requested more community-based clinics; training of lay-persons to be caregivers; stress management and child management education and training; marriage guidance; and general development of the self.

The Cape Town community organizers pointed to a variety of activities which were considered to constitute relevant practice. These included (i) research, for example, examining the ways in which social forces interact with personal factors, how people are affected by and respond to social political and economic structures, and providing feedback of research findings to the community; (ii) education and dissemination of information, for example, providing information about stress reactions, emotional disturbances and possible coping strategies, as well as information about existing social services; (iii) counselling, based on a political analysis of the problem and aimed at empowering people, and including crisis intervention work to provide short-term relief; (iv) group work, for example, involvement with organizations around issues of group functioning and group dynamics; and (v) training of non-professionals, for example, in areas of counselling and research, providing psychologically-oriented skills training.

(d) Social Issues to be Addressed in South Africa:

A list of the major issues highlighted for attention for psychologist in South Africa is presented below (Table II). Alongside each issue mentioned, the studies from which these issues arose are identified.

Table II: Social Issues to be Addressed by Psychologists in South Africa

Issue Identified	Studies in which Issue Identified
<u>Political Issues</u>	(1), (2), (3), (4), (6), (7),
Violence	(2)
Apartheid	(1), (2), (3), (4)
Oppression	(1), (2), (3), (4)
Forced removals	(2), (6)
Intergroup conflict	(1), (2), (3), (4), (6)
Black/White relations	(1), (2), (4), (6)
Social change	(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (7)
Public policy	(4), (6), (7)
Resistance work	(3), (7)
Human rights	(6)
<u>Economic Issues</u>	(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7)
Housing	(1), (2), (3), (5), (6)
Unemployment	(1), (2), (3), (5)
Unequal resource distribution	(1), (2), (3), (4)
Poverty	(1), (2), (3), (5)
Social class inequalities	(3), (4)
<u>Cross-cultural Understanding and Interventions</u>	(1), (2), (3)
<u>Family Life</u>	(1), (3), (5), (6)
Marriage	(1), (5), (6)
Parenting	(1), (6)
Children	(1), (3)
Migrant labour	(1), (2)
<u>Education</u>	(1), (3), (4), (6)
<u>Substance Abuse</u>	(1), (3)
<u>Industrial Issues</u>	(1), (7)
<u>Personal Development</u>	(1), (3), (5), (6), (7)
Stress management	(1), (7)
Relief work (ameliorative)	(1), (3), (5), (7)
Self-help	(6)
Self-actualisation/self esteem	(6), (7)

Key: (1) = South African psychologists  
 (2) = UCT psychology students

- (3) = UDW psychology students
- (4) = USA community psychologists
- (5) = Other social scientists/helping professionals
- (6) = Public from Extramural course
- (7) = Cape Town community organizers

## 2. The Relevance of Community Psychology for South Africa

While the above findings relate directly to the community psychology approach and can be incorporated into the development of such, specific questions relevant to the community psychology approach were addressed to participants of most of the studies described above.

A summary of the findings of these empirical studies will be presented under the categories of (a) the relevance of the community psychology approach for South Africa; (b) the form it should take; (c) priorities for community psychology in South Africa; and (d) potential problems and limitations of this approach in South Africa.

### (a) The Relevance of the Community Psychology Approach for South Africa:

Within all the empirical studies described above there was an overwhelming agreement that the community psychology approach had relevance for South Africa and that it should be developed within this context. However within that apparently unified response were clear ideological differences and other diversities with respect to how it should be interpreted in terms of priorities, theoretical basis, and intervention methods. The need to interpret the term 'community' in community psychology became evident, that is, to decide whether it served all communities and had a broad focus, or whether it should specifically serve the interests of oppressed groups in society, became evident. For those few participants who expressed the opinion that this approach was not relevant for South Africa, the main reasons given referred to its inherent problems and limitations within the political context, and the irrelevance of a USA Western model of practice for the South African context.

### (b) An Appropriate Approach for a South African Community

Psychology:

The views of the South African psychologists revealed differences of opinions with respect to the particular form that community psychology should take in South Africa. With reference to the level of analysis and intervention, a number of participants indicated that psychologists needed to work on all levels, that is, individual, group, community, institution, and national structures, and that the actual level of intervention chosen should depend on the particular problem being addressed. However, while many felt that one should be aiming to change the structures, there was a need to start with individuals. The community mental health model was therefore strongly supported.

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Psychology students from UCT stressed the need for intervention at both individual and structural levels, and for attempting to address short-term and long-term goals within South Africa. The need for an indigenous model of community psychology practice for South Africa was emphasized by the psychology students at UDW. While this was stressed, the need to look at other models and avoid the danger of becoming too insular was also highlighted. With respect to levels of intervention which should receive emphasis, the need to address broader social structural problems received the major emphasis, with a clear recognition of the need to simultaneously work with individuals in both an ameliorative and preventative way. A multi-level model of working was therefore generally accepted. Finally, many participants of this study expressed the view that community psychology in South Africa should be an ideologically broad based approach, open to serving all communities irrespective of values and political viewpoints; that all people in South Africa had a right to these services. In contrast to this position, there was an equally strong feeling on the part of other participants that community psychology should be a psychology serving the oppressed groups in South Africa only.

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The USA community psychologists considered the empowerment/social action models of community psychology to be most appropriate for a South African community psychology. The development of community psychology in South Africa was considered to be a valuable move in terms of bringing like-minded

psychologists together, but the problem of ideological differences within such a group would have to be confronted and a decision made as to whether to develop a broad-based or more ideologically focussed community psychology in South Africa.

The debates between other social scientists and helping professionals revealed an emphasis on the need for community psychology in South Africa to do ameliorative work with the individual and to become involved in structural change where necessary and appropriate. In the short-term, the community mental health model was perceived to be viable, whereas the social action and empowerment perspectives were considered to be more appropriate for long-term change in South Africa. Some participants also emphasized the need for a focus on community development.

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For the members of the public at the extramural course, community psychology in South Africa needed to work at the structural and individual levels of change. This dual emphasis on both individual and systemic interventions was also forthcoming from the Cape Town community organizers who were clearly asking for a psychological practice that addressed needs at both these levels simultaneously. The location of 'relevant' practice in the broader progressive political movement in South Africa was also highlighted by these participants.

#### (c) Priorities for Community Psychology in South Africa:

While the specific question of priorities for a South African community psychology was not directly addressed with the South African psychologists, their comments on various aspects of the role and responsibility of the psychologist in South African society indicated clear priorities of focus. The broad range of ideological stances representative of the sample of psychologists revealed itself in diverse emphases. For most, the importance placed on the development of the community mental health model of practice, and therefore work at the individual level, was paramount. However the need for structural change and the psychologist's participation in that was also considered to be a worthy aim. Social issues identified as important for the psychology profession to address revealed a clear priority for an

emphasis on political and economic issues, while issues relating to other spheres of the individual's life (e.g. cultural and family institutions) also received a fair amount of support. Race relations was seen to be an important issue for South Africa. The major intervention method supported by participants in this study was that of action research. However substantial numbers of participants supported a number of other activities.

With reference to whose interests should be served in South Africa, the UCT psychology students generally identified the powerless, black, working-class and oppressed people of South Africa. However, many felt that the oppressor and white electorate should also be targets for intervention. Social issues identified revealed a clear priority for the psychologist to address issues of an economic, political, and cultural nature, the latter referring specifically to cultural differences in South Africa. The role of the South African community psychologist in developing appropriate theories for understanding issues and problems from a psychological point of view, was emphasized by these participants. The need for an indigenous, appropriate psychology for South Africa was further stressed. A number of intervention methods received attention, the main emphasis being on the need for action research and information dissemination for the purpose of conscientization of oppressed and oppressor groups in South Africa.

The UDW psychology students outlined a number of priorities for a South African community psychology. These included (i) aims/values outlined by the USA approach, with a particular emphasis on the empowerment of oppressed groups, cultural diversity and relativity, primary prevention, citizen participation and contribution towards participatory democracy in South Africa, and the ecological perspective as a way of understanding and guiding action. It should be noted that while the value of cultural diversity and relativity was supported because of the realistic diversity within the South African context, a great deal of concern was shown in respect to the potential misuse of this value for the perpetuation of apartheid structures and division of groups in South Africa; (ii) a major emphasis on community psychology in South Africa serving the

interests of oppressed groups in South Africa. In this regard there was a divided opinion on whom one should work with to address this oppression. The majority of participants expressed the view that the South African community psychologist should work directly with oppressed groups and groups of oppressors in order to address issues of oppression in South Africa; (iii) the role of community psychologists in South Africa to facilitate constructive social change processes and help to prepare for a future post-apartheid society, was emphasized; (iv) the facilitation of integration of different groups, with an emphasis on intergroup understanding and the development of a common South African culture; and (v) it was clearly stated by some that a South African community psychology must not support present political structures and should make a strong stand against racism in South Africa.

For the community psychologists in the USA interracial tensions were considered to be a major focal point for a community psychologist in South Africa, in addition to other issues relevant to the broader political, economic and educational structures. The need to challenge the apartheid structures was emphasized. It was generally felt that community psychologists in South Africa should participate in the dismantling of oppressive structures and that this could mean working either directly with oppressed groups or with oppressive structures or groups. A value-neutral role was considered to be inappropriate for the South African community psychologist, who needed to speak out against injustices in the country. However the need for a facilitative and negotiative role was also emphasized. The need for South African psychologists to form coalitions and work with existing progressive organizations and groups, particularly the church, was expressed.

For the other social scientists and helping professionals the emphases of both ameliorative work with individuals and structural change were revealed as priorities for community psychology in South Africa. While the community psychologist's particular expertise should be utilized in a broader movement for progressive social change in South Africa, the need for a democratic sharing of this expertise was emphasized.

While the issue of priorities for a South African community psychology approach was not directly addressed with the members of the public at the extramural course, their emphasis on the need for the psychologist to influence public policy and do socially relevant research revealed a clear emphasis on the need for structural change. The roles of educator and mediator were emphasized in this regard. Issues relating to the apartheid structures were seen to be a particular priority for these participants. While structural issues received a great deal of attention, individual needs and rights were considered to be of equal importance by many.

Priorities for a framework for a relevant practice of psychology in South Africa were clearly identified by the Cape Town community organizers. The need for psychologists to publicize their potential contribution to social change in South Africa was emphasized; the need for the psychologist's practice to reflect a shared power or democratic ethos, working with rather than for people; the need for psychologists to re-evaluate their own affluence within the context of economic realities in South Africa; the need for the psychologist to build up a credible image through overt expressions of commitment to progressive change in South Africa; and to provide immediate relief for victims of the system and support political activists, while challenging the structures that are perceived to be associated with problems in living, all constitute suggestions for an appropriate community psychology in South Africa.

#### (d) Potential Problems and Limitations of the Community

##### Psychology Approach in South Africa:

Problems and limitations of the use of this approach in South Africa perceived by the South African psychologists included two major factors (i) resistance, both from the political status quo powers and from oppressed communities themselves; and (ii) the problem of funding (who would pay for such work and how does this affect accountability, etc).

The UCT psychology students identified a number of major problems and limitations: (i) resistance to change, particularly from the present government; (ii) the problem of disastrous

consequences of revolutionary change but the impatience with evolutionary social change; (iii) problems related to trying to change the system from within; (iv) problems of credibility and language/culture distance which would be created by a white community psychologist wishing to work in black settings; (v) the irrelevance of Western psychology for South Africa; (vi) the possibility of abuse of community research; (vii) lack of funding; (viii) the fear that powerless people have of the power structures in South Africa; (ix) the heavy consequences of taking political risks; and (x) the danger of being too idealistic.

UDW psychology students referred to the probable restrictions from the present state authorities, and expressed the concern that it was possibly too dangerous to practice community psychology in South Africa at present. Secondly, the problem of the community psychologist's credibility in oppressed communities was raised; and thirdly, the fear that community psychology could unwittingly find itself conducting practice that supported the present apartheid-capitalist system, was expressed.

Difficulties perceived with the community psychology approach in South Africa by other social scientists/helping professionals included the issue of credibility and acceptability to certain communities; the risky and therefore insecure nature of the work, and likelihood of it being resisted or avoided by most psychologists; and the fact that prevention work was often such a difficult and thankless task. It was suggested that some problems could be avoided if the psychologist was part of the community s/he was working in; if the emphasis was on the skills and training community psychology offered rather than the title; and if bureaucratic settings were avoided.

Members of the public attending the extramural course referred to the following problems and limitations of the community psychology approach in South Africa: (i) the lack of exposure to and real cultural differences between groups in South Africa; (ii) the lack of sufficient personpower to provide adequate psychological services; (iii) that many communities would resist change or want it to be either too slow or too quick; (iv) political constraints; (v) the lack of education about available

helping services and resources; and (vi) that the community approach was not sufficiently cohesive or organized.

The major limitations of the psychologist wishing to work at a broader socio-political level perceived by the Cape Town community organizers were (i) inadequate knowledge on the part of community members as to what the psychologist had to offer them; (ii) the issue of credibility and trust, especially for white, middle-class psychologists; (iii) the aforementioned psychologists' lack of understanding of many community problems; (iv) the psychologist's present image in the community, with particular reference to her/his perceived role in supporting present economic and political structures; and (v) that psychological needs were not considered to be of primary importance in comparison to basic economical needs.

### 3.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### Summary

There appeared to be a general consensus that the psychologist does have a responsibility to respond to social issues in as far as they influence the development of individuals. However some caution, particularly on the part of other professions, was shown in terms of whether the psychologist was presently sufficiently equipped to carry out this responsibility adequately, and whether in fact there was such a commitment to involvement in the broader socio-political arena within the psychology profession. The issue of a citizen-psychologist role split was raised with arguments both for and against such a split being expressed.

The psychology-politics debate arising out of the studies revealed that while the majority of participants expressed the view that psychology should become involved in the political arena, many were against this. A minority of those in favour of political involvement indicated an unquestionable relationship between psychology and politics, referring to the dialectic nature of the relationship. The issue of values in the practice of psychology was raised, with divided opinions about the role of the psychologist in this regard. Some supported a professional

value-neutral stance while others argued that the dialectic nature of the psychology-society relationship did not allow for any choice in the matter.

With regard to the role of the psychologist in responding to social issues in South Africa, issues that arose included the following major points: (a) that the psychologist should work within a multi- or interdisciplinary context, and that although professional territorialism was recognized as being an inhibiting factor, it was not considered to be an insurmountable problem; (b) that the psychologist had a specific contribution to offer to the overall effort towards social change in this country; (c) that most participants viewed the value-neutral role as not only undesirable but impossible, particularly in South Africa; however, many argued for a value-neutral role in this regard; (d) that the power relations between the psychologist and clients needed to be confronted, with every effort being made to work in a democratic manner, while acknowledging the power and skills that do exist; (e) related to this was the suggestion from most of the studies that the psychologist work with existing programmes and community organizations; (f) that interventions be aimed at both individual and structural levels were necessary; and (g) that the issue of credibility needed to be addressed.

With regard to the specific contributions of the psychologist to the social change process the following resources were considered to be of particular importance: (a) the psychologist's understanding of and skills in working with individuals, particularly in terms of understanding and drawing links between the person and the environment, and ameliorative or relief work with victims of the social system; (b) understanding of and skills in working with groups; (c) research expertise; (d) ability to conceptualize complex issues and build appropriate theories particularly in terms of the social change process; (e) a perspective and ability to help individuals and groups to reflect on their roles in society and thereby confront ideological constraints; and (f) an action or intervention orientation.

Specific roles and activities which were considered to be valuable included the roles of researcher, conscientizer or

educator, trainer/skills disseminator, counsellor, consultant, programme planner and evaluator, negotiator and facilitator. Specific activities relating to the above included action research, dissemination of findings, consultancy to policy makers and community leaders, public education, non-professional training, community organization, provision of accessible helping services, conflict resolution, stress management training, needs assessment, creation of alternative settings, analysis and utilization of support networks, crisis intervention, advocacy, etc. Specific settings which emerged as being of particular importance were schools, work, the church, and progressive organizations in South Africa.

There was strong agreement across the studies in terms of social issues which should constitute a central focus for the psychologist in South Africa. Issues gaining the highest frequency within and across the aforementioned studies were primarily of an economic and political nature, including specific concerns such as apartheid policies and their consequences, oppression (gender, class, and race), intergroup conflict, social change process, public policy and legislation, resistance (working towards an alternative nonracial democratic society with progressive organizations), housing, unemployment, unequal resource distribution (material and power resources), and poverty. Relations between black and white people were considered to be of particular importance and related to this was the emphasis on the need for more cross-cultural understanding and work.

Family life, with an emphasis on marriage problems and guidance, parenting problems and skills, and prevention interventions with children constituted a major focus. Migrant labour and its effects on family life was also considered to be an important issue to be addressed.

Education received a great deal of attention, with a particular emphasis on the psychologist's role in contributing towards an alternative education system within the broader restructuring of South African society. Education was also stressed because, as with the family, the schooling system provided an ideal setting for preventative work.

Various issues relating to personal development were raised, particularly the need to do relief or ameliorative work, help people learn to manage stress, and the general development of self-esteem. Alcohol and drug abuse were considered to be serious community problems which needed to be addressed. Finally, various work-related issues and problems in the industrial setting were highlighted.

The majority of participants of all studies indicated that the community psychology approach was relevant for South Africa. However the ideological differences and other diversities that existed within this approach were generally recognized. For those participants who looked at the different models encompassed by this approach, there was a general feeling that all levels of intervention were necessary, and that although structural change was fundamental the community mental health model was appropriate and necessary. However the social action and empowerment models were considered to be particularly pertinent to South Africa in the long-term. The need to interpret the term 'community' in community psychology as being a psychology for the oppressed communities in South Africa was emphasized by many participants in all the studies. A clear priority for issues relating to power and oppression to be central to the community psychology approach in South Africa, was therefore revealed. Lastly, when reflecting on the relevance of community psychology to South Africa, there was a strong feeling that it should involve itself in existing programmes and activities rather than focus on developing its own identity and uniqueness, both inside and outside of the broader psychology profession.

Alongside the positive feelings about a community psychology approach in South Africa was a recognition of the potential problems likely to be encountered in this situation. Problems or limitations stressed by participants from most of the studies included (a) resistance from state authorities; (b) resistance from communities themselves, and related to this, (c) the question of credibility; (d) ideological differences and polarisation within South Africa or within psychology itself; and (e) the issue of funding. In addition to the above, the views of psychologists and psychological services in South Africa

as expressed by the Cape Town community organizers revealed the present perception of the psychologist's resources as being inadequate, inaccessible, irrelevant, or of secondary urgency, and associated with perceived negative factors such as mental illness, middle-class values, etc. This overall attitude towards the psychologist's contribution to the liberation struggle in South Africa in itself presents potential barriers to becoming more relevant.

### Issues Arising from the Research

A number of issues pertinent to the question of the role and responsibility of the psychologist in South African society, and the development of community psychology within this context, emerged from the research.

This includes the issue of values arising from an exploration of the psychology-society/politics relationship. The question of values becomes pertinent when looking at one's responsibility, one's role as psychologist, and the socialization of the psychologist. The relationship between psychology and society, and in particular, the way these two inform and transform one another, becomes a central issue. Furthermore, ethical issues such as accountability, value-neutrality, alignment with political groupings, are all important in this regard.

The term 'community psychology' also raises many issues. In particular the questions 'who are the community', 'whose interests should community psychology serve', 'should it be ideologically broad-based or partisan', are crucial.

A further major issue arising from the present study relates to professionalism. This includes the questions of the role of psychology in society, and in particular, the issue of professionalization of the community psychology perspective; the way in which the psychologist interprets, in practice, her/his role as expert; the role of theory in practice; the power relations between psychologist and 'clients'; the process of democratization of psychological knowledge and skills; and the process of socialization of the psychologist.

The psychologist's approach to social change in South Africa

is central to the development of a community psychology perspective. In this regard, some issues relating to central sociological debates have been highlighted in this study. The extent to which individualism is predominant in South African psychology and therefore the extent to which individualist approaches to social change are supported is important.

The issue of developing an appropriate community psychology in this context needs to be explored in relation to the location of psychologists in this context. A number of issues relevant to this question are highlighted in this study.

The above mentioned issues do not constitute a comprehensive list but rather are those which were repeatedly highlighted throughout the entire research process within numerous conversations, debates, workshops, seminars, formal empirical studies, and, in particular, through direct experience in the community.

The purpose of this section is not to discuss the various theoretical issues and relationships in detail (this is attempted in chapter 4) but rather to discuss the findings of the empirical studies in the light of these issues. The reader is asked to refer to the more detailed theoretical discussion following this section for clarification of many of the issues raised.

### **1. The Role of Values in Community Psychology**

The issue of values arose within a number of debates around the question of the role and responsibility of the psychologist in society, and when exploring a relevant community psychology for South Africa. The debates revolved around the acknowledgement of the existence of values in one's work as a scientist or professional and the question of value-neutrality versus partisanship or alignment in psychological practice.

Acknowledging that one's practice is not value free and taking a deliberate decision to align oneself and one's professional work with a particular political grouping are considered to be two separate issues. While psychologists may acknowledge that science and therefore one's profession is socially embedded, they may still avoid a partisan position.

Within the studies conducted, an awareness of some form of

relationship between psychology and society appears to be evident. However, the consequence of this for issues relating directly to the role of the psychologist are not necessarily realized. The possibility and even need for a value-neutral practice was emphasized by many participants, particularly in terms of a therapy and negotiation or conflict resolution role.

While there are many arguments for a value-neutral stance in psychological practice, a position which expresses itself in the dominant ethos of traditional psychology, the argument against this position is a strong one, supported by psychologists from a variety of fields and contexts (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Foster, 1986; Fox, 1985; Fullagar & Paizis, 1986; Goodstein & Sandler, 1978; Heller et al, 1984; Howard, 1985; Rappaport, 1977; Sandler, 1978; Schacht, 1985; Spitzer, 1985; Swartz, 1986; Webster, 1986). The dialectical relationship of society and science and the acceptance therefore of values in one's work is the key issue in this debate. As Rappaport (1977) argues

the helping professions are so affected by current social forces that there is little sense in the argument that direct political action on the part of social scientists is 'unprofessional'. The passive acceptance of status quo social forces is viewed as equally political as active intervention at social change. (p26)

Being a neutral agent would be denying the problem, since an effort to remain neutral might constitute an ethical position amounting to support for the status quo prevailing in the society in which one functions (Gilbert, 1985). The psychologist's choice is therefore not whether to be value-neutral, but rather whether s/he is supporting the present system or working towards alternatives. Dawes (1985) argues that an uncritical stance

exhibits powerful support (through silence) for practices which are destructive to the mental health of the South African community. (p56)

The editors of the journal 'Psychology in Society' (Vol 6, 1986) outline three choices for social science practice in South Africa: one either supports and promotes apartheid in South Africa, or opposes it, or opts for scientific neutrality.

According to these authors, the first two would be 'honest' in as much as the political aims behind them are not concealed, whereas in the third option, usually favoured by psychologists, the political aims are concealed (at least from themselves) and in it the practice of ideology achieves its most subtle form.

If one accepts the inevitability of the presence of values in one's work, and changes the question from whether, to how, what, and so on, the practical quest for an appropriate response becomes imperative (Spitzer, 1985). It is suggested that the first step is an acknowledgement of the presence of values. Thereafter, one would need to discover the nature of those values through a process of self-reflective critique. In this regard the Critical perspective is believed to provide one useful tool for conducting this examination. The process of values clarification (which would be an ongoing process) would then result in a confrontation of one's values, evaluating whether in fact they are acceptable to one or not. The process of re-choosing those values, if appropriate, or choosing alternatives, would then be facilitated. While 'choosing' new values is not a superficial exercise, it is believed to be a viable part of a journey towards an integration of values that fulfill one's goals in life. Having said that, one needs to acknowledge that there is a certain opaqueness to the self-critique process (refer discussion on the Critical approach in chapter 4) which will largely prevent one from uncovering those interests which motivate our actions and choices in society. It would be idealist to assume that psychologists will make new choices without some form of external pressure. This issue is discussed in more detail when looking at the issue of community psychology in South Africa.

Having clarified one's values and made appropriate choices and decisions in this regard, the psychologist needs to be open about them (Appendix C; Attneave, 1984; Goodstein & Sandler, 1978; Rappaport, 1977; Scarr, 1985). The call for an explicit presentation of the psychologist's values is based on the need to avoid deception, to both oneself and one's 'community' (Rappaport, 1977). This may result in the community grouping and the psychologist realizing that they cannot work together

(Goodstein & Sandler, 1978) but this is considered to be an important part of the process of negotiating a work contract, particularly when one's psychological practice is in the socio-political arena. An omission of this step in planning community programmes could result in a number of minor and major problems, within the process itself as well as in the end product.

While accepting the need for being explicit about one's values, it has been argued that the psychologist does not have a right to impose these onto others (Appendix C). The need to respect the values of others is therefore emphasized, keeping in mind the need to confront unjust practices where appropriate.

The issue of alignment is taken up by a number of psychologists, within and outside of South Africa (Editorial in *Psychology in Society*, 1986; Foster, 1986; Fullagar & Paizis, 1986; Huszczo et al, 1984; McPherson & Sutton, 1981; Rappaport, 1984; Serrano-Garcia, 1984; Webster, 1986).

Serrano-Garcia's (1984) questions such as 'should one hide one's partisanship as a psychologist', 'should we work with one particular ideological group only' etc., are relevant. They are particularly pertinent to the psychologist choosing to work in a more politically overt nature. Within OASSSA, for example, the issue of partisanship and sectarianism is a regular debating focus, forced upon the health workers involved by virtue of the issues and clientele with whom they work.

While there appear to be no simple answers to these questions, and while one's values may lead one to attempt a non-partisan position, it is argued, from personal experience, that in certain instances, one has no choice but to align oneself. If one does not consciously make the choice oneself, one's actions will be perceived as a choice by others, and one's position with one grouping or another will be set. An example of this dilemma would be the psychologist who, having decided to work with any group requiring aid, is asked to work for the police (or military, or House of Representatives, or provincial council, etc). Having made the choice to respond to that call for help, that psychologist may have great difficulty in finding acceptance with groups involved in the broader liberation struggle in South Africa. The opposite situation is also likely to prevail

although perhaps not so vehemently. The psychologist is therefore forced to make certain decisions about whom s/he will serve, either making an informed, intentional choice or having it made for her/him.

The seriousness of this issue is noted by other psychologists in South Africa. Foster (1986) argues that

the fierce nature of a struggle for a full democratic society will leave little room for the comforts of a 'neutral' stance. (p65)

The editors of *Psychology in Society* (Vol 6, 1986) argue that a neutral stance is not viable within communities that are not bourgeois, and that for those opposing apartheid in South Africa, a neutral stance with liberal humanistic dimensions is a liability. For example, Fullagar & Paizis (1986) and Huszczo et al (1984) argue that one cannot work from a neutral stance when working with unions. The psychologist would need to prove her/his commitment to the workers in order to establish sufficient credibility to practice within that setting. Fullagar & Paizis suggest that any aid should be partisan in that "it should incorporate, accept, and promote the goals of the labour organizations" (p79). This is particularly important if the psychologist is going to respond to the call for the psychologist 'to work with us, not for us'.

In conclusion, Webster's (1986) comments on the issue of alignment highlight the South African reality:

Increasingly, the social scientific community will find it difficult to avoid 'taking sides' in the wider ideological debate surrounding the form and nature of change in South Africa. (p26)

It is therefore a question of

with whom shall we align ourselves and for what purposes shall we expend our resources, train our students, and design our social policy initiatives? (p215)

It is argued therefore that the present South African political situation no longer allows one the possibility of being unaligned. By virtue of whom one is perceived to serve, indicated by the areas of study chosen, and where and with whom

one works and is accountable, one makes oneself accessible to some groups and unacceptable to others. McPherson & Sutton (1981) refer to this need for the psychologist to make deliberate choices, discriminating for the sake of some and against the interests of others.

One solution to the issue of alignment that has been suggested in both the study with psychologists in South Africa (Appendix A) and with the USA community psychologists (Appendix C), has been for the psychologist to avoid alignment in her/his professional capacity where this alignment would interfere with professional practice, but to align her/himself and conduct political activist work in her/his personal capacity as a citizen. This suggests a psychologist/citizen role split, a position considered appropriate by some but impossible and unacceptable by others.

Halmos (1978) refers to a similar distinction, arguing that when working with an individual, the nature of the relationship between a therapist and client is characterized by its global, mutual, particular, tentative, and value-neutral nature. In contrast, he argues, the political activist attempts to change a system, this relationship being characterized by segmentedness, onesidedness, universality, forcefulness, and partisanship. The appropriateness of the value-neutral stance is therefore determined by whether one is working on a personal or political level.

What appears to be necessary is a deliberate value choice to play a reflective role in some situations, using facilitative skills to enable others to explore either personal issues or conflicts between people or groups. Within that role, one would need to decide the appropriateness of including an analytical aspect, raising particular questions for the purposes of achieving specific goals. This is not a new question. Therapy is always theory-bound and, depending on the theory, will emphasize analyses or not. In a situation where one's theory influences one to analyze a particular situation as oppression, the psychologist's choice is whether to hold back that analysis and allow the participants to pursue their own goals, or to intervene with an analysis of what is being perceived as an oppressive situation. It has been argued (Dawes, 1985, and

others) that silence in that instance would amount to a support of that oppression. What is the role of the psychologist in this regard? If a central aim of community psychology is the issue of power and oppression (Rappaport, 1977, and others), this suggests that our social responsibility is to acknowledge and confront such oppressive situations.

## 2. Professionalism

As a result of the empowerment framework favoured by the community psychology approach in the USA, other contexts abroad, and within South Africa, the issue of power within the professional-client relationship becomes a central one. Furthermore, community psychology's espoused focus on issues of power and oppression in society, and therefore, commitment to powerless, disenfranchised, oppressed groups in society, should result in a reflection of its own position in this regard. The community psychologist's practice would need to reflect its rhetorical stance on these issues and therefore be seen to be facilitating the sharing of power and minimizing of oppressive processes and structures.

The issue of power in psychological practice is inherent in the professionalization of psychology within society. Louw (1986) refers to an important stage of this process, that is, when psychology attempts to prove its relevance and competency in a specific domain by, for example, demonstrating that it has the necessary skills and techniques to intervene in a particular problem area. Within his analysis psychology thereby translates an area of social conflict into a field of practice, and unwittingly, transfers power from the community to the profession (Bannister, 1983). In this way, the mental health dimension of problems is 'given over' to a group of experts (refer also Hayes, 1983).

In South Africa, the recent interest in community psychology needs to be critically viewed. It could be seen to be an extension of psychology's domain in the face of an identity crisis where many are criticizing psychology for being irrelevant to the current crisis. Louw's (1986) analysis of the role of the psychology profession in the realm of labour in the first half of

this century in South Africa clearly illuminated the ways in which a profession translates an area of social conflict into a field of practice, extending its professional powers. The present rise of interest in the community psychology approach is perhaps a further attempt to do just that - to translate the present political crisis into a field of political psychological practice.

Some community organizers (Appendix D) have referred to the problem of the compartmentalization of skills within different professions and the drawing of distinct boundaries between areas of expertise and specialization. This points to the functioning of professional bodies which control the entrance, training, registration, and practice of professionals within a particular discipline. This separation of the 'helping' services from existing community social support networks was considered to be unhelpful to the community organizers and a distinct obstacle to 'empowerment'. The role of the non-professional and community members as helpers of each other was considered to be an important one, and should therefore be facilitated rather than blocked by professionalism prevalent in psychology and other helping professions. Swartz (1986) refers to the tendency in the psychology profession to devalue and even obstruct the development of non-professional psychological practice, except for the present trend of supporting the use of indigenous healers in certain contexts. He states, furthermore, that the recent ethical code, produced by the Institute for Clinical Psychology in South Africa, implies "that the way the psychologist should respond to the social context is by being more professional" (p9).

The issue of professionalism is one which is prevalent within the community psychology approach in the USA. The traps of professionalism have long been recognized within that context, which is why the debate over 'licensing' (registration with a professional board) has been raging since the inception of this approach. Community psychology, in its sincere attempt to 'deprofessionalize', has avoided developing into a discipline, attempting rather to be a movement or perspective (Appendix C; Davidson II, 1986; Hiller (in Rappaport, 1981); Keys, 1986;

Newbrough, 1986). Rappaport refers to some central issues in this regard, commenting that

to the extent that a discipline becomes more a profession and less a social movement its practitioners are likely to become more defensive, conservative and losing their sense of urgency. (p10)

The role of the psychologist as expert has been perceived as a particular potential problem in attempting to work within a collaborative framework. Turton (1986) refers to this, suggesting that "expertise may easily become a barrier between the 'expert' helper and the 'naive' beneficiaries" (p98). The obstacles often presented by the expert role is also recognized by others (Appendix C; Dalton, 1986; Fullagar & Paizis, 1986; Swartz & Swartz, 1986; Swartz, 1986). Dalton (1986) has suggested that

to do our work well, we need to step down from the expert role and define ourselves as partners with the people we serve. (p14)

In an attempt to reverse power relations within the professional relationship, progressive psychologists in South Africa have often tended not only to step down from but totally reject the expert role. This position has not been found to be a helpful one. While the issue of deprofessionalization is an important one, caution needs to be exercised so that, in trying to be democratic, psychologists do not devalue their professional resources. Swartz (1986) argues that

to reject the 'professional' title, in keeping with the rhetoric of equality, is to accept a very particular view of professionalism as the only one. In the long run, it may be far more fruitful to explore how the concept of 'professional' in itself needs to be transformed. (p19)

It is therefore not a question of rejecting one's training, but rather exploring alternative ways of sharing those resources so as to avoid inappropriate dependency. As participants in the American study (Appendix C) commented, 'going native' in an attempt to share power could be as ineffective as the traditional usage of the role of expert. What was needed, according to them,

was an honest appraisal of one's resources and a sharing of these in a way that encourages a sharing of power and mutual respect for competencies. When offered in this way it is accepted and valued by community groupings. Certainly, in Fullagar & Paizis' (1986) study with unions in South Africa, professional assistance was considered valuable if it was "participative in nature and undertaken as a cooperative endeavour" (p80).

Some community organizers in Cape Town (Appendix D) considered professional knowledge and skills to be very important. They did, however, identify a problem in the monopolization of skills by elitists groups such as psychologists. It was felt that this fostered a dependency on the 'expert' who usually assumed responsibility for and ownership of the person's problems. They recognized that this was reinforced by the 'clients' who viewed professionals as advice givers and problem solvers. The power to resolve conflict is therefore transferred from the community to the professional (Bannister, 1983).

While the values of community psychology demand an horizontal power relation between the psychologist and members of the community with whom s/he is working, the psychologist's training is usually inadequate as a preparation for this demand (Appendix C). At present the psychologist's socialization into her/his profession emphasizes the role of psychologist as elite, as expert in the field of human behaviour, as helper, and so on, and perpetuates a professional distance from those who are being helped. A top-downwards power relationship, characteristic of the psychology profession, and other helping professions, is usually accepted and perpetuated in a number of ways. Williams (1961) refers to this top-downwards relationship attitude in his analysis of the social use of the concept of 'service' in the rise of 19th century industrial society in Europe, this concept reflecting a particular material interest. Applied to the interaction of psychologists and clients, Williams's analysis of the concept of 'service' when it is used by a body which is relatively strongly bound to the ruling classes, involves a top-downwards attitude towards clients, the aim of the helper being to raise the other upwards. Within this context William's contrasts this position with that of 'solidarity', which begins

with the reversal of power or authority relationships, and involves mutual responsibility.

Within Williams's (1961) analysis, the social position and material interests of the psychologist is a factor perpetuating a top-downwards power relation. The psychologist's material interest in this regard, developed within a Capitalist society, together with normal power needs and a professional training that perpetuates a top-downwards expression of that, make it very difficult for the psychologist to move easily into a horizontal power relation. This difficulty not only arises from the psychologist her/himself, but also from the 'community' who have themselves been socialized into a dependence relationship with experts and professionals (Swartz & Swartz, 1986). They would therefore tend to enter a relationship with the psychologist expecting and accepting a particular power relationship within that context. While it should be noted that, as with all things, this dependency can be appropriate within certain contexts (e.g. a crisis), the psychologist wishing to change her/his approach from a top-downwards to a horizontal one is then faced with having to deal with the community's expectations of her/him to assume a traditional role.

An obstacle to developing a horizontal power relationship is the professional-client relationship distance created by class structures of society (Appendix C; Swartz & Swartz, 1986; Williams, 1961). If the psychologist is (as s/he almost always is) middle-class, and the 'clients' working-class, the development of a shared power working relationship becomes a difficult one. Not only is it difficult because of factors such as different realities, worldviews, and material interests, but it could also be viewed as hypocritical if the structural inequalities remain unchallenged. Perhaps this is why some participants in the study with community organizers in Cape Town (Appendix D) commented that psychologists wishing to serve the working-class needed to examine their own affluent life styles. If the psychologist wishes to work within a 'solidarity' framework which requires the reversal of power and authority relationships (Williams, 1961), how does s/he do this while still supporting the structural inequalities in this regard?

The number of obstacles to developing a horizontal power relationship between the psychologist and community group highlight the reality that the issue of democratization of the professional-client interaction cannot be simply resolved through the willingness of the professional to discard her/his expert role and divest her/himself of the accompanying status. The process of democratization depends on a number of factors: on the participants, the community concerned, the social distance between the different parties, the nature of the interaction, and the context and broader power structures within which it occurs.

Community psychologists in the USA (Appendix C) suggested a number of ways in which the psychologist could overcome or prevent some of the above problems. As personal needs were often at the root of the inability of the psychologist to do 'partnership' work, the need for the psychologist to confront her/his values and personal needs, during and after training, was stressed. Secondly, the psychologist should work with existing local programmes, sharing her/his resources in existing social change structures rather than initiating her/his own programmes. Another solution to professional distance problems would be to contribute as a fellow citizen rather than as a professional psychologist. A further point was made that the psychologist would find it easier to gain access and credibility in the community if s/he was associated with a university rather than a state agency institution. Another comment was that the complex factors contributing towards the relationship distance issue could be lessened if the psychologist was a member of that oppressed community, reflecting similar worldviews and material interests. Following from that, it was suggested that 'linkers' or mediators also be used to facilitate communication between different groups.

Fullagar & Paizis (1986) make a further suggestion, that

any skewed distribution of power between researcher and researched could be minimized if researchers adopt the role of 'resource' rather than 'expert'. (p82)

Whether one changes the term 'expert' to 'resource' or works towards a redefinition of the term 'professional' (Swartz, 1986),

the role change required demands a confrontation of one's own attitudes, needs and social position. If one is going to change one's view of oneself from being the resource to being one resource in the definition of and response to social problems, one has to firstly recognize one's strengths and limitations in this regard, and come to terms with one's personal needs for status and power. In addition it calls for a genuine belief in the competencies and resources that already exist within a community, not in a patronizing way, but in a way that recognizes that an individual view of a problem and its possible solution is not as adequate as a collective one. Resources, including the psychologist's, are equally respected and necessary to the problem-solving process. The value of any resource would therefore be determined at any one time by the particular need to fulfill a collective goal. The psychologist has to be prepared to help and be helped; to teach and to learn; to be strong and weak.

Within this framework, the psychologist's knowledge and skills are therefore considered to be one valuable resource in addressing social problems (Appendix D; Fullagar & Paizis, 1986; Swartz, 1986). This issue is twofold: (a) the expertise is not to be rejected, it is the way in which it is offered that is under question; and (b) the importance of an appropriate use of expertise is emphasized. With regard to this latter point, it should be noted that the empowerment model, which supports the value of participatory democracy upheld in resistance circles in South Africa (Matiwana & Walters, 1986) is not a blue-print for the role of the psychologist in the socio-political arena. Certain strategies call for a use of one's presently accepted power status as expert to fight injustices in society. It would be inappropriate and ineffective to work democratically in certain instances. Examples of this would include legal work, where the psychologist acts as expert witness; research that is used as a tool for challenging certain communities and structures; advocacy of various kinds; etc. In addition to these sorts of situations where the expert role is used as a tool for change, in some situations, the psychologist is needed to help contain a situation, where dependency on her/his skills is

necessary and appropriate in order to work through a particular problem. In that context, the psychologist is called in specifically to play a particular role needed by a particular group or community.

When perusing the findings emerging from the study with South African psychologists (Appendix A), it is interesting to note that while the need for some form of democratic practice is evident in the rhetoric emerging from the interviews and questionnaires, there is a strong support (following a trend also evident in the USA community psychologists' study - Appendix C) for a policy science approach (influencing policy makers). This indicates a leaning towards a technical or positivistic approach and role. This approach is diametrically opposed to a genuine democratic process which emphasizes the role of the psychologist as a participant rather than an expert. This raises contradictions which need to be acknowledged and power relations which need to be questioned in terms of the aims of the empowerment process.

A further interesting point arising out of the South African study (Appendix A) relates to the concepts of 'service' and 'solidarity' referred to by Williams (1961). In this regard, the interviews with psychologists in various parts of the country revealed a tendency on the part of many psychologists to view the professional psychologist-client/community relationship in a top-downwards fashion. An attitude of 'service' rather than 'solidarity' was therefore suggested in responses such as "I would like to uplift the black community", and so on. Responses such as these were genuine, with the respective participants expressing a sincere wish to extend their practice into the community. While a 'solidarity' stance was evident in some instances, it appears that the majority of the participants in the study saw community psychology as an opportunity to uplift their fellow human beings (usually blacks). This issues needs to be addressed when looking at the development of a community psychology in South Africa.

### **3. Community Psychology and Social Change in South Africa**

While many participants in the present study acknowledged the

need for structural change in South Africa and therefore some psychological activity in that regard, there was a strong emphasis on the need for psychologists to work with individuals. A predominantly individualistic orientation in the South African psychologist's views (Appendix A) was therefore evident. This is not unexpected given the general individualistic bias of psychology throughout the world. In addition to the emphasis on the individual and therefore change at that level, the type of change advocated by participants in this study and community psychology in general needs to be considered. In this regard, an evolutionary or developmental reformist approach is paramount. In particular is the emphasis on influencing policy makers; and the emphasis on conflict resolution between different groupings in South Africa. The reformist nature of these approaches needs to be critically considered. This does not imply that they should not be accepted. Even in revolutionary approaches, aspects of reformist policies are seen to be necessary. However, there is the danger of supporting an approach which glosses over the roots of South Africa's problems and fails to address fundamental issues.

Evident in the empirical studies is a strong emphasis on race relations and issues in South Africa, with little emphasis on class relationships and industrial issues. This is not surprising either for the American or South African participants, all of whom are products of a capitalist society. The relative lack of a class analysis should however be addressed as it results in an incomplete analysis of the South African reality, and therefore an inappropriate approach to social change.

### 3.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The term 'community psychology' has raised a number of issues within the present study. In the varied interviews, workshops, seminars, and meetings, within which the question of the relevance of the community psychology approach for South Africa has been debated, the need for a clear and specific definition of the term 'community' has been highlighted. The question of whether it refers to all people, irrespective of political

worldview, or specific communities, or progressive groupings only, or oppressed groups in society, or a geographical community, etc. has been raised. This has created a great deal of confusion and irritation in all quarters. It is a term that is fondly used by the government, fervently by liberals, <sup>community (general)</sup> regularly by progressives, The term is used loosely, sometimes because of genuinely unclarified meanings, and sometimes purposively to remain opaque and therefore unanswerable to claims made when using that term.

The issue of accountability is pertinent here, the question of whom community psychology is going to serve in South Africa being a central one. For many a broad definition of 'community' as being any group defined either geographically or by relationship (the traditional sociological definition of this term) has been supported. In practice this would mean that the psychologist <sup>community</sup> would be available to any group wishing to use her/his services to solve problems. Professionally, this would mean that <sup>oppressed group</sup> community psychology in South Africa would house psychologists of varied political worldviews and commitments. This would result in community psychology reflecting a variety of values with no unified commitment to social change in South Africa.

An alternative approach, also supported by many in South Africa, specifically those who are overtly opposed to the present political structures, advocates a re-definition of the term 'community psychology' to refer specifically to a psychology which overtly commits itself to addressing issues of oppression in South Africa. The term 'community' in this instance would refer to oppressed groups or communities. This is then either defined broadly to incorporate all types of oppression irrespective of political grouping, or more narrowly, to refer to the oppression of particular groups in South African society. Then there is a further distinction of 'with whom does one work' in order to address issues of oppression. For some it is the oppressed, for others it is the oppressor groups and structures, while for others it means working with both groups to address issues of oppression.

In the interviews with the USA community psychologists (Appendix C), it was strongly suggested that psychologists in

who to work with  
oppressors or oppressed

South Africa needed to work with oppressed groups (if they had credibility and accessibility within that context) but that direct confrontation of and working with oppressor communities and structures was particularly important. The major motivation for this argument was that one had to avoid a victim blame (Ryan, 1971) ideology and rather locate and address the problem (where appropriate of course) in the oppressive structures. This would then often require a direct practice with groups of oppressors. While acknowledging this point one could argue that it is more fruitful to organize social change programmes from the 'bottom-up', working with oppressed groups to demand their rightful access to basic resources. This argument often arises out of a belief that the only way to distribute resources such as power and material is to 'take it', because history has revealed that it is seldom given away by those who have it.

The question of whether to define community psychology broadly or more specifically therefore becomes a central one for defining an appropriate practice in South Africa. The decision one way or another will result in certain 'community-orientated' psychologists disassociating themselves from such a title. This issue is one which, it is believed, will confront all psychology departments wishing to provide training in that area, and those wishing to practice under the title of community psychologist.

This issue of a more specific definition of community psychology is likely to become a thorny one within South Africa, where, as revealed in the South African study (Appendix A) psychologists' support for community psychology in South Africa is based on differential interpretations and political worldviews. Its fundamental liberal and humanistic underpinnings has launched it as an approach which tolerates diversity within itself, projecting it as a home for all socially concerned psychologists, irrespective of particular political commitments. While its rhetoric espouses particular values, its breadth and inherent diversity in practice makes it difficult to decide exactly what it is against or what it is for (Biesheuvel, 1987).

Attneave (1984) calls for a 'wide angle lens', a position which accepts that community psychologists represent different subcultures in psychology and society, and have different value

preferences. He advocates a community psychology which houses this diversity in terms of theoretical preference and preferred method of practice. He suggests that the parameters of the approach be set widely, the common ground being a broad value of life as an opportunity for survival and then the enhancement of its quality, for all. He suggests that within that broad framework, community psychologists need to be explicit about their values but also to resolve differences. He argues that these different standpoints should not be put against each other, but rather should accept the complementary nature of each others' work.

A major concern with this view is that it assumes that the conflicts or differences can be resolved and that the differences are in fact complementary. Within South Africa (but not exclusively), there are some differences which are inherently conflictual and interests in complete opposition to one another. While some aspects can perhaps be rationally debated, some differences would have to be acknowledged and opposing goals pursued.

Swartz (1986) cites Gellner's (1985) reference to the 'dilemma of the liberal intellectual' which relates to the

situation in which a principle of tolerance leads to implicit condoning of practices which are unacceptable to the person doing the condoning. (p11).

In South Africa this issue needs to be addressed by the psychologist who wishes to confront oppression in this context. While the principles of tolerance, respect for diversity, cognitive respect, academic freedom, etc., may be ideal, within the context of the reality of the present political crisis in South Africa, and in fact the reality of politics in any country, this may result in a nebulous position, of no use to anyone except possibly the integrity of the psychologist concerned. Oppression will not disappear on its own. Clear stands against it will always be required. The community psychologist in South Africa will therefore have to show intolerance of any views, actions, theories, or practices which wittingly, or more likely, unwittingly maintain or perpetuate oppression of any kind.

Finally, when considering the development of a community psychology practice in South Africa, the psychologist's location in society should be remembered. Psychologists are products of a capitalist middle-class socialization process, with particular roles and interests in society to protect. While rational persuasion and 'awareness raising' can and certainly does occur, resulting in psychologists attempting to be more relevant and 'community' orientated, any move towards a genuine support of revolutionary change in this country is unlikely for the great majority of psychologists in this context. Perhaps together with structural changes enforced on psychologists (the present crisis being one such force), psychologists will move into a more radical position. However, this will only be to the extent that it continues to serve the interests of the psychology profession in some way. This is an issue which needs to be taken into account when considering the development of community psychology in South Africa, and particularly when exploring the implications of this for the training of psychologists in this context.

## CHAPTER FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Community psychology has been criticized for its lack of adequate theoretical foundation (Appendix C; Seedat & Cloete, 1988). This thesis recognizes the need for this issue to be addressed both internationally and within South Africa itself. However, it is not the purpose of this study to propose an appropriate theoretical foundation for community psychology practice in this context. This would entail a doctoral study on its own. Rather, the purpose is to

- (a) outline the theoretical issues which are central to the development of community psychology practice;
- (b) identify the theoretical foundations which inform my own particular approach to community psychology practice in South Africa;
- (c) explore the appropriateness of a critical social scientific approach, outlining this perspective's view of the different theoretical issues and relationships identified in (a), and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of this approach;
- (d) suggest a possible way of utilizing the Critical perspective as a springboard for developing appropriate theories and practices for a community psychology in South Africa.

### 4.2 THEORETICAL ISSUES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Central to the community psychology approach is the concept of social change. It is the explicit goal and arena of the community psychologist's work. This points to the need for a thorough theoretical understanding of the process and goals of social change.

A theoretical concern that relates directly to this process is that of the relationship between individual and society. As will become clear in the ensuing discussion, the way 'man' is viewed, the way society is construed, and the way these two apparently

dichotomous aspects relate to one another, are all central to any approach to social change. This relationship needs, therefore, to be thoroughly theorized for the purposes of adequately informing a community psychology approach. The relationship between individual and society is also important for the purpose of identifying the extent to which the psychologist is responsible for becoming involved in systemic as well as individual change processes.

Relevant to the issue of the psychologist's responsibility is the role of the psychologist in society. In this regard it is necessary to develop a theoretical understanding of the 'expert' - society relationship. This involves understanding how each 'affects' the other, that is, the way in which society determines the role played by the expert, and the way in which the expert helps to constitute society. The relationship between theory and practice forms a central focus for this exploration, as well as an understanding of the sociology of knowledge (an approach which aims to demonstrate how knowledge is tied to the structurally-based interests of a society or group (Buss, 1975)).

#### 4.3 A CRITICAL APPROACH

In order to explore the issues and relationships identified above, community psychology needs to look to disciplines such as sociology and philosophy.

It is the purpose of this thesis to focus on a Critical approach to these issues. It is hypothesized that this perspective offers a comprehensive theoretical basis for a community psychology approach. The discussion will outline the major theses of this perspective; discuss in some detail its particular view on the theoretical issues identified above; and highlight the apparent weaknesses and strengths of this approach. Other sociological perspectives will be referred to where appropriate: to identify the context in which the critical approach is located (in sociological debate); to highlight other possible interpretations or understandings of the theoretical issue in question; and to identify where other perspectives can be used to balance the weaknesses of the critical approach.

### Why a Critical Approach?

It would be fair to ask why I have elected to utilize the critical theory approach as a starting point for a theoretical exploration. It is acknowledged that this choice reflects my own personal socialization, resulting philosophy, and therefore approach to community psychology (refer Ch.1.6). However, I do believe that there are sufficient theoretical grounds for the appropriateness of this approach.

The Critical approach (to be defined below) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the various issues of social change, individual versus society, and expert-society relationships (Habermas, cited in McCarthy, 1978; Ivey, 1985; Simson, 1982). Furthermore, its focus on praxis, or reflective action, is relevant to the community psychology approach. The emancipatory interest of the critical perspective is also congruent with this approach which emphasizes the process and aim of empowerment. The self-reflective stance, (in particular the ideology-critique of critical social theory), offers a useful tool for analyzing the role of the psychologist in society. Critical social theory's focus on cognitive processes, human agency, and social interaction suggest a natural link with a psychological perspective and its application in the social change arena. Perhaps particularly for this reason, I believe that it offers an appropriate framework for understanding social dynamics as well as providing a guide for social action. These are fundamental aspects for any community psychology, and could provide a fruitful conceptual framework for the development of community psychology practice in South Africa.

### The Critical Approach: Major Theses

Earlier in this century (1923 -1950) a group of social scientists in Germany formed the Institute of Social Research which focused on the reassessment of the relationship between theory and practice in the light of perceived positivistic and interpretive weaknesses. Karl Marx's philosophy formed the basis for the

theoretical debates developed within that context. A critical theory approach arose which addressed the perceived 'missing' subjective aspect of marxism and incorporated the sociocultural dimensions neglected by mechanical marxism (Jay, 1973; McCarthy, 1978). Many well-known social scientists participated in the development of this approach (e.g. Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm). Jurgen Habermas is the most recent major proponent of this tradition. His work in this field over the last two decades has made a major contribution to almost every discipline within the social sciences.

Brian Fay (1975 & 1987) has also made a valuable contribution. He has not only clarified the Critical approach in language that is accessible to the average academic (which Habermas unfortunately does not do), but has made some suggestions as to how the critical social theoretical perspective can be expanded to include other approaches which balance the weaknesses (as perceived by some) of the Habermasian corpus.

It has been suggested that the major sources of critical theory are marxism, German philosophical idealism, and phenomenology (Bottomore, 1978). Habermas has incorporated a number of perspectives in his overall framework, attempting an integration of action theory and functionalist systems theory. His approach to Marx was a reconstruction of historical materialism. This approach assumes the central role of productive forces and processes in society, while not attempting to develop this half of the Marxian formula explicitly. Rather, Habermas's aim was to recover the significance and complexities of the other half of the Marxian formula, namely, the relations of production.

Critical theory or critical social science has been interpreted and defined in different ways. Fay (1987) provides a comprehensive and useful definition which I would like to utilize for the purposes of this thesis.

By 'critical social science' I mean an endeavor to explain social life in general or some particular instance of it in a way that is scientific, critical, practical, and non-idealistic. By 'scientific' I mean the provision of comprehensive explanations in terms of a few basic principles which are subject to public evidence. By 'critical' I mean

the offering of a sustained negative evaluation of the social order on the basis of explicit and rationally supported criteria. By 'practical' I mean the stimulation of some members of society identified by the theory to transform their social existence in specified ways through fostering in them a new self-knowledge to serve as the basis for such a transformation. And by 'non-idealistic' I mean a theory which is not committed to the claims either that ideas are the sole determinant of behavior (idealism i), or that emancipation simply involves a certain sort of enlightenment (idealism ii), or that people are able and willing to change their self-understandings simply on the basis of rational argument (idealism iii)' (Fay, 1987, p26)

There have been various attempts to develop a social psychology based on the critical social theoretical approach (e.g. Henriques et al, 1984; Ingleby, 1974 & 1981; Ivey, 1985; Jacoby, 1975; Simson, 1982; & Wexler, 1981). Both neo-Marxist and psycho-analytic thought have provided a heritage for this perspective (Jacoby, 1975). For example, Wexler (1981) outlines a critical social psychology, using traditional social psychology, marxism, and critical sociology as basic sources. Wexler defines this approach as being

... a critique of the basic assumptions of conventional social psychology; and second, elaboration and application of an excluded theoretical tradition, Marxism and critical sociology, to questions of social interaction, interpersonal dynamics, and the relation between individual and group social processes' (1981, p52).

Specific tasks of a critical psychology which have been suggested include a focus on the relationship between social science and ideology, for example, the role of psychology in a capitalist system (and apartheid state in South Africa); a self-reflective critique of ideological constraints; an historical analysis of the development of theory and practice of psychology; a critique of the doctrine of individualism; and a critique of positivistic methodology in psychological research (Psychology in Society Editorial, 1983).

For the purposes of this thesis the term 'Critical approach' will be used to refer to sociological and psychological perspectives based on critical theory. The Critical approach proposed for the development of an appropriate community

psychology practice in South Africa will also utilize other sources, in particular, those informing Fay (1987) and Wexler's (1981) proposals for developing an appropriate Critical framework.

The major aims, basic assumptions, and fundamental values of critical social science are outlined by Fay (1987). His definition (above) identifies the scientific, critical, practical, and non-idealistic nature of this perspective. Fay also identifies three basic assumptions/values of the Critical approach: rational self-clarity, collective autonomy, and happiness (the latter value being Fay's own interpretation of a major goal of the critical approach). Rational self-clarity refers to that state where people can know the 'true' nature of their existence. It is believed that changes need to occur as a result of rational persuasion and reflection. Collective autonomy refers to a belief in the possibility of self-conscious control of life, and that differences within a collectively autonomous group can be settled through rational deliberation and persuasion.

Collective autonomy involves two elements taken together: the first is the will of the members of a group to live their lives on the basis of a rationally informed self-transparency; and the second is the power to effect this will so that the lives of the members of this group express their enlightened wishes' (Fay, 1987, p80)

The process of enlightenment and goal of emancipation emphasized by the Critical approach incorporate these values of rational self-clarity (essential value of enlightenment) and collective autonomy (essential value of emancipation) (Fay, 1987; Grundy, 1987).

The 'critical' element of this approach will be discussed in some detail as it forms the particular focus of the Critical approach, both in terms of its knowledge constitutive 'emancipatory' interest, and its practical liberatory aim. This element in fact distinguishes it from other approaches (serving only 'technical' or 'practical' cognitive interests - Habermas, 1978).

Habermas (1978) refers to these three knowledge-constitutive

interests. Through them, he argues, reality is constituted and acted upon. These interests determine knowledge organization as well as scientific goals. The 'technical' interest values the development of general laws and is geared towards prediction and control of the natural environment through manipulation of causal conditions. The general orientation of the hermeneutic or historical sciences is rooted in the practical interest in facilitating possibilities of action-orienting mutual and self-understanding, emphasizing intersubjective comprehension and communication of meaning.

The 'critical' or emancipatory interest lies at the root of the two other interests (Habermas, 1978; Ivey, 1985; McCarthy, 1978), attempting to explain the social order in a way that facilitates the transformation of society. Theories are used as analyses of social situations, noting those features which can be altered in order to eliminate frustrations (Fay, 1975). The emancipatory interest of the Critical approach is simply expressed as being a commitment "not only to understanding the social world but also to changing it" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p194).

It is crucial to realize, as I think many neglect to do, that Habermas is not idealistic at this point. The emancipatory interest is not simply at the level of consciousness or reflection, but - in its link to the other interests - it takes form in work (forces of production), language (in which the relations of production are socially expressed), and power (by which the relations and forces of production are developed, including through struggle (Habermas, 1978). The goal of an emancipated society, or of autonomy and responsibility can only be understood as an anticipation (that which guides one's striving), not as a realized embodiment. It is argued therefore that, contrary to many criticisms levelled at Habermas, he is no idealist or liberal.

The Critical approach emphasizes the shaping power of ideology. This has been described as distorted knowledge which conceals the interests of a dominant class in society (Cochrane, 1987), and masks contradictions which are unreflectively accepted by society members (Grundy, 1987). A Critical approach to

ideology is inclined towards a rationalistic and epistemological interpretation which tends to emphasize the concept of false consciousness and the need for 'blindness' to be removed. It usually views ideology in a negative way, focusing on its constraining nature. It should be noted that this is one theory of ideology within the critical social sciences. Fay and Wexler's approaches (referred to below) are in fact determined attempts to address the limits of the rationalistic and epistemological (true or false) limits of this approach to ideology, pointing to a more somatic and ontological nature of ideology, emphasizing that individual's self-concepts are bound up in it. The latter approaches also emphasize the need to focus on the positive and enabling (in addition to negative and constraining) aspects of ideology. In this regard emancipation is only enabling when it helps people to understand what they can do in any particular situation.

A critical social science aims to explore the ideological forms which maintain a social system. It includes the study of cultural as well as political and economical domination. The purpose of this criticism is to remove the cloak of neutrality where values are converted into facts (Ivey, 1985; Wexler, 1981); and to destroy 'false' consciousness by demonstrating its role in legitimating domination (Cochrane, 1987). The form that this critique takes is a self-reflective critique of ideological constraints on individual and collective self-formation. This 'ideology critique' attempts to strip ideologies of their power.

Having briefly outlined the major tenets of the Critical approach, we will now reflect on the theoretical issues and relationships identified above. The Critical perspective on each of these issues/relationships will be outlined while other approaches will be referred to for the purposes of locating the Critical approach in a broader debate and facilitating the development of a broader 'eclectic' Critical approach considered important for the development of an appropriate framework for South African practice.

### Individual - Society Relationship

The individual-society relationship is a central theoretical concern for community psychology. Within general sociological debate, one finds that a perspective either views the individual-social relationship with an emphasis on the 'individual' or on the 'social'. One finds, for example, that the existentialist, humanistic, liberal or interactionist orientations emphasize the capacity of people to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. Individual autonomy and freedom are key values inherent in these orientations. These perspectives place an underemphasis on social structural factors and an overemphasis on voluntary action (Fisher & Levi-Strauss, 1978).

Other sociological perspectives tend to place an emphasis on the social character of the individual. These include theories on the far right (conservatism) which give priority to the social, arguing that man is created by the social (Nisbet, 1978); as well as structuralist marxist positions which view individuals as superstructural forms, deriving from the base of economic formations (e.g. contemporary capitalism) (Simson, 1982; Wexler, 1981). Generally historical materialistic approaches are opposed to any form of individualism and to the idea of the 'autonomous' individual (Wexler, 1981). They give primacy to economic structures, and therefore to economic determinism, and to the historical specification of all social phenomena (Cochrane, 1987). Within the marxist tradition there are two major developments: the cultural and structural traditions. The cultural tradition (of which the Critical approach is a part) emphasizes class consciousness, voluntarist forms of social transformation, and analyses of superstructures (Wexler, 1981). The structural tradition (e.g. Strauss, Foucault, Althusser) emphasizes economic determinism, taking an anti-humanist view. It stresses structural causality rather than the actions of individuals, and emphasizes unconscious rather than conscious processes (Bottomore, 1978; Bottomore & Nisbet, 1978). One apparent distinction between these two marxist traditions is that the cultural approach, while accepting the role of ideology in identify formation, believes that individuals can become free of their ideological constraints through a rational process of ideology critique. In contrast, the structuralist approach

infers a much more powerful role of ideology in the formation of individuals, suggesting that the freedom from ideological constraints as argued by the rationalists is not possible.

The Critical approach views persons as reflective and willful, at least insofar as the interest in emancipation is concerned, and thus able to achieve rational clarity and to act constructively on the world. It therefore upholds an activist view of persons (Cochrane, 1987; Fay, 1975 & 1987), with consciousness and intentionality being key emphases (McCarthy, 1978). The individual is seen as an autonomous entity, able to change and control her/his environment. These assumptions are expressions of a humanistic perspective, found also in many other sociological and psychological perspectives.

Fay (1987) argues that the Critical approach's over-emphasis of the active powers of the human deny that individuals are also embodied, traditional, historical, and embedded. The hold of ideology on human agency therefore needs to be recognized.

Cochrane emphasizes this point, quoting Karl Mannheim:

Those persons who talk most about human freedom are those who are actually most blindly subject to social determination, inasmuch as they do not in most cases suspect the profound degree to which their conduct is determined by their interests. (1987, p3)

Social psychological debate has recently focused on the extent to which 'man' is socially constructed and the process through which this occurs. A recent special issue of the British Journal of Social Psychology (1986, Vol 25) focused on a contemporary debate on these issues.

It appears from a perusal of the above mentioned debate that the concept of social identity, viewed as a sub-system of the self-concept, is central to this debate (Duveen & Lloyd, 1986; McGuire, McGuire & Cheever, 1986; Palmonari, 1986; Turner & Oakes, 1986). The debate, according to McGuire et al (1986) appears to be over the extent to which the individual is socially constructed.

McGuire, McGuire & Cheever (1986) refer to two main perspectives of the relationship between the individual and society: the interactionist and the dialectic perspectives. The

former is a dualistic approach which still retains the entities of 'individual' and 'social' as separate and tends to be individual-centred in perspective. Semin (1986) suggests that the dominant form of social psychology analyses of social behaviour is of this nature. The dialectic approach attempts to dissolve this duality. In this regard, the relationship is not just one of superficial influence, but of transformation. Duveen and Lloyd (1986) explain this:

The term 'individual-society interface' readily conjures up the image of two objects in some kind of relationship, with the theoretical problem then being to specify the nature of this relationship. In this image 'individual' and 'society' are taken as given, as objects existing in nature. (p219)

They argue that

individuals are so inextricably interwoven in a fabric of social relations within which their lives are lived that a representation of the 'individual' divorced from the 'social' is therefore inadequate. (p219)

The person is therefore constructed or constituted by social processes (Semin, 1986; Turner & Oakes, 1986), and in turn, contributes towards the construction of society.

Proponents of the Critical psychology perspective have levelled criticism at the interactional approach to the individual-society relationship. Henriques et al (1984) reject the individual-society dualism perpetuated by traditional psychology, reductionism to either individual or society not being acceptable (Jacoby, 1975). Within the dialectic approach the individual is not viewed as being pushed around by external sources but as being formed by a process which takes interior and exterior as problematic categories (Henriques et al, 1984). Jacoby (1975) highlights this dialectic in his comment that the private or individual is not influenced by the social; but rather that the social dwells within the private. The individual is therefore constituted through the social domain (Henriques et al, 1984; Wexler, 1981). The individual-society relationship is one of mutual mediation and not just an individual-society interaction operating on the surface (Jacoby, 1975).

A dialectic relationship between social and individual

learning processes is also argued by a number of social theorists (e.g. Berger, cited in Semin, 1986; Fay, 1987; Habermas, cited in McCarthy, 1978; Henriques et al, 1984; Weber, cited in Dawe, 1978; Wexler, 1981). The dialectic approach is therefore fundamental to the Critical perspective. It emphasizes the circular process between social and individual learning processes, stressing that circumstances make men and that men make circumstances (McCarthy, 1978). The dialectic view rejects polar extremes, arguing for a recognition of the mutual transformatory process occurring between the individual and society. In this regard, the individual is socially constructed and an active constructor of society.

### Social Change

The view one has of the individual-social relationship has a direct and fundamental impact on one's view of the social change process and therefore strategies for social action (Fay, 1987; Henriques et al, 1984; Dawe, 1978). Of fundamental importance is the extent to which one emphasizes human agency, or in contrast, social determinism. While an activist conception of the human being may be held for the individual or the social being, a Marxist understanding of this would emphasize communal rather than individual agency. A single person, as agent, is therefore historically meaningless for Marx and most of those who follow in his tradition.

Directly related to the view of agency or control is the issue of power. In this regard, the view one has of power in any social situation will guide one's analysis of that situation and strategies for change. The position which emphasizes human agency sees power as individually located and therefore amenable to change of individual consciousness and individual social action. It has already been noted that the Critical approach holds an activist view of 'man', emphasizing the possibilities of rational self-clarity and autonomy. The Critical perspective espouses a dyadic view of power which is congruent with its approach to social change.

Power is dyadic in the sense that all of its many forms invoke the self-understandings of the powerless as well as the powerful. ... Power ... is rooted in part in the reflections and will of those interacting, both the powerless as well as the powerful.' (Fay, 1987, p130)

Fay argues that even power relations of manipulation are indirectly contingent on the self-understanding of the led. In this regard, the powerful manipulate the powerless and vice versa. Conflict is kept latent so that control occurs without disagreement. He argues that all (the powerful and the powerless) consent to the legitimacy of certain social arrangements, and that the consent of the powerless is based on ignorance. Fay goes on to argue that even in the case of deprivation, force or coercion, the self-understandings of those deprived play a role in the success of this method of power. The process of legitimation, explored extensively by Habermas (1975) in relation to advanced capitalist societies, is therefore a key factor in this process. A second aspect of power discussed by Fay relates to the definition of power as being that of domination AND of a group coming together (for collective social action).

From the above brief discussion on some major assumptions of the Critical approach which affect its view of social change, it follows that the approach to change is one which emphasizes a rational, educational, conscientization orientation to change. The major assumption could be seen as 'the truth shall set you free' (Fay, 1987). Insight or correct self-knowledge is therefore viewed as a key (but not the only one) to liberation.

It should be noted that while the rational, educational aspect of this process is emphasized in the Critical approach, there is a recognition that ideas are not the sole determinant nor that enlightenment is all that is needed. The enlightenment process and structural change need to occur simultaneously. That is, ideas AND conditions need to be changed. The Critical approach's emphasis on the dialectic between individual and society is therefore evident in its emphasis on the need for change at both levels (Fay, 1975 & 1987; McCarthy, 1978; Wexler, 1981).

The Critical approach is a normative approach in that it

overtly states its aims as being emancipatory in nature, and interprets this end goal in a certain way. The term 'emancipation' is used in a negative sense, that is, as emancipation FROM slavery (Horkheimer, in Connerton, 1976), FROM pseudo-natural constraints whose power lies in their non-transparency (McCarthy, 1978), FROM domination (McCarthy, 1978). The Critical approach is also committed to emancipation FOR, aiming to enable individuals and groups in society to fulfill their true needs and realize their full capacities and to participate in a democratic society (Fay, 1987).

Habermas's (1984) concept of communicative competence and action forms a central ideal for the emancipatory interest of the Critical approach. Habermas's ideal speech situation provides a model for the ideal discourse and, in fact, the ideal life (McCarthy, 1973). This refers to a situation where consensus is pursued through a rational process of persuasion, and achieved through the force of the better argument (McCarthy, 1973 & 1978). McCarthy (1973) identifies the conditions of and requirements for an ideal speech situation, arguing that it

rests on a background consensus formed from the mutual recognition of at least four different types of validity claims which are involved in the exchange of speech acts; the claims that the utterance is understandable and that its propositional content is true, and the claims that the speaker is veracious or sincere in uttering it and that it is right or appropriate for him to be performing the speech act which he performs.' (McCarthy, 1973, p476).

Discussion held under the above conditions should therefore guarantee that consensus achieved is genuine. A key element of this process is the absence of constraints, and a symmetrical distribution in terms of participation in the process.

The requirements for a general symmetry for an ideal speech situation are (a) that all participants should have the same chance to initiate and perpetuate a discourse, (b) that all should have the same chance to question, ground or refute statements, i.e. where all statements are open to critique (i.e. no domination), (c) that all should have the same chance to express themselves, and (d) that all should have the same chance to regulate the discourse, through commanding, opposing,

permitting, etc. (McCarthy, 1973).

It should be noted, keeping in mind that Habermas assumes the spheres of work and power as also integral to knowledge-constitutive interests, that these conditions of communicative competence clearly imply major changes in the structural conditions of social life, including the political economy. The concept of communicative competence is meaningless historically unless one sees this, although Habermas himself does not take up the question of change at this level very much.

It is argued that communicative rationalism is attainable if argument within a symmetry of opportunity is utilized. The purpose of this is to strive towards a communal definition of the world (Louw, 1988). In communicative action, the intersubjective nature of the relationship of actors is important. In the process, they negotiate meanings and attempt to achieve shared understandings. This does not imply agreement. Consensus could be arriving at a position where actors agree to disagree.

Communicative competence is therefore the goal of social evolution (Cochrane, 1987). It aims at social transformation, where participation in power and control in the economic sphere are important. It is recognized therefore that structural domination needs to be addressed at the same time.

It should be noted that Habermas recognized that the conditions of the ideal speech situation and therefore the attainment of communicative competence is rarely if ever met. He emphasized that it should act as an ideal serving as a guide (McCarthy, 1973 & 1978). In this sense, it plays the same role in his theory, as does the utopian concept of communism in Marx.

The overall aim of the Critical approach, therefore, is a participative democratic process and goal for society, where one group does not dominate another, and where individuals and groups can fulfill their real needs and realize their capacities.

The process pursued to achieve the goal of emancipation will now be briefly discussed. The Critical approach emphasizes the process of enlightenment. This refers to insight about ones' needs and capacities gained through the process of a self-reflective ideology critique. Once understanding is achieved, it is argued, individuals will be galvanized into activity. This

entire process, including the final political strategising arising out of the understanding gained through the self-reflective process, is a process of empowerment (Fay, 1987).

While enlightenment is considered to be important in the change process, it is a mistake to think that Habermas, for example, assumes that mere enlightenment, or education, or will, or discourse, is sufficient for emancipation. It is a necessary part of the process but not a sufficient condition. For that, the group or humans concerned must also have a practical interest in freedom from domination. The task of enlightenment is thus connected to a struggle for liberation in practical terms. It helps to orient, inform and sustain that struggle, but it does not replace it.

The process of self-reflection is a key factor in the process of enlightenment. It is based on the assumption that rational clarity is achievable, and, as previously stated, is based on the belief that the 'truth' will set one free (Fay, 1987). Self-reflection in ideologically constrained persons, it is argued, will dissolve ideology's hold on human agency, freeing those persons to actively change their situation (Ivey, 1985). The normative goals of enlightenment are self-emancipation through self-understanding, overcoming distorted communication and the strengthening of self-determination (McCarthy, 1978). As has been outlined in the discussion on the communicative action, this process is a collective and democratic one.

While the Critical approach includes a hermeneutic or practical orientation, emphasizing the need for people to express their own understandings and to strive towards an intersubjective collective understanding of meanings, it also emphasizes the need for appropriate theories to be used for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive ideology critique (Grundy, 1987). This refers to the inclusion of explanations and analytical enquiry more commonly found in the technical orientation. As stated previously, the Critical approach incorporates both a technical and practical orientation in its attempt to fulfill its fundamentally emancipatory interest. Social theory is therefore used as a catalytic agent of change (Fay, 1975 & 1987). It is used as a tool for gaining insight in terms of self-

understandings, and examining social practices and conditions, pointing to contradictions therein. It is used as a basis upon which changes can be made (see brief discussion on praxis below) (Fay, 1987; Grundy, 1987). Theoretical knowledge plays a role in undermining the power of those who oppress (Fay, 1987), facilitating a process whereby oppressed groups can identify the ways in which they are being dominated, and pointing to ways in which this domination can be challenged.

Fay (1987) has emphasized the need for an analysis of objective and subjective conditions in order to determine whether the Critical or educational approach to change is appropriate. He argues that this approach is only appropriate if people are ready to hear and act in a particular situation. It requires that people are experiencing dissatisfaction and frustration in their social situation and that some form of systemic crisis is evident, forcing some form of change onto people. He stresses that only that part of the crisis that is played by false-consciousness can be amenable to the enlightenment approach. It is therefore only where manipulation or power is dependent on the ignorance of the powerless that this approach is appropriate. It should be noted however that for marxists false-consciousness is pervasive in society (except in the communist ideal). The situations appropriate to the critical approach are therefore very frequent, repeated, and pervasive.

A further aspect that needs to be analyzed and recognized is the probable resistance that will be set up when one enters an enlightenment situation. In this regard, Fay (1987) refers particularly to the deeply embedded nature of false consciousness, a view supported by the structuralist-marxist approach. He emphasizes the need to strategize so that subjective and objective conditions are analyzed and opportunities and resistances understood and taken into account.

In the process of change, which is referred to as the mediation of theory and practice (McCarthy, 1978), three processes and therefore functions are identified: (a) the development of appropriate theories which can be used as a tool within the enlightenment process; (b) the educational process of enlightenment; and (c) political struggle. The former two

aspects of the process have received some attention above. The area of political struggle has received minimal emphasis in the literature on Critical approaches, and is indicative, perhaps, of one major critique of this approach: that its practical working out in the political arena has not yet been sufficiently clarified or worked through.

The Critical view of the concept of 'praxis' would perhaps best help us to understand this change process. Praxis is a form of action which is the expression of the emancipatory interest of the Critical approach. It includes the constitutive elements of action and reflection, working together in a dialectic. It is a form of unity between the traditionally demarcated areas of theory and practice. Praxis emphasizes the theoretically informed and committed nature of action (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). In this regard practice is theorized within a critical framework of understanding which facilitates prudent action.

It is evident that the Critical approach's view to social change is a rationalist, educational and activist perspective, emphasizing the role of ideology in the domination process, and the possibility of rational clarity and collective autonomy in the process of addressing power imbalances. It is perhaps pertinent at this point to outline other approaches towards social change, particularly within the Marxist tradition. This will enable us to place the Critical perspective in a broader context and to identify its possible strengths and weaknesses in this regard.

Fay (1987) refers to three Marxist models of change: (a) the Jacobin, (b) the social democratic, and (c) the marxist-humanist models. The Jacobin approach, based on a Leninist approach to social change, espouses revolution through violent destruction when the dominant power structure is weak, and the establishment of a socialist regime. The Party, acting in an hierarchical manner, plays a major role in instigating the change processes. It acts as a revolutionary vanguard of class-conscious workers and intellectuals, bringing socialist ideas to the working-class movement. The Social Democratic approach relies on the assumption that capitalism will eventually give way to socialism. The break for revolutionary change occurs when a crisis in

capitalism emerges for which it can no longer cope. Different methods of revolt are pursued, including violent and non-violent strategies. In this approach, the Party take a leading role in the revolutionary process but it is felt that the leaders must keep in touch with the masses. Class consciousness is a key element of this approach. The Marxist-humanist model (within which both Habermas and Gramsci fall) is the third approach identified by Fay. The Habermasian Critical theory approach has been outlined above. We will therefore focus on Gramsci's approach to social change, an approach which I consider to be an important complement to the Critical theory approach.

Gramsci's interpretation of or approach to marxism recognizes the important part played by the economic structures but extends this to include the political and cultural spheres. He emphasizes the importance of civil society, arguing that it is an important site of struggle between the two opposing classes. He also points to the importance of the family, identifying women's oppression as a major aspect of the overall struggle (Simon, 1982).

The concept of hegemony is central to Gramsci's theoretical approach.

This involves the ideological domination of one class by another such that the former's conceptions of what exists, what is appropriate, what possibilities are open to it, and what it should rightfully expect reinforce the position of power of the latter, powerful class. (Fay, 1987, p138)

He emphasizes that consent is a fundamental aspect in all power, stating that

.. political action, including revolutionary action, can only be understood in terms of a dual perspective which includes both consent and force, persuasion and violence.  
(Fay, 1987, p139)

One therefore needs a two-fold strategy: a war of position (geared towards weakening consent by undermining hegemony on which consent is based) and a war of manoeuvre (armed action, using force and/or violence). Gramsci suggests that both approaches are appropriate but that the time and particular

conditions of a situation tend to determine which strategy takes precedence. In the war of position approach, attempts are made to engender a crisis of authority, undermining legitimacy and developing a class consciousness. Education plays a key role in this process. The focus in this strategy is to transform human relations and challenge hegemonic consent or ideology. A further strategy employed in this regard is the creation of alternative institutions where situations free from corrupt practices are developed. Simon (1982) focuses on Gramsci's emphasis on building alliances to achieve a position of hegemony, where efforts are made to build a broad bloc which would then confront the dominant hegemonic bloc. This approach stresses the need to begin with individual dissatisfactions and cultural and psychological needs, building up towards collective solutions (Wexler, 1981). In building alliances, he emphasizes the need to recognize diversity, taking other interests into account. This is in contrast to a social democratic position (Simon, 1982).

Gramsci's war of position which addresses the issue of consent and utilizes an educative strategy, focusing on hegemonic understanding, is a position very similar to the Critical approach. The educational strategy, need for a thorough analysis of subjective and objective conditions, emphasis on some form of ideology critique, and need for collective action, are all common factors in these two approaches.

Generally, the marxist approach emphasizes both subjective and objective factors, and to varied degrees and with different emphases, attempts to address both of these factors in the change process.

Finally, we will look briefly at approaches to social change found particularly in an interactionist or functionalist (systems) perspective. This perspective, dominant in North American and Australian community psychology, is distinguished by certain basic assumptions and strategies. The interactionist view (e.g. Goffman and Becker), according to Fisher & Strauss (1978), focuses on microscopic interactionism (at the expense of macrostructural factors, according to Gouldner); is interested in reform, utilizing analyses which identify social limits to identify how far reforms can be pushed; supports an evolutionary

approach to change, seeing change as inevitable and progressive; views change as active social control; sees education and institution building as major strategies; assumes that individuals have the freedom and power to change their own destiny, i.e. gives precedence to human agency; and views change as slow, wide, and deep. Functionalism (e.g. Luhmann's systems approach) stresses the need for functional analyses as a basis for rationalizing social decisions. The aim is not reflective enlightenment but securing continued existence (McCarthy, 1978), with the focus being on the integration of the system.

While marxist approaches to social change to different degrees recognize the possibility of human agency they also stress economic-structural determinism and the role of ideology in the formation of identities and perpetuation and maintenance of dominance (underemphasized or not addressed in the non-marxist approaches). This results in a focus on economic-structural change and ideology critique in the marxist approaches, and a more optimistic approach to individual consciousness change and control in the more liberal-humanist approaches. Furthermore, while evolutionary change processes are recognized and utilized in marxist approaches, revolution is strongly favoured as a necessary aspect of social change. While some liberal-humanist theories also emphasize structural determinants and therefore structural change (e.g. systems theory) economic determinism does not play a role in social analysis or in strategies for change. Domination (economic and other), a key issue for marxist approaches, is also not given precedence in analyses or social action in the systems approach.

These differences between a liberal-humanist and marxist-humanist approach are important to note, particularly in the context of exploring a relevant community psychology approach. A Critical approach, adopting a marxist-humanist approach in contrast to the more liberal-humanistic stance inherent in the systems approach referred to above, would therefore emphasize the need for both economic-structural change and ideology critique, with a focus on issues of power and oppression.

#### Expert - Society Relationship

The role of the community psychologist as a change agent is a major area of concern for community psychology. It should be evident from the previous discussions on both the individual-social relationship and social change, that the role of a change agent, in this case, a professional or intellectual actor, relates directly to her/his location in the 'individual-social' and 'social change' debates. The purpose of this section is to highlight the different possible roles that could be assumed depending on where one is located in this context.

Before focussing specifically on the role of the 'expert' professional or intellectual in society an overview of the sociology of knowledge area will be attempted. This area of specialization has emerged as an important contribution to social theory in this century. This perspective, developed by major protagonists such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Mannheim, as well as other more recent theorists such as Foucault, Gergen, Habermas, and Buss (1975, who argues for a sociology of psychological knowledge), views human thought as being partly conditioned by social substructures or human relationships. It looks at the relationship between cognitive and social structures. This approach emphasizes the point that knowledge has consequences and that the development of knowledge is an integral part of the processes and organization of historically formed social relations (Wexler, 1981). Ideology is a key concept in this approach and for some (e.g. Mannheim) is the central theoretical focus (Buss, 1975).

It should be noted that a distinction between a relativistic sociology of knowledge and a critique of ideology was made by members of the Frankfurt school (McCarthy, 1978). The distinction between Marx and Mannheim's views, in particular, is substantial. Mannheim's use of the term 'sociology of knowledge' has been used as an anti-Marxist concept, distinguishable from a 'critique of ideology'. The former refers to a field of knowledge, while the latter refers to an analytical concept within a field of knowledge.

Marxist approaches to the sociology of knowledge emphasize the economic determinants of knowledge (Buss, 1975), the

correspondence between class relations and knowledge being a major focus for analysis (Wexler, 1981).

The dialectic relationship between knowledge and society is discussed by Habermas (e.g. 1978). Perhaps the most important concepts he has developed in this regard are the three knowledge-constitutive cognitive interests referred to in the early sections of this chapter. These three major interests (technical, practical, and emancipatory) act as modes through which reality is constituted, disclosed, and acted upon. The genesis of these interests is in the socio-cultural evolution of human species.

Buss (1975) develops the idea of a sociology of psychological knowledge. He focuses on the relationship between psychology and society. The goal of this sociology of psychological knowledge, says Buss, is

- ... to understand the role of politics, ideologies, values, economic systems, and in general, society and its underlying structure and dynamics ... (1975, p5)
- ... to emphasize the relationship between fact and value within psychology and thereby help to make psychologists more aware of the implications of their research with respect to creating a specific image of man and society. (p7)
- ... values and social science are intimately interlocked, and this interdependent relationship must be made explicit and understood within psychology to the extent that psychology is, should, and hopes to participate in the creation of a better society. (p7)

The politics of psychology therefore need to be examined. This point of view is shared by others (e.g. Hayes, 1984; Henriques et al, 1984; Ingleby, 1974; Jacoby, 1975).

Ingleby (1974) refers to the dialectic between psychology and society in his discussion of interests. He points out that the applications and the form of knowledge of psychology serve particular interests. When one asks the questions 'for whom does the psychologist work?' or 'what interests does he further?', it becomes clear that that the interests served are usually of those in power (refer also to Heather, 1976; Moll, 1985; Wexler, 1981). A very clear class bias is therefore revealed in psychology's theories, research, and practice.

Caplan & Nelson (1973) refer to the use of scientists for the

displacement of blame for political failures. They refer specifically to the use of person-blame research to permit authorities to control segments of the population under the guise of being helpful. In this way, person-blame definitions perpetuated by psychology serve the interests of the advantaged part of society (Caplan & Nelson, 1973).

In addition to the above point made by Caplan & Nelson, the ideological role of psychology in society is revealed in a number of ways: in its maintenance of the status quo through social regulation (for example, through behaviour modifications and diagnosis (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Halmos, 1978; Heather, 1976; Henriques et al, 1984; Rappaport, 1977; Schacht, 1985; Sutton, 1981; Webster, 1986)); in its emphasis on adjustment to society; its preservation of the split between personal relationships and social realities (Ingleby, 1974); and the denial or rationalization of social contradictions and prevention of awareness into social circumstances. Humanistic psychology is particularly criticized for glossing over class interest conflicts, for example, by focusing on the improvement of communication between workers and management while interests between these groups are by definition irreconcilable (Heather, 1976; Ingleby, 1981).

Psychology has been specifically criticized for maintaining and perpetuating oppressive structures in society. For example, Hayes & Banks (1980) refer to the counsellor's role in mollifying and dulling the sensitivities of oppressed groups. Beit-Hallahmi (1974) refers to the inadvertent support of oppressive structures by those who help people and in the process eliminate the desire to change the world, thereby neutralizing valuable political energy. IQ and diagnostic tests have also been criticized for being used as measures for defining persons, judging them and predicting their role in society, thereby legitimizing class, race, and gender differences, and perpetuating the oppression of, for example, women, blacks, and the working class (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Webster, 1986).

The psychologist, in the role of expert, acts as one definer of reality (Heather 1976). In this regard, Henriques et al (1984) and others (Buss, 1975; Heather, 1976) emphasize the role

that psychology has played in creating a dualistic image of man and society. It has portrayed the individual in a unified, self-contained and controlling way, perpetuating certain capitalistic notions such as individuality, rationality, and freedom (Dawes, 1985). In addition, social science explanations favouring the intra-psychic are characteristic of psychology (Rappaport, 1981), social phenomena being transformed into individualistic explanations, thereby defining the terms within which problems are viewed (Henriques et al, 1984; Ingleby, 1981).

Gergen (1973, cited in Buss, 1975) has challenged the foundations of traditional experimental social psychology, arguing for a historical approach. He has highlighted the point that theories reflect current cultural values, norms, and ideologies, and that as conditions change, theories change. He argues that a search for general laws is a misguided mission because of the nature of the subject matter that social psychological theories attempt to explain. He therefore surrenders the development of theory in favour of relativist historicism (Wexler, 1981).

The role of knowledge or science in the maintenance and perpetuation of dominant interests has been discussed and debated by a number of other people. For example, the political nature of knowledge has been noted by Foucault (cited in Muller & Cloete, 1986). Wexler (1981) and others have revealed how science functions as social ideology. Cloete & Pillay (1988) and Louw (1986) have referred particularly to the phenomena of scientific legitimacy, referring specifically to the use of knowledge in the poor white situation in South Africa earlier in this century. On a more general note, Habermas has referred to the way in which scientific technology has been used to legitimize unequal social structures and forms of relationship (Grundy, 1987).

Accepting the dialectic nature of the science-society relationship, one is left with the need to recognize the political nature of one's work (Fay, 1975). Furthermore, one needs to make choices in terms of how one utilizes and develops knowledge, opting for a focus on forms of knowledge and processes of knowledge development that empower rather than control (e.g.

Muller & Cloete, 1986). In this regard the democratization of knowledge is an important issue.

The use of knowledge in the solving of societal problems has been critiqued by a number of people. In this regard, the role of knowledge and 'expertise' in the development of policy has received a great deal of interest, particularly over the last decade. This is particularly true of community psychology which has recently placed a great deal of emphasis on the role of the psychologist in policy decision making. Policy science has been defined as

... that set of procedures which enables one to determine the technically best course of action to adopt in order to implement a decision or achieve a goal. (Fay, 1975, p14).

Within the Habermasian framework of knowledge-constitutive interests, this policy science approach is an expression of a technical orientation. This approach emphasizes the use of knowledge developed by 'experts' in the process of problem solving in society. Experts are not called on to argue their validity claims. Their expertise is offered in decision making processes in a way that assumes an authority, not able to be questioned by the ordinary citizen.

The role of the expert in society has received some attention particularly from marxist writers. In this regard their role in producing and certifying knowledge has been noted (e.g. Muller & Cloete, 1986; Seedat & Cloete, 1988). This generation and accreditation of knowledge which is usually controlled by academics creates a powerful and highly marketable role. Disco (1979) also refers to the manner in which professions protect themselves through processes and structures of credentialling, associations, and professionalization. In these instances, therefore, scientific and professional status is used to support one's own dominant power position. Disco (1979), Gouldner (1979) and Conrad & Szelenyi (1979) refer to knowledge as a form of capital which is acquired by intellectuals and not given up very easily. This is illustrated by Louw's (1988) point that experts retain their position of 'knowledge' power through a process of knowledge development which excludes ordinary society members,

the language of that process being inaccessible to such members.

While professions are seen to be forming part of the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971), reproducing domination and exploitation in that society, the role of the intellectual is not only seen as a perpetuator of dominant values in society. For example, Gramsci (among others) has emphasized that intellectuals play a role in establishing and maintaining the ruling class of society, and in contesting and overthrowing the dominant order (Cloete & Pillay, 1988). Furthermore, it is argued that intellectuals serve their own and others' interests. That is, they serve both truth and interests (Disco, 1979; Gouldner, 1979; Louw, 1988).

Perusal of a limited literature on the role of the intellectual/professional suggest a number of possible roles that could be assumed. Differences of opinion about the location of intellectuals in the transformation of society has resulted in different authors conceptualizing these roles in different ways. Within the marxist tradition, it appears that the expert (in this context, the community psychologist) has the choice of assuming one or more of the following roles in the process of social change.

Gramsci does not develop a comprehensive theory of intellectuals, but he makes observations about their role in society and, in particular, their relationship to the labour movement (Simon, 1982). He defines intellectuals in terms of their organizational and connective function, referring to all who have the function of organizers in all spheres of politics and culture. He therefore incorporates in this category both 'thinkers' and activist leaders (Simon, 1982). According to this definition, all are intellectuals but only some function as such (Muller & Cloete, 1986).

Within this definition, he talks of two types of intellectuals: (a) the traditional intellectual, and (b) the organic intellectual. The traditional intellectual has been described in two different ways. The one view refers to the intellectual who was an organic intellectual of a former mode of production which has been superseded, or who is an organic intellectual of a mode of production in the course of being

superseded. For example, the working-class see all capitalist class intellectuals as traditional intellectuals. Another view of the traditional intellectual refers to the person who assumes to take an inter-class position, trying to play an autonomous role, independent of any dominant social group (Simon, 1982). This latter group's unwitting implication in power is a problematic issue from a Critical point of view.

The organic intellectual refers to a direct agent of a newly emerging class, that is, intellectuals that are organic to that class. Each class, therefore, has its own intellectual agents or organic intellectuals. The organic intellectual acts as her/his class's deputy, acting as an agent in organizing its hegemony. The working-class organic intellectual would actively participate in practical life, as constructor, organizer and persuader (Simon, 1982). Gramsci emphasizes the need for the intellectual to remain in touch with the people. In this regard he states that

the intellectual's error consists in believing that it is possible to KNOW without understanding and especially without feeling and passion ... that the intellectual can be an intellectual .. if he is distinct and detached from the people-nation .. without feeling any elemental passions of the people, understanding them and thus explaining and justifying them in a particular historical situation, connecting them dialectically to the laws of history. (Gramsci, cited in Simon, 1982, p100)

Muller & Cloete (1985) utilize Gramsci's two types of intellectuals to outline further specific roles of the traditional intellectual. They refer specifically to (a) 'garboists', who demand to be left alone; (b) 'moles', who are concerned only about changing the world outside of their own institutional location; (c) 'handmaidens', concerned to hand knowledge back to the people, and (d) 'midwives', who attempt to mediate the split between theory and practice, democratizing knowledge.

Seedat & Cloete (1988) refer to the handmaiden role (based on Lenin's approach) of the intellectual, contrasting it with the mediation role characteristic of the Critical approach. The handmaiden or Leninist approach is an instrumental approach,

supporting, in Habermasian terms, a technical interest. It is characterized by a power differential between actors, the technical expert being separated from the working class. Knowledge is 'handed down' to the masses (favouring a popularization rather than democratization of knowledge approach). This approach has been criticized for its failure to address the need for the intellectual to be transformed in the process of overall transformation. It does not critically reflect on and address the role that is played by the intellectual in the transformation process (Sassoon, 1978).

The Critical theory role of the intellectual which has been described as that of mediation between theory and practice (Seedat & Cloete, 1988) assumes a 'midwifery' approach according to Muller & Cloete's (1985) synopsis of the different traditional intellectual roles. Habermas's reference to the three distinct stages in the process of mediation between theory and practice (1974), highlights different roles for the intellectual (Seedat & Cloete, 1988). These are the preparation and organisation of theory, requiring an academic role; an educational process of enlightenment, where mediation between theory and practice is facilitated (the midwife approach); and a process of strategy developing, where political activists take the major role in the process of planning prudent social action. The Critical social scientist's role in this procedure has been primarily described as being that of a catalytic agent or educator (Fay, 1987). As educator, the intellectual can play both a facilitative and 'expert' role, the important factor being the manner in which either of these roles are played (Fay, 1975). In this regard, a democratic process is emphasized. While the superiority of the critical theorist is perceived to be unavoidable (Habermas, cited in McCarthy, 1978), and could result in epistemological self-righteousness, or dogmatism (Fay, 1987), these issues can be addressed. The involvement of all participants in the process as outlined above in the discussion on the ideal speech situation, should ensure that no one theory or theorist be favoured above another without rational refutation and practical validity. However, this is recognized as an ideal situation which is questionable in a radically unequal speech situation such as in

South Africa.

Touraine's (1981) approach to research would be an example of a mediation process which takes seriously the different roles needed throughout the action-reflection process. Firstly he emphasizes the need for the intellectual to engage with activists (who he calls strategic knowledge experts) in political movements. The purpose of the connection is to work with activists to help them utilize available 'popular' and scientific knowledge to improve their political activism. He describes a process which commences with a recording of experiences of activists around a specific problem. This is then analyzed using theoretical knowledge (conducted away from possible resisting political pressures). This analysis is then evaluated in a process where the analysis is presented and discussed with people not involved in the initial discussions, and then shared and debated with the original group. Thereafter, new action is planned. The dual purpose of this activity, as with any action research, is to advance knowledge and to further good strategy formation.

In contrast to the various interpretations of the role of the intellectual referred to above, the role prescribed by the policy science approach is worthy of mention, particularly as it is an approach favoured within community psychology at present. An interactionist perspective sees the intellectual as a helping hand in the shaping of national policy. It favours an approach where technologists guide society to a democratic idea. Leaders are seen to be the educated elite. A 'handmaiden' (see previous discussion) role is therefore favoured, where it is felt that the scientist needs to give back knowledge to the people (Fisher & Strauss, 1978). While a power differential is evident in this approach, interaction with followers is stressed (e.g. Thomas). Coleman (1978) refers to the different roles played by the policy researcher. He suggests that they either act as agents or as independents. In the former case, they are either agents of a particular party, or agents of a third party (e.g. a foundation). In the latter case they assume an autonomous role.

If one reflects on the role of the intellectual or professional in South Africa, one would find all of these roles

in existence. The last decade has shown a rise of the academic expert in South Africa (Muller & Cloete, 1986). Intellectuals are needed and are being used by both the state and resistance movements. Cloete & Pillay (1988) argue that as the crisis in South Africa deepens, the struggle for professional possessors and producers of knowledge increases. Facing the modern-day South African academic and professional is therefore not WHETHER or not there is a role for the expert in society, but WHICH role should be adopted.

The power differential between expert and 'community' has been referred to but has not received much attention in the literature cited above. I feel that the power relations involved constitutes a crucial issue when considering the role of the expert, or in this instance, the community psychologist, in South Africa.

When looking at both the marxist and non-marxist approaches to the role of the intellectual discussed above, it is apparent that there is a clear distinction between the instrumental or technical interest approach revealed in both the Jacobin or Leninist and policy science approaches (based on very different social theories and political commitments, but reflecting the same or similar views to the theory-practice relationship and role of the intellectual), and the Critical or marxist-humanist approach, which serves an emancipatory interest. The latter, by definition, supports a participative democratic approach to the production and dissemination of theory, and therefore a democratization of the entire knowledge development and utilization process. In this context, a democratic or horizontal power relationship between the expert and the 'community' is striven for. In the case of a more instrumental approach favoured by the Leninist and policy science approaches, the power relationship between the scientist and 'the people' is not addressed. Rather a traditional top-downwards approach is utilized. In community psychology, one would find evidence of both types of approach to the professional relationship. Perhaps the differences in approach would be most adequately explained by whether a prevention or empowerment approach to community psychology is favoured. In the former a top-downwards

relationship tends to prevail, while in the latter, a horizontal power relationship is sought.

#### 4.4 A CRITICAL EVALUATION

The purpose of this final section is to identify, specifically, the apparent strengths and weaknesses of the Critical approach as an appropriate social theoretical framework for community psychology. From this evaluation, suggestions for the development of an appropriate framework will be offered. It is NOT the purpose of this thesis to provide a framework. This is an area that requires long-term, collective work, including both psychologists, other professions and disciplines, and the 'community' itself.

Fay (1987) devotes a great deal of his recent book on identifying various limits to the traditional critical social science approach. In this regard he refers to the limits of rational change, emphasizing the limits to both clarity and autonomy. When looking at the goals of a critical social science, Fay argues that the goals of rational self-clarity, collective autonomy and happiness are neither coherent nor compelling. He argues for a tempered belief in the power of reason, identifying, in particular, epistemological, therapeutic, ethical and power limits.

(a) The epistemological limits he refers to are "those factors which prevent rational analysis from yielding required information" (p144). He argues here that there is an inherent opacity to human life rendering complete self-clarity impossible. He also argues that human reason renders it unable to inevitably engender consensus as to the policies and practices that ought to be pursued.

(b) The therapeutic limits of the critical approach are "those barriers which prevent rational reflection from being able to alter a way of behaving or thinking." (p145). He argues here that there are aspects of human existence which are impervious to this sort of rational power.

(c) Ethical limits refer to "those factors which make an attempt to an educational transformation based on rational reflection

likely to produce a net decline in the level of flourishing of the people for whom it is supposed to be liberating." (p145). There is a point, he states, beyond which the rational reconstruction of society is likely to result in chaos.

(d) Power limits refer to "those constraints on human power which restrict the ability of humans to be self-determining and therefore autonomous" (p145).

The limits of rationality are therefore emphasized by Fay (1987). He argues that there is an overemphasis on the power of reason in a change process and limits to the process of self-clarity, that is, to a rational self-reflection process. He refers to the inherent opacity of human existence and to the limits to a rational approach brought about by the processes of embodiment, force, and tradition. The role of ideology in the formation of the individual is therefore not a superficial process which, through rational ideology critique, can overcome its deeply embedded nature. Fay (1987) argues that

these facts about false consciousness - its systematic, shared, and deep nature, as well as its being rooted in its holders' needs - combine to make any attempt at dislodging them extremely difficult. Giving up such illusions requires abandoning self-conceptions and the social practices they engender and support, things people cling to because they provide direction and meaning in their lives. (Fay, 1987, p98)

Various other authors have also critiqued the rational emphasis in the Critical approach. Wexler (1981) critiques the exaltation of critical reason. He points out that the German idealism characteristic of this approach has been criticized for its focus on the study of cultural production and domination which has removed critical sociologists from production-based politics. Gadamer (cited in McCarthy, 1978) criticizes the Critical approach for its idealistic perspective, giving the process of reflection a false power. Fay (1987) refers (a) to the behaviourist's argument that reflections do not really have an impact so have limited if any use in the transformation process; (b) to the epiphenomalist approach which does not see mental states as a causal factor; (c) to the elitist approach which argues that reflection and willpower are only limited to a few

members of society; (d) to Rousseau's practicalism which does not see rational reflection as a major factor, (e) to the anti-rationalism of Oakeshott and Nietzsche, who argue that discursive abstract thought does not help to change society; (f) to the instrumentalists such as Hobbes and Hume, who argue that rational self-examination cannot alter desires of people, supporting the view that passions are impervious to reason; and (g) to naturalism which posits that human social arrangements are governed by unchanging laws.

It is evident therefore that the rational approach is, to varying degrees, perceived to have severe limits in the transformation process.

In addition to the limits of rationality outlined above, there are limits to the active power of individuals. Fay (1987) criticizes the traditional critical social scientific emphasis on the active powers of humans. He argues that there is an overemphasis on individual control and an under-emphasis on the social construction of the individual. He sees this as the Critical approach's major ontological problem, arguing that its activist conception is one-sided and excessively rationalistic. Too little emphasis is given to the view of the person as embodied, traditional, historical, and embedded. The hold of ideology on human agency is not given sufficient credence. He argues, as do others (e.g. Bottomore, 1978; Wexler, 1981) that a person's will to change is circumscribed in many ways. In this regard the Critical approach's neglect in fully recognizing the constraining effect of the embeddedness of social structure in the individuating process (which makes us individuals), is criticized.

Fay (1987) goes on to discuss some problems with the stated end goals of the critical approach. In this regard he believes that they are utopian, falsely leading one to believe that the end state referred to is possible (or for that matter desirable) to achieve. It is argued that the ideal of happiness conflicts with the ideals of clarity and autonomy. In this regard Fay (1987) states that

the gaining of freedom may produce a net decline in the

happiness of those who acquire this freedom. (p165)

He argues that freedom could in fact make people unsettled, restive, and discontent. Faced with too many choices, the cost of freedom may be too great.

Fay (1987) also criticizes the idea that collective autonomy (which is linked with consensus by Habermas) is epistemologically possible. He argues against a rational agreement approach, suggesting that the ideal should rather be that of rational disagreement, where defensibility of rational disagreement rather than consensus should be favoured.

The issue of how conflict is addressed in the Critical approach is raised. In this regard it appears that this approach suggests that differences can be sorted out through rational reflection. Given the limits of rational reflection and the power of the irrational, therefore, it is argued that this is an idealistic and unhelpful approach to conflict management, particularly in present day South Africa. Criticisms levelled at humanistic psychology, for example, would apply here. A major issue raised within that critique refers to the glossing over of class interest conflicts in efforts to improve communication between, for example, workers and management. The Critical perspective's focus on communication needs to clearly articulate the way in which it differs from the approaches referred to above.

Fay (1987) argues that rational disagreement rather than agreement needs to be engendered; that one cannot expect the force of argument to result in a rational compulsion to choose one and not another point of view. McCarthy (1978) refers to the need for testing interests which are shared, disclosing fundamental interests of mankind, and those which are not shared. The consensus is therefore not one of agreement on a particular view, but agreement about where common and different interests are evident.

The Critical approach has been criticized for its lack of concrete follow up in the political or practical arena (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Fay, 1987; & Wexler, 1981). In this regard Habermas's critical theory is criticized for having no bearing on

actual political life, neglecting socially transformative political action. However, while critical theory can be criticized for its emphasis on the conscientization process at the possible expense of more directly related structural change, it should be pointed out that Habermas's approach addresses this by going beyond critique to critical praxis, where enlightenment is supposed to bear directly on transformed social action.

Critical social science has not only been criticized for its lack of adequate practical or political activity, but also for its use of theory in the transformation process. In this regard, it should perhaps just be noted that a major concern seems to relate to the perceived epistemological self-righteousness that could occur. This problem is described by McCarthy (1978) who states that

to identify ideological distortion one must not be a victim of it oneself. The claim to a privileged exemption from such distortions seems to be presupposed when such distortion is identified in others. (p107) and the generalization of the physician-patient model to the political practice of large groups thus runs the risk of encouraging an uncontrolled exercise of force on the part of self-appointed elites who dogmatically claim a privileged insight into the truth. (p206)

Fay (1987) also recognizes the danger of theory being used as dogma in the Critical approach. It has, unfortunately, often been my and other people's experience that this arrogance is often present in 'leftist' or Leninist/Jacobin academics who have offered their critical insights in a dogmatic way. It is a contradiction that is raised by the need to work within a critical AND democratic process.

When considering the appropriateness of the Critical approach for the South African context it becomes evident that this approach needs to be used cautiously where structural limits are paramount. The empirical conditions for an ideal speech situation are not present, domination being structured into the society in a number of forms. Furthermore, McCarthy (1978) points out that

the oppressed class not only doubts the ruling class' capacity for dialogue, but also has good reason to assume that every

attempt on its part to enter into dialogue with the ruling class could only serve as an opportunity for the latter to secure its domination. (p207, quoting Hans Joachim Giegel)

Finally, while the argument by Fay (1987) that power resides in the reflections of both the powerful and powerless and is therefore amenable to the Critical enlightenment approach, in the face of the power of oppressors, there are limits to this approach.

For critical science cannot be effective if its message never reaches the people it is supposed to enlighten; if those who are enlightened by it are murdered; and if those who evince the slightest interest in what it has to say are imprisoned or tortured or have their means of livelihood taken from them. (Fay, 1987, p159)

One look at South African conditions today raises the serious question of whether or not this approach is appropriate without incorporating other elements which address the very constraints presented by this approach. At the same time, it is equally clear that critical theory concepts do apply wherever there is more than mere activism or apathy, that is, where there is a reflective praxis. And this, in turn, is very present among many political, community, and labour leaders and activists in South Africa, even now when repression is so severe. I thus think the point about structural limits is overstated by some, leaving people to fatefulness. Yet they do in fact struggle against fatefulness in an astonishing number of ways and places. It is this drive for liberation, even where one may not expect it, that Habermas emphasizes. It seems quite valid to do so, both from a practical and a theoretical point of view. If one aims to empower social movements, one needs to press on despite constraints. The political task of committed theory in this instance is to seek empowering knowledge in the face of all the odds.

#### 4.5 TOWARDS AN APPROPRIATE CRITICAL COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

While a number of criticisms of the Critical approach have been outlined and its weaknesses recognized, it is felt that this

approach does offer a possible framework for community psychology. It is argued that it can be made more fully appropriate if it is supplemented by other theories which recognize the neglected (by Critical theory) facts of human existence. Both Fay (1987) and Wexler (1981) suggest ways of developing a more comprehensive framework, utilizing critical social theory as well as other, particularly more structural, marxist perspectives.

The critical theoretical approach's strengths lie in its combination of scientific, practical and critical interests; its opposition to facticity; its balance to other marxist approaches which often devalue the power (limited though it may be) of human agency to effect change in the environment; and the need for both cognitive and structural change to occur simultaneously to ensure that the change goal is most comprehensively achieved.

The effectiveness of the womens' movement over the last two decades is evidence of the effectiveness of an educational approach to change (Fay, 1987; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This liberation movement, identified as an educative enlightenment model, has had universal ramifications in the area of gender domination. While different change strategies have been developed within this movement, its overall reliance on consciousness change and collective action (empowerment) has resulted in changes on various levels of social life. Its effectiveness as a change strategy cannot be questioned. When one views that movement's history, one can only believe that there is a place for such an approach in the overall transformation process.

As Fay (1987) and Wexler's (1981) approaches to a supplemented critical approach are considered to be important contributions to the development of an appropriate model, particularly for South African conditions, a brief overview of their proposed frameworks will be outlined.

Brian Fay (1987) proposes a basic scheme which supports a dialectic between conditions and ideas. He argues for the need for conditions and self-understandings to be changed (this is congruent with Habermas's view). He bases his approach on a

balanced ontological approach, emphasizing both the active and embedded nature of 'man' in society.

Fay proposes a basic scheme of a fully developed critical theory, consisting of a complex of theories relating to one another in a systematic way. These theories would comprise (a) a theory of false consciousness; (b) a theory of crisis; (c) a theory of education; and (d) a theory of transformative action (Fay, 1987, p31,32). At the conclusion of his book, Fay recommends that the above basic scheme be supplemented by (e) a theory of the body; (f) a theory of tradition; (g) a theory of force; and (h) a theory of reflexivity (Fay, 1987, p212).

Philip Wexler (1981) conducts a similar combination of the two marxist traditions, critical theory and structuralism. His proposal for a critical social psychology utilizes critical theory, marxist structuralism and traditional social psychology as its sources. He outlines two major moments in the critical social psychology approach proposed.

These include, firstly, a negative moment of critique (ideology critique). This would include the use of a critical theory ideology critique and reflectionist class criticisms (e.g. Lukacs' analysis of reification of bourgeois thought, Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Althusser's theories of social role and production of ideology). It involves a view of knowledge as an active process of constructing and transforming experience. It also includes an empirical social critique which looks at why and how social knowledge becomes dominant, a-social, and privileged. It combines the hermeneutic tradition, marxist model of production-based class dynamics, Frankfurt's philosophical perspectives, and research of mainstream social science.

The second moment of Wexler's proposed critical social psychology involves a positive moment - the development of an appropriate marxist social psychology. He argues for a view of 'man' which sees the individual as social; the need to explore the application of economic perspectives to the study of social interaction; and the use of Marx's theory of social relations.

Both these perspectives (Fay and Wexler) argue for a form of eclecticism albeit of a marxist nature. While eclectic approaches are often criticized for their wishy-washy, often

unintegrated nature, it is argued that an eclectic approach is needed while appropriate social theories are being developed. Habermas, who could hardly be criticized for being wishy-washy or unintegrated in his attempts to develop an extremely comprehensive social theory, has argued for an eclectic approach, saying that this is unavoidable as long as a complex and explanatory theory is still in progress (cited in McCarthy, 1978). This is particularly important to remember if one is striving towards a democratized theory-building process, where non-academic members of society are going to actively contribute to the development of appropriate theoretical and practical frameworks for social change. As Fay has said (1975), theory

is corrected and reformulated as it continually confronts the practical men it seeks to enlighten. A critical social theory is not divorced from social practice in the sense of being set over and against it as a blue-print to be followed; here, the objects of the theory actually become subjects of it, which is to say, they help to fashion it by their own choices and actions, and by the responses to it. (p109)

An appropriate Critical theoretical framework for community psychology in South Africa therefore needs to take both its context (South African society) and its approach to theory development (with the concept of praxis being a fundamental element) seriously if it is to develop in an appropriate manner. It is proposed, however, that a good starting point is an exploration along the lines suggested by both Fay (1987) and Wexler (1981). This would ensure that a dialectically balanced view of the individual-social relationship, social change, and the role of the expert in society would be engendered.

It should be emphasized that the above proposed framework is one possible approach to the development of a theoretical perspective within a South African community psychology. While it is suggested as one which is considered to be appropriate (a recognized value choice, and one which needs to be put to the test in the scientific and 'grassroots' communities of South Africa), it is recognized that other theoretical perspectives could conceivably provide equally appropriate guidelines for a South African community psychology. The bottom line, it is

argued, is a self-critique aimed at questioning the relevance of the theory for South African reality AND a reflection on the degree to which it acts directly or otherwise in the interests of oppressive structures in South Africa. Any theoretical framework adopted as a basis for community psychology needs to comprehensively address issues of power and oppression, and needs to provide guidelines for practice in the socio-political arena.

While a comprehensive, integrated theoretical framework has not been explored in detail (a task too great for the purposes of this study), the guidelines for the development of an appropriate framework offered above can act as a springboard for an exploratory approach to community psychology practice in South Africa.

The importance of developing an appropriate theoretical framework for community psychology in South Africa is emphasized when one acknowledges the role that theory plays in determining practice (Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Goodstein & Sandler, 1978; Heller et al, 1984). Although community psychology is predominantly an 'applied' field, its dependence on appropriate theories to determine practice is emphasized.

CHAPTER FIVE  
COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is acknowledged that various attempts at developing an appropriate practice for the psychologist in South Africa have been undertaken. This thesis attempts to complement, incorporate, and build upon these. Attempts to address the question of the role of the psychologist in society in other contexts are also recognized and has played a major role in determining the suggestions for a relevant practice in South Africa.

It should be noted that while the broader role of the psychologist in society is fundamental to the present study, the major focus of this thesis is to explore a practice of psychology that overtly focuses on applying its knowledge and skills to broader social issues, that is, a community psychology perspective. As this perspective is believed to cut across all specializations and psychology sub-disciplines, reference to practice that would be perceived to be the domain of all those speciality areas will be made, insofar as they relate to a particular 'community psychology' perspective of that field of practice. The value and place of traditional perspectives and methods of practice of practice are acknowledged. This is an attempt to complement rather than replace present practice. It does, however, challenge the way in which present practices reflect and contribute towards society. The dialectic nature of the psychologist-society relationship therefore calls for a self-reflective critique within all fields of psychological practice.

In addition to not being a blue-print for all applied psychology in South Africa, this proposal does not present itself as a blue-print for community psychology in South Africa. The particular value base out of which it arises gives it a particular flavour which cannot assume to be the only correct one. Community psychology, in the hands of psychologists who hold different values and political worldviews, could look very different. As a result of its projective nature, and the

inevitable diversities amongst psychologists themselves, community psychology could take on a variety of characters within South Africa, and probably will.

## 5.2 STRUCTURE OF SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

It should at the outset be noted that the use of the term 'community psychology' in the context of the present proposal refers not to a specialized field outside of other present registrations in South Africa (that is, clinical, counselling, educational, industrial/organizational, and research/academic) but rather to an approach and particular practice which can be adopted by psychologists of all specialities. Within each of the present specialities, psychologists could choose to work with individuals and families or groups in a traditionally 'curative' framework, or to address structures or social issues relevant to their particular area of specialization.

With regard to the present structures of the psychology profession in South Africa, the proposed structure of community psychology in South Africa would therefore not be a further specialization field under the Professional Board of Psychology of the SAMDC, but rather a specialization option within existing fields of practice. In addition, it is suggested that the theoretical issues and relationships underpinning the community approach be incorporated in the training of all psychologists as the questions and issues raised around these relationships are considered to be appropriate for all psychologists.

It is recognized that the structure suggested above inherently accepts the present professional structures in South Africa. It should be noted that this proposed model is designed to utilize present structures for its own purposes, rather than to challenge them fundamentally. In ideal form, the present structures are not considered to be acceptable. The compartmentalization of the various specialities which causes splits on a number of levels; the professional territorialism resulting from those divisions; and the confusion in practice, are some of the reasons why the present divisions are not considered to be adequate. While the need for specialization training is not denied, the way in which

it is dealt with in South Africa is questioned. The need for a single category of psychologist, within which there would be specialization choices, determined by preferred goals, activities, and settings, would be considered to be more appropriate. One could, of course, go even further, and call for a category of health worker, or social science worker, social service worker, etc., where the boundaries between professions themselves are broken down in order to facilitate cooperative endeavours to understand and attempt to solve social problems.

### 5.3 AIMS AND PRIORITIES FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

It is proposed that one of the central tasks of a community psychology in South Africa is to critically reflect on the present role that psychologists are playing in this context; to examine the way in which it is presently contributing towards the social issues being addressed. A reconstruction of psychological practice then becomes necessary, so that psychology's contribution to society becomes an honest and hopefully constructive one. Within this process of reconstruction, appropriate traditional roles and activities of the psychologist as well as innovative roles and activities need to be developed for the purpose of addressing social issues in this context.

Community psychology in South Africa not only needs to clarify its appropriate practice in the current socio-political context, and in that regard, determine its short-term response. It needs to begin now to examine its role in the medium- and long-term within South Africa. These stages require particular responses which remain relevant to the particular needs of our rapidly changing society. In the short-term it requires responses to the present political crisis and all its consequences. In the medium-term it needs to make a specific contribution to the transition change process. In the long-term, it needs to prepare for a form of society about which at present one can only hypothesize. Within this historical context, it needs to remain flexible and in constant touch with the needs of people and the demands of structures, so that it can contribute towards the development of a society that will hopefully strive for optimal

individual and collective goal fulfilment.

Before proceeding to highlight specific values and aims believed to be appropriate for a South African community psychology, it is suggested that the central question of accountability needs to be addressed. The many issues relevant to this question have been referred to in numerous contexts within this study and so will not be repeated here. This question is believed to be the pivot upon which the direction of community psychology in South Africa revolves. Community psychology, in its broadest definition, can be used to serve any group in society, as Verwoerd (a psychologist in the 1930's and 'father of apartheid') has shown us.

'Community' psychology, broadly defined, refers to all groups in society. All social problems relevant to this broad definition would constitute a possible focus for intervention, and social issues chosen as targets for intervention would be varied. The criteria for involvement on the part of the psychologist would therefore be dependent on her/his own particular value system, accessibility to the issue or situation, and particular knowledge and skills base. As a result of this broad definition, 'community psychologists' in South Africa would be involved in a variety of settings, doing diverse things, and serving different political ideologies. In this model, one community psychologist could be working with the military, helping them to achieve their goals, while another could be working with a progressive organization, serving their goals.

Another difference would be between the community psychologist whose practice becomes labelled 'community psychology' because s/he has extended that practice into community settings or in some way has made it more accessible to lower income groups - and the community psychologist who fundamentally questions present modes of psychological practice, seeking new ways of addressing problems in living. Further areas of diversity would be reflected in theoretical frameworks adopted for understanding of social problems and determining practice, research approaches adopted, specific roles adopted within practice, and strategies or interventions used to address issues.

The key characteristic of this broadly focused community

psychology approach is encapsulated in the term 'diversity'. Within this broad approach, a clear definition of community psychology becomes very difficult to achieve. Despite its broad values, the breadth of specific values incorporated as well as the varied interpretations of those values, make it difficult to identify exactly what the scope of community psychology encompasses and what its priorities are.

It becomes necessary therefore to decide to either fall in line with a broad interpretation of the community psychology approach, incorporating all the diversities described above, or to choose a more specific definition of this approach. In this regard it is argued that certain values espoused by the community perspective do point to some priorities which define the approach more specifically. Thereafter, priorities are primarily determined by one's particular values and societal goals. The values of community psychology appear to show a clear commitment to social or structural rather than individual change (without denial of the need for simultaneous change at both levels); primary prevention, particularly through social change; the need for a redistribution of resources, with a particular focus on power and material resources, as well as mental health services; a focus on addressing oppression of any kind; a need to address the issue of power within the professional-client relationship itself, working within a partnership rather than top-downwards relationship; an appreciation of diversity; and the need to be self-critical of one's role in society.

The above mentioned values do therefore suggest some broad priorities for community psychology, that is, an emphasis on social or structural change, with a particular focus on structures that perpetuate and maintain any form of oppression. The psychologist's role in this regard must be self-critical in terms of her/his own place in those structures. The issue of power is a central one, needing to be addressed at both a theoretical and practical level.

#### South African Community Psychology: Aims and Tasks

For a South African community psychology it is suggested that the following aims and tasks form the basis for practice in this

context: Aims & Tasks that form the basis for practice

1. Social-structural change should receive the major <sup>in SA</sup> emphasis.

In this regard, strategies which address issues at that level need to be adopted and developed. Political theorists such as Gramsci, Habermas, etc., need to be referred to in this regard.

2. While the need to address change at the social-structural level is emphasized, a multi-level or complex approach to social change should be pursued. This refers to the need to recognize the complex nature of social problems and to recognize that change at all levels of a problems needs to be addressed. In simplistic terms therefore the need to address change at both the individual and broader structural levels simultaneously is crucial.

3. The empowerment perspective which focuses on enabling persons to develop a sense of personal power and control over their own lives and to gain access to basic resources in society, is considered to be important for South Africa. Both aspects of the process are considered to be important, as a focus on the development of personal power alone without addressing structural oppression simultaneously can be more harmful than helpful (Lazarus, 1985(b); Rappaport, 1977; Serrano-Garcia, 1984).

4. Related to the above, the need to address issues of power and oppression should form a central focus for a South African community psychology. This needs to be done within the psychologist-client relationship (see 5 & 6 below) as well as at the level of social issues that form the focus for community psychology practice.

5. The power relations between the psychologist and clients need to be addressed. The psychologist needs to reverse present top-downwards power relations, sharing power in the form of knowledge and skills wherever appropriate. The democratization process is emphasized in this regard. This does not refer to a denial of one's power, but an attempt to address areas where power is unjustly distributed and utilized. The recognition of resources and competencies within oneself and 'the community' forms a basis for this approach.

6. Community psychologists in South Africa should aim to be self-critical about their practice in this context. The

assumptions and values underpinning particular actions or interventions should be clarified and challenged in terms of who they are serving in society as a whole. Self-reflection in a critical way should not only be exercised in order to avoid unwitting support of oppressive structures, but should provide a framework of 'action-reflection' in all practice.

7. This brings us to a further aim, namely, the attempt to strive for a theory-practice dialectic in community psychology in South Africa. In order to develop appropriate theories and practices within the South African context, the two will need to inform and transform each other, so that an indigenous psychological practice can be developed. Not only are theory and practice enriched by this process, but if pursued within a participative democratic framework, the democratization of knowledge and skills can be further facilitated in this way.

8. With regard to theory, one major aim of community psychology in South Africa should be to contribute to debates and the development of understanding of the theoretical issues underpinning this approach. In this regard it is suggested that this exploration include a critique of present theories drawn from within and outside of psychology, and a contribution to the debate, drawn from South African praxis. The critical social scientific approach is considered to be an appropriate springboard for such an exploration.

9. An emancipatory interest needs to undergird community psychology's theory and practice. In this regard this basic interest should determine the appropriateness of any theories or practices developed within this context.

10. Accepting the diversity of any community or society and therefore the inevitable need for diversity in understanding and action, it is argued that community psychology in South Africa should respect differences both within the profession itself, and within broader social contexts. Psychologists from different worldviews and political commitments should engage in debates aimed at exploring the issues being addressed. However, this respect for diversity should not be a liberal tolerance (refer Swartz, 1986) at the expense of confronting practices that unwittingly or wittingly are serving structures which are

oppressive. A serious critique should form part of any debate, irrespective of the worldviews of the participants concerned. Habermas's (1984) concept of communicative action is relevant here. Finally the question of priorities for a South African community psychology should be addressed within the diverse nature of the psychology profession and social reality itself.

11. Community psychology practice in South Africa should aim to be appropriate. This refers, firstly, to the need to emerge from and respond to the South African social reality, specific goals and priorities being determined by these realities; and secondly, the need to recognize that there is no one correct answer either for the present or within an historical perspective resulting in a need to strive for appropriateness within any particular point in time. This latter point acknowledges the limitations of our understanding and practice, and recognizes the need to humbly learn from both our successes and failures in this regard.

12. A further aim, if the community mental health model is to be incorporated under the title 'community psychology', would be to fight for a fair distribution of mental health services for all people in South Africa. This could form one aspect of the central focus on addressing resource distribution within this context, particularly if one argues that these services are a basic resource which, as with medicine, should be every person's right to access. However, it would also be argued, from a community psychology and critical psychology perspective, that a mere distribution of present services is not sufficient. What is needed is a critique of present theories and practice both in terms of their relevance for the South African context and ideological role that they are playing. This has been recognized by many and is beginning to be addressed within this country.

13. If community psychology is going to contribute in a meaningful and effective manner, it will have to adopt collective strategies within its own profession. This refers to the need for psychologists to work together, mobilizing around common foci with similar goals.

### Priorities for a South African Community Psychology

While the above mentioned values and aims are presented as being appropriate for community psychology in South Africa, they are still very broad in nature and, seemingly, not unlike those in other contexts. While this breadth is considered to be appropriate to allow for diversity in social reality and solutions to problems, it is argued that the call for an appropriate community psychology points to the need for priorities in a South African community psychology. While personal values quite obviously influence the choice of priorities in any field it is argued that some clear priorities arise out of the social reality in which we find ourselves, and are indicated by the responses of the varied participants in the empirical studies.

Firstly, the issue of oppression is a central one in South Africa, with particular large scale importance in the areas of race, class, and gender. These form central and urgent foci for community psychology within this context. It is argued that a South African community psychology should address these issues as a first priority, particularly at the level of challenging structures and processes that are clearly implicated as contributing towards the oppression of large numbers of people in South Africa. This includes the political apartheid structures, the present economic system, and oppression of men and women in terms of gender roles. Oppression at other levels could also form the focus for community psychology activity. Ultimately, the level at which one has most experience, accessibility, and commitment should determine the particular action front for addressing issues of oppression. While apartheid appears to be the most important aspect of oppression at present, it is certainly not the only area needing to be addressed. Diversity of focus within the broader struggle to address issues of power and oppression is therefore supported.

When addressing the issue of accountability therefore it is argued that in South Africa community psychology is accountable to all those who are oppressed. Our responsibility is to address these issues at all levels, confronting structures in society that perpetuate and maintain any form of oppression, and working with individuals and groups to develop a sense of personal power

and to organize to facilitate the redistribution of resources.

A second priority, referred to on numerous occasions in this thesis, is the need for the community psychologist to refrain from running out to 'help the community', but rather to reflect on her/his present role in society; to confront the ideological aspects of that role; to examine her/his motives for 'moving into the community';; to recognize both the limitations and potential contributions of psychology to the broader social change process; and to begin the process of being re-educated (by 'the community' and other disciplines) so that more appropriate theories and practices can be developed.

A further priority for a South African community psychology should be to contribute, as psychologists, to the development of a society that minimizes oppressive structures and processes, attempting to find ways in which both individual and collective needs and goals can be optimally realized. This requires psychologists to participate actively in the present transformation processes, working democratically to break down oppressive structures and to build up alternatives that are considered appropriate by all concerned. In addition to the political and economic structures, emphasized by so many in the present study, areas that are considered to be needing particular attention at the moment are health, welfare, and education. Within all these arenas therefore the psychologist could help to develop alternatives for South Africa.

Finally, it is not only the aims of community psychology in society that need to be prioritized but the methods used to fulfill these aims. It is argued that the social reality within which community psychology in South Africa finds itself in many ways determines what is possible and appropriate if action is going to be successful. Strategic planning should therefore form a central part of the community psychologist's practice.

#### 5.4 BROAD ROLE ISSUES

When looking at the aims and specific priorities for a South African community psychology, the question of what has to some extent been addressed. The purpose of this section is to address

the questions 'how': the way in which the psychologist engages in community psychology practice. This is considered to be of particular importance, and in fact, is often a defining factor in this approach.

We will look at a few major broad role issues, highlighted as central to the community approach within the present study. These include the psychologist-political activist role; the stance adopted in terms of values in terms of the partisan versus value-neutral or non-partisan roles; the professional-client power relationship and the psychologist's role in broader power structures; the psychologist's role in an interdisciplinary team; the psychologist's role in the theory-practice dialectic; the psychologist as ameliorator of present symptoms or confronter of structural roots of problems; and the psychologist's present location in the social change process in South Africa.

Related to the above are the various role options of the intellectual or academic and professional as outlined by various theoreticians (refer chapter 4). In this regard, the roles of the traditional intellectual (incorporating those who are agents of the present system and those who assume an inter-class or autonomous role - Gramsci, in Simon, 1982); the organic intellectual (agent of the newly emerging class); the 'mole' (or paternalistic role), the 'handmaiden' (or Leninist role), and the 'midwife' (or mediator) roles (Muller & Cloete, 1985; Seedat & Cloete, 1988).

As a number of these issues have been discussed at depth within this thesis, the present discussion will focus on some practical suggestions for the role of the community psychologist in South Africa.

With regard to the psychologist-activist role, debated at some length within certain circles in South Africa (Appendix A; Biesheuvel, 1987), it is argued that we should firstly accept the inherent political nature of our role as psychologist in South Africa irrespective of whether we choose to actively engage in political activism. Secondly, the suggestion arising out of the USA study with community psychologists (Appendix C) that the psychologist could either utilize her/his professional role to confront political issues, or act as non-professional political

activist, utilizing her/his psychological knowledge and skills to further the aims of a particular political activity, is considered to be appropriate. Either way, it is argued that by virtue of the aims of community psychology, the psychologist working within this approach is fundamentally a political activist. S/he has intentionally chosen to enter that arena and cannot therefore avoid the defining aspect of her/his role. Even if specific activities may be focused around individuals, the aim of the work is fundamentally social change.

The issue of values raises the question of whether the community psychologist should be partisan or not. If Halmos' (1978) analysis is correct, the role of the political activist is partisan in nature. The argument for a partisan stance within South Africa is highlighted by the realities of the current situation in South Africa (Appendix A; Foster, 1985; Fullagar & Paizis, 1986). It is argued that while the psychologist may wish to take a non-partisan or value-neutral stance, her/his activities will define her/his position in the present struggle in South Africa. It is suggested therefore that the community psychologist in South Africa should determine whom s/he wishes to serve, what social change goals s/he wishes to further, and openly align her/himself with that. However it should be noted that the value of the facilitator role of the psychologist is not outlawed by such a stance. It should be remembered that the groups with whom the psychologist conducts these activities will place her/him into one political camp or another.

The choice of alignment is therefore twofold: whether to be aligned (in contrast to an independent or 'autonomous' stance), and aligned with whom (which forces one chooses to serve and therefore act as agent).

The role of the community psychologist in terms of the professional-client relationship is clearly outlined in the empowerment perspective of this approach. The psychologist in this regard needs to address power inequalities within her/his own practice and relationship with 'the community'. A horizontal power relationship needs to be developed, where the traditional top-downwards approach is reversed to a mutual power sharing model. The psychologist's professionalism is redefined (Swartz,

1986) to incorporate an appropriate use of power; to contribute as one resource rather than the resource in the solution of problems; and to facilitate the utilization of the community's own resources to address issues. This abandonment of the traditional expert role is, according to Serrano-Garcia (1984)

not done by downplaying our knowledge and skills, but instead by frequently verbalizing and identifying those skills that residents possess. (p185)

Furthermore, Serrano-Garcia (1984) and others (e.g. Dalton, 1986) emphasize the need for the psychologist to participate in all kinds of tasks, no matter how menial, together with the community concerned, so as to move away from the tendency to compartmentalize skills and tasks in an alienating way. Furthermore, the need to work within present change programmes rather than initiating new ones, is emphasized as a way of avoiding unhelpful power dynamics.

The psychologist's present position in society also needs to be addressed. The development of a shared power relationship is inadequate if present imbalances in basic societal structures, are not simultaneously addressed. Within South Africa this suggests that it is not sufficient to work as a white, middle-class psychologist with black, working-class oppressed groups in a 'horizontal' manner without confronting the inherent structural inequalities present within that relationship.

The need for the psychologist to attempt an understanding of social problems and plan practical responses within an interdisciplinary context, is emphasized. In this regard the role of the psychologist is to bring one view of reality into a team effort to understand a particular situation and to suggest solutions. The psychologist's skills are then also used in an interdisciplinary team effort to practically address those issues. The psychologist's particular focus on the individual provides a perspective not usually included in social change ventures. While this individualistic bias of psychology can be (and is) challenged, even within a dialectic perspective the person in society (or society in person!) is a real unit and cannot be overlooked.

The role of participant-conceptualizer or scientist-practitioner has been emphasized within community psychology from its inception (Rappaport, 1977). In this regard the community psychologist's role incorporates a dual emphasis in the theory-practice dialectic. The importance of an action-reflection or reflexive approach is emphasized here. The concept of 'praxis' is central to this issue. The way in which theory is used is a key issue in this process. One could assume a handmaiden or midwifery approach to this but it should be kept in mind that the handmaiden approach is counter-ethical to a democratic approach.

The question of ameliorative, symptomatic practice versus confrontation of structural roots of problems presents a potential role conflict for the community psychologist. For example, it has been argued that treating detainees is an amelioration of the scars of torture, forcing mental health workers to assume responsibility for the outcome of the torture rather than confronting the structures responsible for instigating detentions without trial (Manganyi, in Cordes, 1985). Nzimande (1986), while accepting the need for amelioration, emphasizes that this is not enough. He argues that the roots of the problem also need to be addressed. This latter position is strongly supported in the empirical part of the present study. It is argued therefore that there will always be a need for ameliorative practice, but what is being called for is a simultaneous practice at the level of addressing the structural root causes of these problems. Amelioration on its own may be construed as fruitless and a perpetuation of present oppressive structures in South Africa, but together with change at the structural level, it forms a comprehensive response to social problems.

Related to this is the role of the psychologist in the present social change process in South Africa. As has been repeatedly emphasized in the present study, the community psychologist in South Africa needs to reflect on the historical and current role played by psychologists in this society, with a view to identifying the way it has already contributed to society, both wittingly and unwittingly, and reflects the values in this society. Within that analysis the question of whose interests

are being served needs to be addressed. Based on this critical analysis, the community psychologist needs to review the situation and make new choices where possible and appropriate. This will have implications for all levels of practice of community psychology in South Africa. This self-reflective activity should not only be limited to an analysis based on the Critical perspective, but should include an ongoing reflection of one's assumptions, values, personal goals, and needs in relation to particular practices 'in the community'. This is considered to be important as one's involvement within a community context would no doubt confront one with certain value decisions as well as direct power issues.

In addition to the need for a self-reflective approach to one's role in South Africa, the community psychologist needs to locate her/himself in the broader political struggle. One choice could be to align oneself with a particular political party or grouping, becoming an agent for that group (refer Gramsci's organic and traditional intellectual role categories). One could take a broad 'reformist' stand, working with any groups furthering an evolutionary change process. Alternatively one could take a broad 'revolutionary' stand, working with the broad 'left' towards a nonracial democratic South Africa. One could intentionally take a non-partisan stand, working for any group or community, perhaps offering one's 'value-neutral' services for the purposes of helping different groups to negotiate, and challenging all sides with certain values perceived to be fundamental to the development of a just society and 'whole' human being. While this is a reasonable position to adopt, the reality of the South African political struggle seems to suggest that this position would be rejected by many political groupings within this context. It also fails to fully recognize the extent to which our psychology and personal values are ideologically formed and perpetuating of dominant ideology.

In addition to the possible options referred to above, a further factor defining our role in South Africa is our vision of a 'just', post-apartheid society, and therefore the particular socio-economic-political structures we are likely to support. While our visions in this regard might be unclear at this point,

broad pro-capitalism or pro-socialism, as well as anti-apartheid or pro-apartheid tendencies would locate one in one or another political grouping in South Africa.

If the community psychologist chooses to align her/himself with the broad 'left' in South Africa, supporting a search for a nonracial democratic society, it becomes necessary to address the issue of participatory democracy, both within one's own work and as part of the struggle. The demands of the community organizations supporting this ethos would make it imperative for the community psychologist to comply with this and to further the aims of such a process. In this regard, personal experience has highlighted the valuable role that some psychologists can play in facilitating effective democratic processes within community organizations, while at the same time confronting the paradoxical issues inherent in this process.

When considering the psychologist's role in social change in South Africa, one is confronted with further decisions relating to such questions as whether to work directly with particular issues, operating as a 'front-line' political activist; or to play a more indirect or supportive role, supporting and providing various services for those who are 'front-line' political activists. A further decision relates to whether one should work within systems, attempting to change them from inside; or to work outside of the system one wishes to change, either challenging that system as an outsider, or creating alternative parallel systems where the entire setting is developed around the ideal values one espouses. These and other issues relating to one's role in a social change process need to be personally addressed, particular choices being dependent on each individual's unique skills, knowledge, talents, values, and commitments. It is argued that all roles have a place in the overall struggle for social transformation, and should be respected for their particular contribution to the comprehensive effort (as long as it is not counter-productive).

The question of whom one's 'community' is further determines one's role. It has been argued that within a broader struggle against oppression in South Africa one could work with groups that are oppressed, or with the oppressors themselves (refer

empirical study). It is argued that psychologists need to work on both these levels, empowering oppressed groups on the one hand, participating in a 'bottom-up' change strategy, and challenging the oppressive structures directly on the other hand. The element of 'appropriateness' once again becomes a key factor in the decision about which role to play at any one time. The need for flexibility is therefore emphasized.

Finally, when considering the issue of credibility, the community psychologist's role 'in the community' needs to be sensitively pursued. It has been argued by many (Appendix D; Dalton, 1986; Huszyczko et al, 1984) that the psychologist must build up trust and credibility in communities in order to gain access and provide an effective service. This is true for all community interventions, but particularly so for the psychologist wishing to work directly with oppressed groups in South Africa. Personal experience has highlighted a number of factors in this regard. Credibility and therefore accessibility to working with progressive groups in South Africa depends on historical involvement in political activity that supports the broad goals of the progressive movement; a reputation of being trustworthy and reliable within previous activities; a willingness to work alongside other community members in any number of non-psychology, menial-type activities; presence at at least some communal gatherings; an understanding of the hatred and mistrust that has developed between groups in South Africa so as to deal with direct confrontation of one's own position in that regard, without taking it unnecessarily personally; to approach 'the community' as one resource, offering to share skills and knowledge but also to receive those from others involved; and to share one's expertise so that one's involvement is useful to those concerned, and not just a personally satisfying activity. This latter point is supported by Huszyczko et al (1984) who suggest that psychologists wishing to work with unions need to provide some evidence of their usefulness.

Based on the realities relating to the issue of credibility, it is suggested that the community psychologist work with communities where s/he has already developed some measure of credibility by virtue of some ongoing involvement within that

context, rather than trying to go and work with some community labelled as oppressed. If the psychologist wishes to work with new communities, for whatever reason, it is suggested that s/he give high priority to acquainting her/himself with that context, beginning to build relationships with people within that context; and involving her/himself in a variety of communal activities with the groups concerned. As opportunities arise, the psychologist can share her/his professional skills and knowledge where appropriate and slowly build up a 'professional' profile which will certainly be utilized by community groups if offered effectively.

The previous argument presupposes a particular type of involvement, one which emphasizes the need for the psychologist to be intimately involved in the activities of community groups and activists. There is the argument that a psychologist or other professional can play an equally useful role in retaining some distance from political activity, offering professional skills and knowledge to particular groupings for their own use (this would relate to the handmaiden role referred to above). This is a role used a great deal when working with unions in South Africa. There are some activists who would argue that it is better that the professional concerned stay out of the affairs of the political activists as their lack of expertise on that terrain could prove to be counterproductive. In this instance, credibility is achieved by doing a good job, one which supports and facilitates the fulfillment of the particular goals of the organization concerned.

### 5.5 SPECIFIC ROLES, ACTIVITIES AND SETTINGS

While the broader role issues discussed above are crucial for defining the role of the psychologist in the broader socio-political arena, the specific roles and activities are the tools that one uses to achieve a particular purpose. The search for a relevant practice in South Africa requires an in-depth search for specific roles and activities that would further the aims of developing an appropriate practice in this context.

Before moving on to a discussion of some specific activities

that could be undertaken by the community psychologist in South Africa, a brief overview of the specific roles that could be played or assumed will be discussed. Dependent on the particular issue being addressed, the setting, the target community, the psychologist, and the broader socio-political realities, psychologists could assume varied roles in order to achieve the purpose at hand. The major roles identified in other contexts (Thomas, 1984) such as consultant, trainer, facilitator, evaluator, researcher, planner, and negotiator, could be viable for the South African community psychologist. However, these and other roles need to be contextualized and critiqued for their appropriateness given the realities of being an activist in a seriously repressed society such as South Africa.

Specific roles and activities believed to be particularly appropriate for the South African context will be suggested. In addition those settings which appear to be the most fruitful for community psychology practice in South Africa will be outlined. While particular settings may partially determine the psychologist's role in that context, it is argued that the full range of role and activity possibilities are possibly relevant to all settings given the multilevel nature of problems and therefore the need for multiple responses.

It should be reiterated that the psychologist, as a member of an interdisciplinary team, needs to consciously address issues and therefore facilitate change on as many levels as possible so that the transformation can be more successfully and congruently facilitated. Both the systems and Critical approaches to the individual-social relationship appear to support the need for a complex strategy to address a complex reality. It will be argued, at the end of this section, that the process of empowerment, in its fullest form, is a strategy which incorporates strategies aimed at multilevel change, naturally facilitating that change within the dialectic process existing between the individual and the social.

Practices that are extensions of traditional roles and skills of the psychologist will be distinguished from those that require a venture into new roles and skills not traditionally frequented by the psychologist. It has become increasingly clear to

community psychologists in other contexts that the psychologist's assumption of responsibility in the broader socio-political arena has revealed the inadequacy of traditional roles in that context, emphasizing the need to explore new ways of acting in order to achieve the aims of community psychology. It is argued however that while new roles and activities need to be pursued, one should not be too hasty in throwing away the old. As will be seen in the discussion below, simple extensions or changes to traditional roles and activities can result in appropriate practices for a community psychology within South Africa.

Roles and activities which are perceived to be extensions of traditional practices of psychology include (a) crisis intervention; (b) identification and mobilization of community support networks; (c) negotiation and conflict resolution; (d) organizational development; and (e) research. Those areas presently not included in the psychologist's training and practice (exceptions to the rule always being accepted) are (a) the training of non-professionals; (b) community education; (c) programme planning and evaluation; (d) public education; (e) consultation; and (f) advocacy. While these latter areas are outside of the traditional model of practice, it should be emphasized that many of the basic skills required for such work are developed within the traditional training of psychologists and simply require a generalization of skills into new areas. This is stressed because of the tendency of psychologists to argue incompetence and therefore withdrawal from certain unorthodox activities. While it is recognized that we do have limitations in many of the areas mentioned above, and need to extend our theoretical and practical training, we have a number of basic skills which should not be underestimated.

Action research as an activity of the community psychologist is emphasized both in the empirical studies in this thesis and in community psychology and critical social scientific literature. For this reason, and because it is an area of personal interest, commitment and experience, the major portion of this section of specific roles and activities will be dedicated to this particular activity. Thereafter, brief comments on the other roles and activities referred to above will be made. The purpose

of this section is not to provide definitive models for practice, but rather to raise possibilities that could be pursued by the psychologist wishing to work within a community psychology framework.

### Community Research

The term 'community research' is as comprehensive and confusing as the term 'community psychology', both concepts allowing for diverse interpretations and ideological frameworks. The need to define it within the present context therefore becomes apparent. An understanding of the terms 'action research' and 'participatory research' contribute to an understanding of the broader definition of community research and will therefore be briefly discussed.

Perusal of the literature reveals that action research can be viewed in a number of ways.

Firstly (and possibly the bottom line of the definition), action research is defined as research that is both socially useful and theoretically meaningful. This does not imply any focus on participation of the 'researched' in the research process, nor that the researcher be intimately involved in a particular setting. It could just be research that is conducted in a traditional manner, but where the findings are used as a tool for social change (e.g. Biklen, 1983).

A second perspective of action research adds the factor that the researcher becomes involved in the research situation, taking on a socially responsible role in a particular setting. As an 'insider' s/he learns and contributes, and helps to change things in that context (Sarason, 1974).

A third perspective includes a participatory element with the emphasis on collaboration of professionals and citizens in the research process. This brings us to the participatory research process which will be briefly outlined.

Participatory research arose out of the adult education tradition, in direct reaction to the traditional positivistic and empiricist research paradigms of the 1950/60's. It arose out of third world experiences, including areas in Africa, South America, India, as well as Europe and North America. Within

those contexts there was a questioning of the means and ends of social research, the relationship between the researcher and the researched, the political implications of research, etc. The answers to these questions focused on the need for social research to be directed towards liberation, with the social researcher becoming a "self-conscious actor and participant in the process of development and liberation" (Walters, 1983, p104).

The key aspects of participatory research are identified as being (a) the research process; (b) the research focus and goal; and (c) the relationship between researcher and the researched. The research process is a crucial focus for this approach, the principles of action, education, and social investigation all receiving attention. The commitment is to the active participation of the researched in the entire research process, and a process of democracy which avoids the traditional top-downwards power relationship of researcher and researched.

A fourth but related perspective of action research arises out of critical theory (e.g. Grundy, 1987; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Carr & Kemmis's (1986) comment that the "critical stance is committed not only to understanding the social world but also to changing it" (p194) emphasizes the social usefulness and theoretical significance of action research referred to above. However, the means and ends of social change are more explicitly defined. In this regard, the goal of emancipation through the process of enlightenment is emphasized (refer chapter 4 for more detailed discussion on this perspective).

Grundy (1987) suggests that the action research process is grounded in the two essential principles of improvement and involvement. Improvement refers to the goal of social change that results in the improvement of social conditions of existence, while the principle of involvement emphasizes the collaborative participation of the researched in a democratic research process. The emancipatory interest is in fact discernible in the power of the research participants to control all aspects of the research process.

Action research as outlined by proponents of the critical action research approach identifies four moments in the self-reflective spiral of action research: (a) planning, (b) acting,

(c) observing, and (d) reflecting. The strategic moments of action and reflection are both retrospectively and prospectively related to each other through the organizational moments of planning and observation. Furthermore, the reflection and planning moments fall within the realm of theoretical discourse while action and observation are found in the realm of practice. Reflection in this context refers to an ideology critique referred to previously (chapter 4). The concept of 'praxis', incorporating action and reflection, is central to this approach, emphasizing the theoretically informed and committed nature of action. In this regard the action researcher is concerned with theorizing practice within a critical framework of understanding which facilitates prudent action.

Habermas's (1971) framework of cognitive interests is a useful framework for identifying some distinctions between these different approaches to action research. For example, the research approach which acknowledges the importance of social usefulness but does not go any further in its move away from traditional research would fall into Habermas's technical interest category. The approach which takes participation of the researched seriously and focuses on the participants' self-reflections, would constitute Habermas's practical interest category. When action research is organized according to the principles outlined in the critical action research approach discussed above, the emancipatory interest is being served. In this third approach reflection includes critical theorems which are used for the purpose of developing a critical understanding of interactions and contexts. These distinctions are important to keep in mind because it is the blurring of these that often makes communication between action researchers a difficult task.

While the different approaches to action research are real, one can identify some major characteristics of this research approach, which for practical purposes are useful to highlight: (a) it is socially useful; (b) it contributes towards science; (c) it therefore has a dual accountability: to the 'grassroots' and academic communities; (d) there is an emphasis on the research process as well as the product, the educational element being a key factor; (e) the participation of the researched in

all or some parts of the process of the research is stressed; (f) the relationship between the researcher and the researched changes from a traditionally top-downwards to a horizontal power relationship, the democratic process of the research being a fundamental principle; (g) the research focus either arises out of or is directly related to particular community needs; (h) there is an emphasis on the feeding back of research findings (product) to the participants of the research; (i) the process and the product of the research constitute a tool for change; (j) the empowerment process is important within the participatory/critical approach, the emancipatory interest being a fundamental goal for social change; (k) accountability to the community concerned and other ethical issues are taken very seriously; and (l) the realization that research is not a value-neutral activity is taken as a given (Biklen, 1983; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Grundy, 1987; Heller et al, 1984; Lazarus, 1985; Rapoport, 1970; Reason & Rowan, 1981; Sarason, 1974; Serrano-Garcia, 1984; Walters, 1983).

It should be noted that the attempt to define the term action-research raises a further complication, that is, that much research occurring outside the 'cult' of action research includes many of the elements mentioned above, but without the label. This creates even more confusion and dissension amongst the research community, particularly when action research is presented as an 'alternative' and more 'relevant' approach to research. The label of action research should therefore be viewed and used with caution. It is used for pragmatic purposes, as a reference to a research practice that emphasizes certain principles. The fundamental issue being addressed is not the label, but the way research is being approached. It can in fact be argued that all we are talking about is good research methodology.

The ideal of academics and activists working together in a participatory mode needs to be placed in the context of the realities of different traditions. In this regard, there are many contradictory practices which are brought together, practices which can inform one another, taking each to a 'higher' level of practice, but in certain instances, practices which need

to be kept separated for the purposes of achieving particular goals. Touraine's (1981) approach to action research provides us with one model for addressing these very issues.

Accepting the positive potential inherent in the practice of community research in South Africa, the very real constraints created by the present explosive socio-political situation present barriers which cannot be overlooked. If the focus of the research is some form of oppression, and the goal empowerment through both the process and the product of the research, it becomes evident that resistance from those who are in power is likely to occur. In South Africa the researcher her/himself takes risks, and needs to be aware of that. More importantly, the safety and security of the participants becomes a key ethical issue. If precautions are not taken, the participants could be endangered, their contribution to the research possibly resulting in security police harassment if not prison itself. These are some of the crucial ethical issues which cannot be emphasized enough. In fact, the responsibility of the psychologist in any empowerment process needs to be addressed within the context of the South African socio-political reality.

### Crisis Intervention

The role of the psychologist in helping victims of oppression has been emphasized by many (e.g. Appendix D), and in fact is a central activity of many psychologists in South Africa at present. This includes the counselling of detainees and their families, victims of violence, battered women and rape victims. Counselling and general psychological support has also occurred with political activists who have encountered a number of problems on a personal level resulting from their high involvement in activist work, and an increasing awareness of the need for psychological support and personal development so that they can continue to operate effectively.

Within particular oppressed community contexts in South Africa it has become evident (through the work of many health and social service workers in OASSSA) that present counselling strategies are often found to be inadequate in oppressed situations (Turton, 1986). Turton refers to a situation in Soweto, South Africa,

where counsellors of the same ethnic culture as the clients were confronted with the inadequacy of humanistic, particularly Rogerian, counselling with its emphasis on gaining insight rather than solving major problems; its tendency to meet actualization rather than survival needs; its neglect of social relations and the social construction of the individual; its individualistic rather than socialized self-actualization; its reduction of social problems to personal problems; and its reflective technique which was found to be unhelpful in solving tangible problems. As a result, different models are being developed (Vogelman, 1987) emphasizing the process of problem management within the counselling process; an inclusion of a political analysis of problems; and an empowerment process. The latter aspects were emphasized by participants in the Berger & Lazarus study (Appendix D). The need for the psychologist to help individuals draw links between personal problems and political factors partially determining the problem, and in that process, facilitate the broader empowerment process, was emphasized. Other psychologists support this move. For example, Manganyi (in Cordes, 1985) suggests that the psychologist in South Africa needs to help "patients recognize and confront the 'psychosocial stressors' of apartheid" (p14) and fortify them for survival, empowerment, and resistance.

The identification of existing social support structures, and their mobilization for the purposes of helping people to cope with crises and to join together over issues of communal concern, are considered to be appropriate areas of practice for the community psychologist in South Africa. In this regard, formal as well as informal networks of support can be utilized. While this strategy could be seen as a merely 'supportive' one, it is also a potential tool for the empowerment of groups over particular social issues. In the awareness that one's problem is shared by many others, and in the development of collective as well as personal power, groups can make the necessary demands on society that would help to alleviate their particular area of concern. This area of practice therefore fulfills the aims of the development of a sense of community as well as the development of personal and political power.

## Community Education

The area of community education in this context refers to (1) the training of non-professional care-givers; (2) the sharing of knowledge and skills with community leaders and members; and (3) public education.

### **1. Training of Non-Professional Care-Givers**

The motivation behind the training of non-professionals is, firstly, that the person-power shortages resulting from the elitist psychological profession on the one hand, and the large numbers of citizens in South Africa on the other, necessitates a sharing of helping skills with members of the community so that more people may have access to basic mental health services. Secondly, the cultural (including all aspects, not only ethnic) differences and therefore professional-client relationship distance factors are minimized if members of one's own community fulfill the role of counsellor. Thirdly, the acceptance of the need to democratize knowledge and skills traditionally monopolized by professional classes, as part of the process of empowering people as well as addressing fundamental maldistributions of resources in society.

The need for community skills training in basic helping skills has been expressed by members of communities in the main firing range of present political 'unrest' (e.g. Appendix D) and, in that context, is presently being addressed by various psychologists and others working through organizations such as OASSSA.

When considering this particular area of practice, the comments made above about crisis counselling in general need to be kept in mind when developing a model of non-professional counselling training. An ongoing search for an appropriate model of counselling in South Africa, one which addresses 'relevance' at the level of 'Africa' as well as its ideological role in the broader social reality of South Africa, is being pursued (e.g. OASSSA).

### **2. Sharing of Knowledge and Skills**

The sharing of other knowledge and skills with community leaders and community members is a further aspect of community education

that has been identified as an area of positive contribution for the psychologist in South Africa. This could include (a) specific skills training and knowledge dissemination with current political activists and community leaders to contribute towards their effectiveness in the social transformation process; or (b) varied skills and knowledge training for community members, focusing on areas that are empowering in nature.

In the former context, that is, dissemination of skills and knowledge with activists, organizers, or community leaders, a number of skills and knowledge have emerged as important. Skills areas could include basic research skills, interpersonal skills, group facilitation skills, negotiating skills, leadership skills, and team or participatory democracy skills. Areas of knowledge relevant to the above and analyses which facilitate strategic practice are also useful to community members involved in the broader struggle for social change.

In the context of more general empowerment programmes, skills relating to basic psychological survival and personal development constitute multiple possibilities for community education activities. These could include problem-solving or decision-making skills training, assertiveness training, leadership training, interpersonal skills training, stress management, and so on; aimed at developing the strengths of individuals as well as empowering people to assume control over their lives and, hopefully, to make demands in terms of their basic human rights and needs in society.

The particular methods one could use within a community education framework include workshops (educational events which focus on utilizing the resources of the participants, and where learning through experience is emphasized), lectures, seminars, debates, supervision, and on-the-job training. All of the above have their appropriate place and, in combination, can provide effective tools for learning. However, the role of the psychologist in terms of power relations should be seriously considered when exploring her/his role as a community educator. Questions that should be asked include (a) why do I want to be an educator; (b) what is my self-interest in adopting such a role; (c) how does the specific role adopted reflect and affect the

### Advocacy

The role of the psychologist as advocate has been emphasized by many within community psychology, and has, to some extent, been taken up by psychologists within South Africa. The advocate role requires the psychologist to use her/his expertise and power status as a tool for fighting for the rights and needs of a particular 'powerless' group. Examples of this in South Africa would include protection of and a fight for the rights of those who are detained under the present political system; of children who are abused; of victims of the apartheid system who are not able to voice their own protest; of people who are rendered powerless by virtue of their lack of material resources; of those who are devalued because of their perceived sexual 'deviance' (homosexual groups); etc.

In contrast to the empowerment model, the use (not abuse) of the psychologist's position of power in order to challenge structures and authorities is emphasized. Any attempt to deprofessionalize in that context would in fact be inappropriate and ineffective. It incorporates the use of other strategies such as research and public education, to fulfill its aims of using psychological knowledge and skills to fight for the rights of a particular group in society.

### Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

The role of the psychologist as negotiator, mediator, or facilitator between various groups in society has received a great deal of support from participants in the present study. Negotiation has been defined as "any effort to resolve a perceived divergence of interest by means of conversation" (Ben-Yoav & Pruitt, 1984).

The aim of this process, according to Ben-Yoav & Pruitt, is to achieve joint benefit, either through compromise (a middle ground decision) or integration (a reconciliation of underlying interests). Their study revealed that a problem-solving approach, where both parties were satisfied, was best for joint benefit.

It should be noted that, while this process is considered to

be a viable one in South Africa by many in this study, reservations about the strategy of conflict resolution have been raised, particularly within a union-management context (Fullagar & Paizis, 1986; Huszczo et al, 1984). These two studies which explored the needs of unionists, revealed that conflict resolution was perceived to be a low need. Fullagar & Paizis (1986) suggest that

this may be a reflection of the view that conflict is not easily resolvable, but inherent in the structure of industrial relations. (p77)

Stacey (1976) and Tucker (1980) also refer to this structural conflict of interest that exists between the owners of the means of production and the direct producers who are deprived of them within capitalist societies. Participants in Huszczo et al's (1984) study also revealed a low belief in the psychologist's ability to serve a neutral role in conflict management between the union and management.

While the above reservations about the area of conflict resolution within certain contexts are recognized, specific skills such as bargaining in the negotiation process are considered to be important, and the psychologist's contribution in this regard would be welcomed by unionists.

Accepting the inappropriateness of conflict resolution in specific contexts where conflicts are structural in nature and apparent resolution would be viewed as glossing over the conflicts for the purposes of making exploited people 'happier' with their oppressed position, the role of conflict-resolution should not be excluded within South Africa. Certain intergroup conflict resolution, where structural conflicts of interest are not a major factor, could be very appropriate and necessary in the process of developing a cohesive resistance movement to fight injustices in South Africa, and in the process of developing a future post-apartheid South African society. The many group splits within South Africa suggest a need to resolve certain conflicts. However, this should not be approached with the naive belief that there are no real differences between groupings. Real differences do exist and cannot be wished away with any

amount of conflict resolution.

One reality in the current political situation in South Africa is that the word 'negotiation' has negative connotations within the broad progressive movement, a belief in 'talking through' problems with present state authorities being very low at present. This reality makes the ideal of the psychologist as a neutral facilitator in the process of conflict resolution and negotiation between different political groupings in South Africa a difficult one.

### Programme Planning and Evaluation

Community psychologists in the USA are often involved in the planning and evaluation of various community action or preventative programmes. Needs assessments and programme evaluation research constitute major activities in that regard. Skills such as systems analysis, research techniques, consultancy, etc., would all play a role in such an activity.

Within South Africa the involvement of psychologists in community programmes provides her/him with a number of opportunities to contribute to particular communities and broader social change. Programme-related research is particularly useful owing to the need of many organizations to apply for funding from the public. This usually requires a feasibility or needs assessment study at the commencement of any major project, as well as a summative programme evaluation to report on progress as well as to motivate for further funding if necessary. In addition, the psychologist who has received community psychology training should be in a position to contribute considerably to the actual planning process, sharing theoretical analyses where appropriate and some perspective on the change process. Other skills such as group facilitation, conflict resolution, etc., can also be shared throughout the planning, running, and evaluation of programmes. While the above mentioned skills and areas of contribution are not presented as being unique to the psychologist, it is argued that psychologists could develop particular perspectives and skills which would constitute one useful resource in the above mentioned context.

## Empowerment

The process of empowerment has been highlighted as a major focus for community psychology in other contexts as well as in South Africa. As an aspect of this, the strategy of conscientization has been heralded as a major activity for social change by the participants in the present study.

Within the Critical perspective the process of enlightenment and goal of emancipation is very clearly articulated. This approach tends to emphasize the cognitive or conscientization aspects of the empowerment process, but recognizes the need for political struggle resulting in structural changes.

The concepts of power and oppression form a major focus for community psychology, with empowerment being perceived as an antidote of oppression (Wilson, 1987).

Oppression refers to that state or condition within an ordered society (also community, institution, organization, groups, or family) where one segment of the society is differentially and involuntarily limited access to all available opportunities, resources, and benefits of a particular society. In most instances the oppression in a society is, intentionally or unintentionally, based on particular characteristics of the oppressed group. For example, ethnic and racial status, gender, religious preferences, and physical and mental handicaps are characteristics that have been used as criteria for oppression. (Wilson, 1987, p19)

The salient feature of oppression is the lack of control over situations and outcomes. Wilson (1987) points out that oppression is adopted by both the oppressed and the oppressor, domesticating and pacifying all concerned into a dependent relationship (Freire, 1981). Turner (1972) refers to oppression as a particular consciousness which accepts the social order as natural, unable to see the world as being able to be changed. The oppressed person, in this regard, is not able to see their own capacity for creating changes to the social order, and experiences feelings of powerlessness in this regard. The concept of alienation is also used to express this condition (Lazarus, 1985) while the concepts of false consciousness and ideological constraints are evident in the critical approach.

Wilson (1987) suggests that empowerment provides the antidote

of oppression, saying that what one needs to do is confront the idea that no other alternative but the existing situation exists. In questioning the reality of the oppressive system, the possibility for alternative realities becomes realized (Freire, 1981; Rappaport, 1981). When oppressed groups use their awareness of the contradiction of oppression as a struggle for freedom, they move from a powerless to an empowered position. The Critical approach's emphasis on the process of ideology critique is relevant here.

Empowerment, which has been defined as enabling people to gain control over their own lives, appears to involve the development of both personal power, that is, the feeling that one has control over one's life, and political power, the realistic gaining of control over particular situations that affect one's life. While the awareness and belief of one's power must serve as a motivating force for empowering action (Freire, 1981), strategies for gaining access to basic resources must confront the realities of an oppressive system. This factor became evident in a recent study conducted in South Africa (Lazarus, 1985) where it was realized that the development of personal power could result in the frustration of being aware of one's personal power while not having the political power to change certain things in society. The need for collective action strategies which address the need for structural change was therefore realized.

Serrano-Garcia (1984) refers to the problem of the illusion of empowerment where the broader structural oppression is not necessarily addressed by the development of personal power and even some control over a particular area in one's life. She refers to an empowerment programme conducted in Puerto Rico where she suggests an illusion of empowerment was partially fostered. In that context, control by residents over their lives had been achieved within an oppressive colonial context. However the residents were not yet able to confront that context which continued to determine their lives and thoughts. The illusion of empowerment that Serrano-Garcia believes may have been fostered refers to the process of facilitating the development of skills and a sense of personal power which may have fostered the illusion that the society allowed for this kind of empowerment,

which it did not. She argues that while personal empowerment is important, the broader social structures need to be confronted so that empowerment becomes a comprehensive reality.

However with an awareness of the above and other factors inherent in the empowerment process, the question of how one goes about doing this requires a more detailed look at the factors that appear to facilitate empowerment. In Serrano-Garcia's (1984) study three major aspects of empowerment were identified. These included the development of an awareness of personal power; the development of an awareness of alternative realities; and development of strategies for gaining access to particular resources in society.

Through the school boycotts of 1976 and 1980, and experience in an alternative education programme in Cape Town, the participants of a previously mentioned study (Lazarus, 1985) identified the following factors that were believed to play a role in fostering the development of a sense of power: (a) a raised awareness of educational and political inequities in South Africa; (b) a heightened awareness that others were also experiencing frustration, etc., as a result of the above inequities; (c) the sense of unity that developed as a result of the above awareness; (d) the discovery that they did in fact have the power to effect change, that is, a reinforcement received through successful community action; (e) the overall democratic structure of the alternative programme, and shared decision-making at all levels of organization; (f) the development of communication skills as tools for understanding and expression; (g) the development of a positive sense of self-worth and confidence; (h) the demystification of the teacher as expert; (i) the encouragement to think critically and question constantly; (j) the encouragement of personal autonomy; and (k) the opportunities for control within the education programme which enabled students to experience their success.

Kindervatter's (1979) experience with non-formal education which was used as an empowering process, identified various characteristics of this process: (a) small group structure, providing opportunities for activity and autonomy; (b) the transfer of responsibility from the facilitator to the

participants; (c) the involvement of participants in the decision-making at all levels; (d) an outside facilitator supporting people to do things themselves; (e) democratic and non-hierarchical relationships and processes, sharing responsibilities at all levels; (f) the integration of reflection and action; and (g) various methods used to encourage self-reliance.

All the above studies, referring to various programmes aimed at empowering groups of oppressed people, suggest that the psychologist wishing to facilitate empowerment in any particular group in South African society needs to do some or all of the following:

(a) Address the power relations between the psychologist and the group concerned; to confront any inappropriate power imbalances and abuse of power. In the process of working in a horizontal, collaborative, partnership manner, participants begin to demystify the 'expert' role; recognize the value of their own resources; and confront power issues at a micro-level.

(b) Facilitate the identification of existing strengths and competencies, and mobilize these in the problem-solving or community action process.

(c) Facilitate opportunities for the participants to act and experience successful change action so that their feelings of personal power are reinforced.

(d) Encourage participation of all parties, particularly in the decision-making process: a participatory democratic form of decision-making where all persons have the opportunity to express their views and take joint responsibility for decisions taken.

(e) Help participants to develop skills that will enable them to participate and contribute.

(f) Facilitate the gradual transfer of responsibility if the initial reality does not allow for this from the commencement of a project. For example, when working with groups who are used to working within an authoritarian structure, it often requires a period of time in combination with many of the previously mentioned strategies for changes to occur. To throw people into a completely strange way of working without allowing for adaptation time can be more harmful than helpful.

(g) Find opportunities to facilitate the development of feelings of self-worth in participants.

(h) Expand the awareness of social realities, of the dynamics of oppression, of contradictions, of alternative ways of viewing life and acting in the world, of common or shared frustrations, etc.

(i) Encourage a questioning attitude towards traditionally accepted norms and views, developing a critical stance towards one's own and others' actions.

(j) Look realistically at the barriers likely to be confronted in any particular change action; to analyse what can and what, at present, cannot be changed through any particular action.

(k) Utilize strategies to challenge broader oppressive structures and to find ways of gaining access to basic resources. In this regard the need for collective action is emphasized.

The emphasis placed on the need to move from a focus on a development of personal power to that of political power or realistic access to basic resources is not done to underestimate the importance of the former development, but rather to address the potential problem of helping people to feel better without addressing very real structural problems. Not only the danger of 'treating' the individual without addressing structural factors, but also of creating a situation of frustration and negative reinforcement which would occur when the 'empowered' person is confronted with the oppressive structure. S/he needs to become aware of these realities, and find ways, in collective action, to challenge and change the situation.

It should be noted that the term 'empowerment' could be misconstrued to mean that the psychologist empowers the community, and within that possible interpretation of the approach as a strategy, the assumption that s/he does it should be challenged. The psychologist's role of empowering other people has within it a possible hidden agenda for the furthering, rather than breaking down, of the top-downwards paternalistic professional-client relationship. As one Latin American community psychologist noted (Appendix C), power is not ours to give away; it is taken. There is a danger of the psychologist assuming a collaborative, horizontal power relationship with a

community when in fact s/he is unwittingly furthering a paternalistic relationship. This would become evident in her/his behaviour within the community context, and could result in an incongruence which would interfere with the empowerment process. It is for this, and other, reasons that it is strongly believed that during and after training as a community psychologist, the psychologist should confront her/his own power position, interests, needs and behaviours, and work through the incongruencies as they emerge.

Finally, the relationship between the process of participatory democracy and empowerment is highlighted. Turner (1972) points out that the twin goals of individual autonomy and a sense of relatedness to others (two major aspects of 'mental health') are met in the idea of participatory democracy, suggesting that

there is ample sociological evidence that participation in decision-making ... increases the ability to participate, and increases that sense of competence on the part of the individual which is vital for balanced and autonomous development. (p36)

In addition to the role of the process of participatory democracy in developing 'healthy' individuals, it is a process which allows for a simultaneous transformation at both the individual and social levels, enabling individuals to develop a sense of personal power, and exercising that to ensure the development of social institutions which meet the needs of the people.

### Settings for Community Psychology Practice in South Africa

At present psychologists in South Africa work in a variety of settings, and those who choose to work within a community psychology perspective would utilize those as well as other, presently unexplored (by psychologists), settings. Settings such as (a) schools and (b) work places, traditionally frequented by educational and industrial/organizational psychologists, have been suggested by many (e.g. Appendix A) as being ideal sites for community oriented work. They are natural sites for preventive action and are where children and adults spend most of their waking hours. Organizational and institutional change within

these settings have not really been addressed by psychologists in this context. Within the industrial setting, the role of the psychologist in unions, working with workers to address their needs within that context, is just beginning to be realized in and outside of South Africa (Fullagar & Paizis, 1986; Huszczo et al, 1984).

Other settings which have been identified as being particularly good sites for community psychology practice include (c) the church or other religious institutions, a setting that has been identified as being particularly viable within South Africa (Appendix C; Shinn, 1986); (d) community organizations and voluntary associations, where people have already organized themselves to address a particular issue in society; (e) government, where policies can be influenced by psychological input, an area particularly favoured within the USA and Britain at present; (f) universities, (g) community centres; (h) hospitals; (i) courts; (j) neighbourhoods; and so on.

Psychology practice conducted from a community psychology perspective can in fact occur in any setting where social action becomes a possibility. However, the realities of living in South Africa in the present socio-political climate suggests that some settings are more viable than others, and that choices made by the psychologist in this regard should take into account factors such as accessibility to the psychologist; the actual skill and knowledge base being offered; the particular specialist training and experience that has been received; the realistic possibility for change that exists within that setting; and the question of where change is likely to be most effective.

It is suggested that within the current South African reality, certain institutions offer a particularly effective and viable setting for community psychology practice. Of particular note are certain religious groupings who are already involved in the broader struggle against oppression in South Africa, providing an existing base for action, and providing some form of safety under its umbrella (although detention figures appear to belie this view), and providing possible paid employment. The university offers a number of advantages (and disadvantages of course) for the community psychologist, providing possible employment,

involvement in various projects already in existence, relative freedom to challenge the status quo, and access to valuable resources. At present numerous progressive community organizations in South Africa offer a variety of possible involvements for the community psychologist, but the realistic repressive measures that are taken against these organizations cannot be ignored. The same point is true for certain unions within South Africa at present, suggesting that while the possibilities for involvement are challenging and real, threat to personal safety and job security are realities of the psychologist choosing these options.

In conclusion, the question of the psychologist's present ability to conduct the above mentioned activities in the settings described above does raise an important issue. To-date the training of psychologists has included some skills and knowledge that can be used within community psychology practice, but it would be fair to say that we are not adequately equipped to conduct the practices proposed. It follows, therefore, that the need for appropriate training aimed at preparing psychologists who wish to, to conduct community orientated practice, is urgent. For this reason, the present study will conclude with an in-depth look at the training of psychologists in relation to this need.

## CHAPTER SIX IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Ingleby (1974) points out that one's socialization into a professional class has a powerful effect on the psychologist, and that to escape from the bemusement of one's own mentality, habits of thought and perception which are laid down during the training years is no easy task. It is evident therefore that when one looks at the role of the psychologist in the South African social context, the issue of the training of psychologists becomes a crucial factor. The importance of this period for the psychologist is also noted by many others (e.g. Kelly, 1970; Moll, 1983; Morrell, 1984; and Trickett et al, 1984).

It is recognized however that while the psychologist's professional training constitutes an important period for addressing a number of fundamental issues relevant to the particular perspective and therefore practice finally adopted, there are limitations to the extent of change likely to occur. In other words, any attempt to change psychologists or the psychology profession in this country needs to recognize the limits of an educational stance to change (refer critiques of the Critical approach in chapter 4). The psychologist's socialization begins long before s/he enters the university. S/he, as a member of particular groups (gender, class, race, etc.), enters the profession with interests which are tied to that membership. The embedded nature of these interests needs to be recognized, as Fay (1987) and others have pointed out. Furthermore, changing individual psychologists presents a limited perspective to the change process. What is necessary is simultaneous attempts to address broader professional and other psychological issues, and in this regard, collective action is necessary. Any serious attempt to challenge the psychology profession therefore needs to look at the issue of organizing psychologists - its potentials and limits.

Nevertheless, the obvious importance of the training period on the development and expression of the role of the psychologist

power relations between myself as teacher and the group concerned; (d) which specific skills should be disseminated, and how can they best be shared; and so on. As with any role adopted, a self-critical reflection of that role should be conducted so that a further perpetuation of inappropriate professionalism can be avoided. The role of community education within an empowerment model has been challenged by Serrano-Garcia (1984) who argues that it is more appropriate to share skills with the community by working directly with them on a particular project, and in the process, share skills that are needed in that context. In that way, a top-downwards teacher-student approach can be avoided. While this point is fully supported, it is suggested that there is a place for a variety of educational methods to be used and that the development of issues around the question of power can be addressed, and need to be addressed, at all appropriate moments in that process.

### 3. Public Education

The need for psychologists to become involved in public education is emphasized by many of the participants of the present study. The Cape Town community organizers (Appendix D) requested specific information about stress reactions, emotional disturbances and possible coping strategies, as well as information about existing social services. Within this study and many of the others in the present investigation, the need for the psychology profession to publicize its potential contribution to communities, was also raised. Morris (1985) addresses this issue, suggesting that the public's present knowledge and attitudes towards psychology needs to be changed in response to the generally confused view of our discipline that is held by so many community members and even other professions. In addition to the above mentioned areas, the possibilities of the content for public education are infinite, including areas of less obvious political significance such as parenting, schizophrenia, mental retardation, drug abuse, child-abuse, etc., areas which have already received a great deal of coverage in the various media; as well as more directly political areas such as the psychological effects of detention, effects of violence on

children, mental health and apartheid, mental health and capitalism, etc. A great deal of the latter type of public education is already occurring through organizations such as OASSSA.

Specific strategies within the broader area of public education would include use of the television media (if that was acceptable to the psychologist concerned); press statements and use of newspapers as a medium for information dissemination; public talks and debates; public courses and seminars; community pamphlets; and so on.

### Consultation

Consultation is a concept of many forms and applications. The consultant is usually defined as one who gives professional or expert advice, but many would be in sharp agreement with that understanding of a consultant's role. The complexity of the concept requires delimitation in order to understand exactly what role is being referred to.

Organizational Development (OD) is one form of consultancy which aims to promote the improvement of organizational performance. This form of consultancy is referred to by Heller et al (1984) who outline a number of OD intervention strategies that could be utilized. These authors also give an overview of two other consultation perspectives, that is, mental health consultation and behavioural consultation. In the former context, the process of consultation is defined as being used

to denote a process of interaction between two professional persons - the consultant, who is a specialist, and the consultee, who invokes the consultant's help in regard to a current work problem with which he is having some difficulty and which he has decided is within the other's area of competence. The work problem involves the management or treatment of one or more clients of the consultee, or the planning or implementation of a program to cater to such clients. (Caplan, 1970, p19, cited in Heller et al, 1984)

Heller et al (1984) distinguish between client-centered, consultee-centered, and programme-centered consultation, with the focus being on the agency's clients, staff, or programme. The emphasis is on work rather than personal problems, distinguishing

this practice from that of counselling. The aim is on improving on-the-job performance so that more responsive service can be facilitated.

Behavioural consultation arose out of the need for methods to achieve improved stimulus control of behaviour in environments. Based on the belief that teachers and parents are key reinforcers during the formative years of most individuals, psychologists have increasingly played the role of consultant to these central reinforcement dispensers (Heller et al, 1984).

While the traditional consultancy role can be criticized for its inherent technical interest, it is argued that it can be appropriately adapted in certain instances. Within the context of South Africa it is argued, based on personal experience, that the potential contribution of the psychologist as consultant is great. In all the three areas referred to above, the psychologist can play an important role in supporting non-professionals and even other professionals in their counselling activities; sharing psychological expertise with organizers who need information on psychological aspects of a particular issue; facilitating effective organization with community organizations; sharing skills and knowledge with key socializing agents such as teachers and parents; and participating in the development of alternative settings in various areas of the social structure.

The area of organizational development has traditionally been used within large industrial or public organizations and has fundamentally served the interests of management. As a result of this historical utilization of this change strategy, there is often a tendency on the part of many psychologists to overlook its potential use in community organizations as well as more informal groupings within a community. Personal experience in this particular activity in South Africa has highlighted its value to organizations and groups of people wishing to find effective ways of organizing. Helping groups to work through organizationally related problems; developing various organizational and group skills; and, in particular, addressing the issue of participatory democracy at a very practical level; have proved to be extremely valuable services within that context.

has been noted by a number of South African psychologists who have expressed various dissatisfactions with the training of psychologists in this context (Dawes, 1986; Holdstock, 1981; Manganyi, in Cordes, 1985; Manganyi & Louw, 1986; Psychology in Society editorial, 1986; Steyn, 1985; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986). Although the specifics of the criticisms levelled at the training of psychologists are diverse, they all point to a need to reassess our training at every level. Dawes (1986) argues that

it seems crucial at this time for South African psychology departments to reflect on their role in becoming more responsive in terms of curricula and research to their African context and to the needs of the majority of the citizens. At the same time they need to reflect on the degree to which their endeavours act directly or otherwise in the interests of the apartheid state and industrial capital. (p29)

While there are no doubt a number of alternative ways of pursuing the question of appropriate training of psychologists in South Africa, the present study aims to explore an appropriate training within the community psychology perspective, focusing on preparing psychologists to conduct practice that aims to address problems in living at the level of social change.

The focus on social change results in the psychologist entering arenas hitherto not penetrated. It becomes clearly evident that the skills and knowledge obtained through traditional training, in all areas of specialization, do not equip the psychologist sufficiently to tackle problems at a broader social level. Skills and knowledge-bases relating to the broad role required as well as specific activities or intervention methods needed at that level need to be identified and training in those areas, received. Furthermore, the need for the community-orientated psychologist to work within an empowerment framework requires a socialization process that provides a learning environment that is congruent with the values of the approach being taught, giving the student an opportunity to reflect on her/his own values and power needs and behaviour so that s/he may work congruently within that framework.

The purpose of this section is to gain an overview of

community psychology training in other contexts; look at the views of psychologists within South Africa on training in this perspective; identify major issues that need to be addressed when considering training in community psychology; and then propose a broad model for the training of South African psychologists for community psychology practice in this context.

## 6.2 OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING IN OTHER CONTEXTS

### Empirical Study

In order to obtain an up-dated view of training in community psychology in the USA, participants of the USA study (Appendix C) were interviewed, revealing the following major points:

1. The need for community psychology training to be linked with another speciality, thereby providing a practical solution to job market problems as well as fulfilling its marginal role as a critical perspective.
2. The process of training was considered to be of particular importance, and in this regard, the how and who of training were perceived to be major issues. It was suggested that the values and commitment of the student were important factors in the selection process, and that students from 'minority' populations be encouraged to enter the profession. With respect to the actual training process it was emphasized that (a) a theory-practice dialectic be pursued; (b) students be encouraged to develop a critical consciousness; (c) varied experiences be provided for the students; and (d) the programmes and staff conducting the training should reflect the fundamental values inherent in the community psychology approach.
3. With reference to specific content areas to be included in community psychology training programmes, a number of areas within and outside of the psychology discipline were identified. These included research methodology, community psychology, social theory, psychology-society relationship, social change processes, futurology, minority issues, different modes of intervention, interpersonal skills training, and reflection on professional

identity and personal value systems.

While training in Latin America appears similar to that of the USA, there does appear to be a particular emphasis on the utilization and development of indigenous resources (reflecting the anti-colonialist attitude prevalent in that context); on the understanding of social reality in that context; and on social issues and therefore change at organizational, community, and institutional levels. Skills and knowledge bases relevant to the above were therefore emphasized (University of Puerto Rico, M.A. Social-Community programme outline, 1985).

### Literature Review

At present, a number of issues around the area of the training of community psychologists in the USA are being considered (e.g. Keys, 1986; Sandler, 1986). These include the development of an appropriate model and structure for specialist training; curriculum issues relating to common core and specialist-generalist curriculum; levels of training; setting and organizational issues; application issues; societal and financial support; programme quality control; new specializations and initiatives; institutional methods; student issues; socialization issues; designation (i.e. setting minimal standards); accreditation, and specialization.

Multiple training formats for community psychology have arisen in the USA over the past twenty years (Lorion, 1984; Sue, 1981; Trickett et al, 1984). The diversity of the community approach has reflected itself in the training programmes emerging. While this diversity makes it difficult to describe a core tendency, it has also been hailed as a fundamental factor of community psychology generally (Keys, 1985; Kim, 1981; Rappaport, 1977 & 1981; Sandler & Keller, 1984; Sue, 1981; Tanaka, 1981; Zax & Specter, 1974). It expresses itself in the different programme-bases used (clinical-community, industrial-community, social-community, etc); in the diverse ideological and theoretical frameworks forming a basis for practical work; in the different roles and specific activities emphasized; in the different settings utilized; and in the emphasis placed on the need for

the student to be exposed to diverse experiences and cultural groups.

One area of debate, as identified earlier, has been the tension between preparing the community psychologist as a generalist or as a specialist. Although different programmes emphasize different skills and roles for the community psychologist, there are many who stress the need for her/him to be prepared as a generalist, developing a variety of competencies relevant to complex situations (Boll, 1985; Iscoe et al, 1977; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Tanaka, 1984; Zax & Specter, 1974). However accepting the need for community psychologists to have generic skills, Shinn (1986) argues that

each class of behavior setting also requires training in specific knowledge and skills in order to work effectively. (p24)

The need for both generic and specialist skills is therefore apparent.

Community psychologists are 'prepared' to assume a number of roles, the most common being that of advocate, consultant, trainer, facilitator, evaluator, researcher, planner, and negotiator (Thomas, 1984). Skills and knowledge-bases relevant to those roles are therefore emphasized in the training process. Areas receiving attention include assessment, administration, theories and issues in community psychology, social advocacy, social support systems, policy analysis, interpersonal skills, crisis intervention, various social change strategies, ethnic studies, community organization, grant-writing, prevention, group process and organizational development, problem-solving, community mental health, health, values clarification, contract management, conflict resolution, legal issues, social welfare, ecology, person-environment relations, communication, ethics, education, relevant self-awareness, as well as other psychology sub-disciplines such as personality, developmental, and social psychology (Bloom, 1984; Iscoe et al, 1977; Kim, 1984; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Murray, 1984; Murrell, 1984; Tanaka, 1984). An important issue relating to the question of skills is the need for community psychologists to equip themselves with flexible,

saleable skills in order to survive in the job market (Bloom, 1984; Murrell, 1984). The need to marry the training programme with its market place is therefore taken very seriously.

The need for an interdisciplinary exposure arose as a common emphasis in the literature (Iscoe, 1984; Kelly, 1970; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Rickel, 1985; Tanaka, 1981; Zax & Specter, 1974). In this regard, the community psychologist needs to include knowledge-bases from a number of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, economics, history, philosophy, and political science, in order to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the complex reality of the social system. In addition s/he needs to learn to work with other disciplines in an attempt to address issues at a social level.

With reference to student selection, the need for members of 'minority' groups to be trained as community psychologists has been emphasized (e.g. New York Community Psychology Ph.D. Training pamphlet, 1985). Certain programmes have made a concerted effort to ensure that a large proportion of the students are in fact representative of 'minority' groups in that context.

With regard to academic level, community psychology training in the USA occurs primarily at the doctoral level, but masters and even undergraduate levels of training are also perceived to be important (Iscoe et al, 1977; Fox et al, 1985; Lewis & Lewis, 1977). Fox et al suggest that at undergraduate level, the student should begin learning skills and gain a general education; that at masters level s/he should emerge as a limited practitioner; at doctoral level s/he should have developed generic skills; and that at post/doctoral level, specialities characterized by a unique domain of knowledge, could be pursued. In addition to the university-based training referred to above, a strong emphasis is also placed on continuing education in community psychology, offered to professionals who wish to extend their skill and knowledge repertoire in order to equip them to respond more adequately to community and social issues.

With regard to organizational framework Heller et al (1984) refer to the clinical-community combination which appears to be the most frequent framework within the USA. There are some free-

standing programmes not combined with other specialities, but owing to the current socio-political climate in that context, this form of organizational framework for community psychology training has received less emphasis (Appendix C). Heller et al (1984) refer to the debate around the issue of whether or not community psychology should be a minor area or major area of study. They note that

advocates of community psychology as a minor area of study argue that community application should be seen as an aspect of the several areas of psychology already concerned with human problems. (p405)

The issue of specialization is one which is relevant in current debate in community psychology in the USA (Davidson II, 1986; Keys, 1986; Newbrough, 1986; Sandler, 1986). Davidson (1986) advocates against specialization because of its inherent link with issues of designation and licensing (registration) requirements. He argues that it strikes at the heart of the core values of community psychology, suggesting that we have something unique to contribute and that there are things that we do not do. He sees it as a further fragmentation within the discipline of psychology, creating a 'special field' for 'community' psychologists, thereby forcing others out of that form of practice. Newbrough (1986) advocates for specialization in terms of accreditation but not for the purposes of licensing. He notes how in the late 1970's community psychology made the decision to avoid specialization in the form of licensing, to avoid the disenfranchisement of non-doctoral person-power and because of the difficulty it would raise in terms of facilitating interdisciplinary education and training. Newbrough highlights the pros and cons of accreditation and licensing saying that, on the positive side, it allows the perspective to gain more leverage in the university; makes it easier to obtain internships and jobs in civil service; helps to clarify what the field of community psychology is; involves the field in general APA politics; helps to improve the status of community psychology in universities; and attracts students, faculty, and money. On the negative side he notes that it serves professional

self-interest; encourages professionals to do what people can do for themselves; decreases self-help if more professionals are looking for jobs; generates graduates even if the field does not need them; licensing designates certain persons as competent to do particular kinds of work at the exclusion of others; limits interdisciplinary programmes; and limits the use of masters degree at a practical level. As a result of all these factors he suggests that there is a need for specialization in community psychology but that one should stop at licensing so that other peoples' involvement in delivering services is not restricted.

With regard to the process of training, a number of authors emphasize the need to incorporate a participatory approach in the training of psychologists in the community approach, reflecting a basic philosophical value of community psychology and thereby preparing students to work within that framework (Kalafat, 1984; Trickett et al, 1984). The need for extensive practical or field work was also emphasized, with a major emphasis being placed on a theory-practice dialectic in the training process (Iscoe et al, 1977; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Mann, 1978; Zax & Specter, 1974).

Bender et al (1983) discuss the issue of training in community psychology in Great Britain. In this context, skills emphasized include behavioural, counselling, research, staff consultation, and community development. They emphasize a ground-work in certain skills; the ability to apply these in a wide range of settings or groups; the ability to look at needs in a multilevel way; and an experience of working in the community. In terms of specialization, they suggest either a community psychology specialization or a maintenance of existing divisions with one qualifying community psychology course for all psychologists. They argue that

we cannot see much merit in yet another applied psychology profession with its attendant need to oversell itself and devoting much energy to establishing its guild boundaries ... We are also concerned to see qualifications that are valid across institutional boundaries, rather than reinforcing those boundaries. (p234)

They suggest that the most appropriate structure would be one qualification common to all applied psychologists, offering basic

modules as well as a range of more specific ones which would be optional. Finally, these authors also lay a great emphasis on the need for continuing education for psychologists who are already in the field.

### 6.3 COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the interviews conducted with South African psychologists (Appendix A) there was strong support for psychologists to be trained to respond effectively to social issues in this country. Different views were expressed with regard to the details of when this training should take place (i.e., at undergraduate, masters, doctoral or continued education levels). The issue of specialization versus non-specialization in community psychology also arose, and in this regard, participants were almost equally divided. On the one hand specialization was considered important for the purpose of providing important additional skills training and a valuable power base from which to operate; and on the other hand it was rejected as a speciality option because of the creation of another division in the social sciences, and psychology in particular, and because it was felt that this approach should be incorporated in the present registration categories/specializations so that all psychologists take their responsibility in this regard seriously.

Although community psychology has not yet developed its own special professional programme in South Africa, training in this area at undergraduate, honours, and masters level is evident in many universities at present. At the masters (professional) level, a number of programmes of all registrations appear to be incorporating various elements of this approach into their existing training programmes. It is predicted that this trend will increase in our present socio-political context with all its demands on the psychologist to reassess her/his role in South African society.

The development of the community psychology training at the undergraduate, honours, masters, and continued education levels, at the University of Cape Town (UCT) over the last few years has raised some important learnings. In evaluating this development,

the following major points are raised: (a) that congruence between the entire programme and the values/approach being taught is very important; (b) that the label of 'community psychology' can be both a positive and negative factor, creating a valuable base from which to develop an appropriate practice, but also creating confusion and misinterpretation in certain quarters; (c) that connection with all existing applied fields and pursuing the relevance of community psychology to each one, is a valuable way of pursuing training in the community perspective; (d) that many students are interested in pursuing training in this field; however, the suitability of all who are interested to the demands of this kind of work is limited; (e) related to the previous point, is the need for a training programme to come to terms with the previous socialization and resultant motivation of the person entering the profession, and the blocks that this provides when one is attempting to provide an alternative service requiring different values and serving different interests; (f) the need to address job market issues is important; (g) the value of working with other members of staff as a team, sharing various resources and perspectives, serving the purpose of providing students and staff with a rich experience; (h) that there is a high need for continuing education in community psychology, for those who are in the field and are wishing to pursue this approach; and (i) that a training programme requires at least one person who is committed to this approach and able to concentrate on the development of training in that field. This person needs to have access to resources needed to conduct the programme efficiently and effectively. At the completion of a four year period of research and programme development of community psychology at UCT, specific recommendations for training in that context were offered to the Department of Psychology (Lazarus, 1986(b)).

With regard to point (c) above, the value of a common core training programme offered to masters students of all registrations, was highlighted in two lengthy workshops held at UCT in April and October 1987. At these events students from the clinical, research, and educational psychology courses came together, with some students from the University of the Western

Cape (a predominantly 'black' university), to receive training in a number of areas relevant to community psychology practice. These included an overview and debate of controversial issues in community psychology; understanding of and planning for social change; community research approaches; community education (planning, running, and evaluating programmes); needs assessment research; consultation; group facilitation; organizational development; interdisciplinary team work; epidemiological research; oppression and the psychologist's response; job market issues; and an exploration of professional identity issues through values clarification and identification of power needs and behaviour. An evaluation of this course revealed the immense value of providing an opportunity for psychologists of different specializations to realize both their basic commonness and to respect each others' specific contributions. Furthermore, the realization of how the community psychology approach cuts across the boundaries of the different existing categories of specialization, was an important one.

#### 6.4 ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Before making any suggestions for community psychology training in South Africa, a number of issues arising from the previous sections will be outlined. Responses to these issues will be incorporated in the educational model discussed below (Para 6.5).

With regard to issues that need to be confronted when developing a community psychology programme, one major area relates to the concepts of 'appropriateness' and 'relevance' as well as the term 'community'. These terms cannot avoid reflecting a particular worldview. The issue for the training programme developers is one of value-clarification and certain philosophical and political choices, particularly in terms of whom one is going to serve in South Africa, and from which particular theoretical frameworks problems will be defined. Related to this choice is the need to decide on either a broad-based 'umbrella' style of training programme, allowing for a diverse interpretation and expression of community psychology, or one which is more ideologically focused, for example, emphasizing

the need for community psychology to focus on issues of power and oppression in the South African context.

An additional issue is that of a community psychology specialization versus non-specialization, highlighted in both the interviews with South African psychologists and community psychologists in the USA and Britain. The arguments for and against specialization in the form of a separate registration category are both persuasive and need to be seriously considered.

Related to this issue is the question of when, in terms of academic level, community psychology training should occur. Should it pervade the entire professional socialization process; be concentrated at masters level; or be a post-masters specialization? The question of an appropriate professional level is also one which is pertinent to the issue of selection, that is, who will have access to such training? Further questions relating to criteria for selection, and the view of the end-product or educational outcome that would be most appropriate to the South African context, also need to be addressed.

(The issue of a viable job market for the community-orientated psychologist is a particularly important one. Providing training in an area that offers no practical and financially viable outlet is an irresponsible action on the part of any institution offering professional training.)

A further issue relevant to the training of community psychologists relates to how the philosophy of the programme is reflected in the educational process at all levels, that is, how the 'end-product' is defined, the implications for the overall structure of the programme, as well as the way it is played out in the areas of selection, staff development, learning/teaching environment, curriculum or course content, teaching and learning methods, and assessment.

The issue of professionalism and general role identity is one which deserves particular emphasis, particularly if the end product of a community psychology programme is a collaborative type of professional. It appears that this role model expectation of a community psychologist is usually not adequately prepared for in the training or socialization process. The community psychologist is expected to share power, empower, work

collaboratively, and so on, but is not sufficiently exposed either directly or indirectly to models for working in that way (Appendix C).

Related to the above point is the issue of the psychologist's location in the broader South African reality, and how this affects the socialization process. The issues of power and interests are relevant here, strongly determining the psychologist's interpretation of her/his role in this context.

The aforementioned and other issues relevant to the training of community psychologists need to be addressed. The proposed model of training presented below attempts to do that, suggesting various ways in which the training process can facilitate a development of an appropriate community psychologist for South Africa.

## 6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

When considering an appropriate training in community psychology in South Africa, two major criteria are used: (a) the need for the programme that is educationally sound; and (b) the need for a training programme that attempts to be appropriate to South Africa. After discussing the overall philosophy, aims, and organizational structure of such a programme, various elements of the educational process within professional training will be highlighted: selection of staff and students, staff development, learning environment, curriculum, teaching/learning methods, and assessment (J Lazarus, 1985). The issue of the job market will also be addressed, looking at both the needs out of which such a training arises and the employment possibilities at the end of the training.

### The Market Place: The Needs

The need for a more appropriate general psychology practice in South Africa, and an emphasis on the need to confront structural roots of problems in living and therefore to be engaged in social change, have been clearly highlighted. The inadequacy of present

training structures to prepare psychologists for a more appropriate role in South African society and therefore a call for a more appropriate training model in South Africa has also been expressed. The need for a psychology profession to reconstruct its practices in South Africa and society's needs to have psychologists who can contribute to the transformation process, clearly indicate the necessity for an exploration of training that equips psychologists to make a more meaningful contribution within this context.

### Philosophical Base and Aims

It is recognized that personal philosophy and values play a large role in determining the aims and theoretical foundations of any training programme in community psychology. It should be remembered therefore that a community psychology arising out of different philosophical frameworks would result in different recommendations for emphases in the training process.

The philosophical approach adopted should permeate all levels of the educational process. If one wishes the student to emerge with particular attitudes, characteristics and abilities, congruence between the philosophy and educational process is crucial. This requires an evaluation of all aspects of the training process in terms of whether they reflect the fundamental values of the approach being taught.

With respect to the aims of a community psychology training programme, the following suggestions are offered. These relate directly to the specific view of community psychology adopted in this study. The aims and objectives described below relate (a) to overall programme aims, and (b) to the 'end-product' or educational outcome aimed at in the training process.

#### **Overall Programme Aims**

With regard to overall programme aims, the following factors are emphasized:

1. Accountability to both the academic community and 'grassroots' communities should be taken seriously. In this regard, the programme would need to be responsive to particular community needs and in some way provide a service beyond the

training process and setting. In addition, this requires a controlling mechanism whereby both academic and 'community' representatives are intimately involved in the directing of such a programme, ensuring that expectations from both communities are addressed.

2. The accountability of community psychology to oppressed groups in South Africa is emphasized. The programme's location within and responsibility to such groups should be clear.

3. A commitment towards working within a participatory-democratic framework is emphasized. The issue of power within the professional relationship therefore constitutes a major focus in the training process. The question of professionalism would need to be confronted and solutions to contradictions and problems sought.

4. A self-critical approach should pervade the entire training process. Within the programme structure and process, opportunities for regular and continuous reflection would need to be created, allowing students to conduct personal self-reflections; encouraging a critical stance towards community psychology and reality in general; and an opportunity to evaluate the appropriateness of the training programme on a regular basis.

5. A theory-practice dialectic needs to be facilitated so that contributions towards appropriate psycho-social theories are generated and practices improved. In this regard, a cyclic process of action-reflection should constitute a fundamental educational principle in the programme.

6. The programme should aim, as Dawes (1986) suggests, to become more responsive to the African and working-class context, and therefore the needs of the majority of citizens in South Africa.

7. The value of diversity within the training process should be respected. This would involve including staff and students from different worldviews and backgrounds in the programme; creating opportunities for the exploration of diverse theoretical and practical frameworks; providing diverse experiences for the student, allowing her/him to develop and utilize her/his own strengths and commitments; and encouraging the participants to work in diverse situations in order to confront the complex

reality that exists in South Africa.

8. The aim of openness (not meaning acceptance) to other points of view is also considered to be important. The particular training aim relating to this is to provide an atmosphere where genuine debate is encouraged, where sound argumentation is encouraged, with a view to exploring various viewpoints in order to develop appropriate theories and practices.

9. Students should be exposed to the harsh realities of South African life wherever possible and appropriate. This suggests that while discussion and argumentation are valuable, concrete experiences 'in the community' are essential for the student of community psychology as it raises the contradictions and issues that need to be addressed if one is to develop an appropriate practice.

10. The programme should make genuine attempts to go beyond disciplinary barriers and provide an appropriate exposure to other disciplines relevant to the area being explored. Students should be given opportunities to learn to utilize interdisciplinary resources in order to understand and address issues in society

#### The 'End-Product'

With regard to the end-product or educational outcome aimed at in the training process, the following aims are emphasized:

1. To develop in the student a strong sense of responsibility to the communities with whom s/he works, and to understand and seriously pursue the ethical issues inherent in this kind of work.
2. To develop an attitude of critical consciousness, in terms of oneself, community psychology, and life in general.
3. To develop the student's openness to learn from others, accepting and respecting the resources and competencies that exist in others.
4. To develop a willingness and ability to share skills and knowledge with others.
5. To develop in the student the ability to work democratically with others, sharing responsibility and power, and using expertise as a resource rather than as a distancing factor.

6. Related to the above, is the need for the student to develop a relevant self-awareness with regard to attitudes, values, personal needs, and internal contradictions. This is considered to be an important part of the self-reflective process in that these aspects fundamentally affect one's practice and can present a problem if unclarified and inadequately confronted. The issues of power and values are ones that need particular attention in this regard.

7. The development of certain characteristics and abilities considered to be essential for the psychologist working within a community framework. Examples of these would be self-reliance, innovativeness, tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility, personal security, interpersonal skills, etc.

8. The development of analytical and strategic planning skills so that participation in social change processes can most efficiently be pursued.

9. The development of some specific areas of knowledge and skills, which could be related to one of the present registrable specialities, as well as skills of a more generalist nature that would allow the psychologist to respond flexibly to complex situations.

While the above aims form an overall basis for the training programme, more specific learning and teaching objectives would have to be outlined, but these could really only emerge out of a more specific and detailed training programme which would be embedded within a particular context.

### Overall Structure and Process

Firstly, students should be involved in the development of the training programme, participating at all levels of the educational process. Emphasis is placed on the importance of allowing students to make choices and control their own learning experiences. Staff members would act as facilitators, resource persons, and participants in the learning process. Requirements and needs emerging from all concerned in the programme would therefore be considered in the planning of the programme. This forms the basis for a model of participatory democracy.

Programme negotiation in professional adult education is not an unknown activity. Bond & Prosser (1980) and Millar et al (1986) refer to courses which were based on this kind of process, identifying both positive and problematic aspects of pursuing such a process. Millar et al highlight the issues of control and responsibility inherent in the process of planning and conducting training courses. They point out that the traditional method, whereby staff plan a course for students, denies the students access to areas of control and responsibility whereas the programme negotiation process facilitates a shared power experience. They argue that continuous negotiation and issues of control and responsibility should be visible parts of a curriculum. Some suggestions for facilitating a negotiation process included the decreasing of dependency, encouragement of the use of resources, assisting the students to define their learning needs and objectives, and including the students in the planning and evaluating of their own programme and progress. The student is encouraged to take responsibility for her/his own learning experience.

The issue of responsibility and control referred to in the previous section raises the question of how one transfers responsibility. In this regard, it is suggested that a structure for the development of graduated responsibility be introduced. This is where responsibility is gradually developed through providing an initially relatively tightly structured programme, whereafter progressively more responsibility, both in the programme itself and in practice in the community, is made available (Keys, 1985; Mann, 1978; Zax & Specter, 1974). In addition to successfully transferring responsibility and control within the training programme, this process acts as a model for encouraging participation and a sharing of responsibility in a community setting.

It is also considered to be important that pertinent members of the community should be involved in helping to give direction to the programme, and in providing appropriate field placements for the students, providing an informal infrastructure for the practical training considered to be a fundamental pivot for community psychology training. While students would spend a

great deal of their time in these placements, it is suggested that the university form the base for the programme. While there are advantages and disadvantages to having a university-based programme in community psychology, it is argued that within the present socio-political climate, it would be the most appropriate setting for such a programme. In relation to the university-community relationship, accountability to the community is considered to be a crucial factor, and in this regard, longitudinal working relationships should be pursued. The benefits to both the university and the community in such a programme could be great, and should be thoroughly pursued. The community organizations and groups involved in the programme benefit from the access to resources of psychologists and the general university setting, while students are given the opportunity to learn from direct experience in a community setting.

It is suggested that a formal university-community relationship be developed around this programme, facilitating a process where representatives from both academic and 'grassroots' communities can participate in the development of appropriate structures and processes within the programme. This would ensure that accountability to both parties is always a matter of central importance. In addition it is believed (and personal experience in a university-community unit over the last couple of years supports this) that members of both communities can contribute a great deal to each other. The traditions of the university and 'community' often have opposing goals, resulting in fundamental contradictions reflective of society as a whole. However, these very contradictions present themselves as a potential site for struggle and, if constructively addressed, result in growth for all concerned. The benefits to both the university and the 'community' are therefore large.

With regard to the academic levels of training at which community psychology should take place, the following suggestions are offered. Firstly, that a Critical and African (Dawes, 1986) perspective be present at all levels of training of the psychologist. All students training to be a psychologists in South Africa should therefore be exposed to South African

'relevant' material, and develop a critical consciousness of the role of psychology and the applied psychologist in South African society. It is believed that unless students are exposed to a critical and relevant psychology from the beginning of their training, reflected in all sub-disciplines to which they are introduced, a later introduction of community psychology can only minimally affect the already strongly embedded values inculcated by their training thus far. The argument here, therefore, is that, for community psychology training to have any real lasting effect, a reconstruction of the entire training of psychologists would need to occur.

At undergraduate level, it is suggested that theoretical and practical aspects of community psychology be introduced to students. Perhaps the emphasis at this level should be on exploring theoretical concepts and their implications for practice. While theory might be a major emphasis at this level, it would be self-defeating if the practice part of the necessary theory-practice dialectic were to be absent. Therefore, some opportunity to experience this dialectic is emphasized. Within the structures of an undergraduate course, there appear to be two ways of operating: (a) to provide a module on community psychology, or (b) to include a community psychology perspective in existing courses.

It is suggested that the need for a short-term professional training period should also be considered. This would facilitate a move away from high-level professionalism, excessive expense, and inaccessibility to many students who would not normally, for various reasons, be interested in or be admitted to psychology. An undergraduate 'barefoot' community psychologist would therefore emerge as part of the team involved in this kind of work. Of course, this raises a number of issues which would need to be addressed if such an option were to be pursued, the most important one being the job market realities facing the psychologist emerging from such a programme. It is argued however that this type of option needs to be seriously considered within the context of South Africa, particularly in terms of developing alternative mental health systems within this country.

At honours (fourth year) level, it is suggested that students

psychology would be one speciality option. This would be more appropriate for a system where there was one integrated course for all applied psychologists, followed by specialization if necessary (refer Bender et al, 1983; Feldman, 1981; Strumpfer, 1981).

Of course the option of a separate registration category of 'community psychology' within the present registration structures could be considered, but is not personally favoured for the many reasons outlined by community psychologists in the USA on the issue of licensing, and because of the further split that would occur, not only between the different specializations, but between present practice and a community perspective.

It is strongly recommended that community psychology training at the level of continuing education be pursued. In this regard, knowledge and skills training in this area could be offered to interested existing professionals who wish to extend their training to meet the needs of the present socio-political situation. This could be easily achieved by opening up courses or modules offered to students at the professional and other levels. The training institutions concerned are urged to explore and take responsibility for offering such a resource to its 'community' of practising professionals.

While doctoral work in community psychology would be appropriate for a small minority in South Africa, it will not be given a major emphasis in the present proposal because of its inaccessibility to so many people, very often the very people who have the kind of commitment that is required for successful community psychology practice. However, having said that, there is a need for some psychologists to extend their training to doctoral level, exploring various theoretical and practical issues in more depth so that issues fundamental to this approach can be extensively and intensively debated and addressed.

With regard to funding, community internships of a non-paid or independently financed nature have been found to be more appropriate in some other contexts (e.g. Rappaport, 1977; Zax & Specter, 1974). This provides students and staff with the kind of freedom required to retain a critical stance, and accountability to people who do not have the resources with which

to pay a professional. It is suggested that within South Africa these options be pursued where appropriate.

### Selection of Students

As with any selection procedure, specific criteria should form the basis for admission of students into psychology professional training. It is suggested that in addition to the normal criteria for selection into the profession, particular weighting be given to criteria that relate more directly to community oriented work. Accepting that research into this area would be necessary to isolate exactly which criteria would be appropriate for the community psychologist in South Africa, it is suggested that commitment to the kind of values inherent in this approach be a major consideration (Appendix C; Sue, 1981). This would need to be overtly evident in the student's previous involvement 'in the community'. In addition to providing evidence of commitment, this provides a crucial background from which the student can draw in her/his training process, and it bridges the credibility gap often experienced by psychologists trying to enter the community. S/he will have existing links with groups which could then be utilized for training, service, and job-market purposes. It should be mentioned that the validity of past academic achievement should be carefully considered when selecting students for a community psychology training. Very often the people who have the kind of commitment required for this approach have been low academic achievers as a result of active community involvement rather than incompetence. This should be taken into account.

In addition to the selection conducted by appropriate staff members, a certain amount of reliable self-selection could occur if interested students were clearly briefed about the community psychology approach and its consequences for South African practice before the selection procedure. That should quickly eliminate all those who are merely interested with no special value commitment congruent with the community approach.

A further criterion urged in other contexts is that community psychology programmes should include members of 'minority'

oppressed or underserved groups. Kim (1981) argues that

membership in the ethnic group often means that the individual understands the values and lifestyles of that group. But it is not always the case and should be assessed for each person in training.

While Kim supports the selection of students from 'minority' groups for the purposes mentioned above, he does emphasize that one can learn about other cultures through reading, exposure, consultation, and, most importantly, through direct contact with the groups concerned. (One should not assume therefore that membership of a particular group ensures successful involvement within that context but look at each situation in a more complex manner.) However, in South Africa it is an overall challenge to the profession that so few 'majority' citizens (black) are represented in the profession, and if one is focusing on racial, gender and class oppression, this is even more important to confront. Inclusion of members of various groups in society should therefore be encouraged in a community psychology training programme.

#### Staff Selection and Development

When considering the staffing of a community psychology training programme, diverse resources from the community, the wider university setting, and the particular psychology department, could be utilized to provide input and guidance where appropriate (Iscoe et al, 1977; Puerto Rico Programme, 1985; Trickett et al, 1984). In this regard, interdisciplinary exposure is considered to be an important aspect. It is suggested that full use of existing resources within the psychology department also be made. The particular worldviews and strengths of the present staff could provide a rich resource for a community training programme, and should not be underestimated. While new resources would naturally have to be sought, the emphasis is on identifying and mobilizing those that already exist.

For those staff who are directly involved in the training of community psychologists, it is emphasized that within the

structures of an academic position in the university, time should be allocated for the staff member's own involvement in the community, and an appropriate reward system be structured whereby publication in a scientific journal or teaching of professionals are not considered to be the only valuable contributions of an academic. Recognition for community responsibility and research should also be highly valued by the university itself, in words and action, towards its staff members. The mutual benefit to the university and the community should be highlighted in this regard.

While a number of people would be involved in the training of community psychology, it is felt that a central coordinator (director) would be needed to coordinate the training activities at all levels. This person should ideally be a permanent member of staff in order to ensure a proper utilization of the resources required for such a programme.

The issue of staff acting as role models for students is an important one to be considered (Appendix C; Keys, 1985; Trickett et al, 1984). The staff members would therefore need to reflect the basic values of the philosophical approach adopted, and be involved themselves in appropriate activities, avoiding an armchair approach often adopted by professional educators. Other areas of competence needed would be (a) a strong accountability to both the university and 'the community'; (b) the ability to communicate with both; (c) organizational ability; (d) administrative skills (particularly fund-raising skills); (e) teaching ability; (f) community research skills; (g) ability to use power constructively and to work within a democratic structure; and (h) strong insights and sensitivity to ethical issues relevant to working within a 'community' perspective.

While some inklings of the characteristics and abilities mentioned above should be present in the persons coordinating and providing training in a community psychology programme, the value and viability of in-service, staff development of an ongoing nature should not be underestimated. This is particularly important when considering the present personpower shortage in this regard in South Africa, and the need to further develop the resources that exist.

### Learning and Teaching Environment

With reference to where the training should take place, it is suggested that the university constitute one appropriate setting as a training base, with community settings providing a major base for practical work. The benefits of using the university in this way have already been discussed. It also provides an opportunity to provide non-remunerative work with groups who cannot fund projects. However, this structure would depend on the programme's ability to set up links and working contracts with a number of community organizations and groups. The setting up of the informal training infrastructure would require extensive work on the part of staff members concerned. It would require a clear accountability to both the university and community organizations concerned, with some longitudinal relationship forming the basis for involvements in the community. The university does not necessarily have an untarnished reputation in the community so accountability should be a serious consideration.

It is important that students and staff spend a great deal of their time involved in real-life problem-solving situations and not only at their desks reading or talking about life in the community. The importance of 'field' work is therefore emphasized in the overall training process.

Finally, when discussing a learning environment, it should be reiterated that an atmosphere or environment that is open, flexible, and so on, is crucial for a community psychology programme which aims to be self-critical, exploratory and involved in change in South Africa. The structure of the programme should therefore facilitate such an environment for the students. The basic philosophy and aims of the programme need to be congruently reflected throughout its structures in order to create an environment within which students can develop in particular areas.

### Curriculum

While it is recognized that specific content of a course would be determined by the particular programme's aims and objectives, as well as negotiation with students and others, the following suggestions are offered.

At the undergraduate and honours levels it is suggested that students be broadly introduced to the community psychology approach, and pursue an understanding of its major theoretical foundations. At honours level, some practical involvement, possibly in the form of community research, could be included.

At the level where students choose to pursue the community approach within a professional framework (masters), it is suggested that a core curriculum be offered to all students, as well as an individual programme for each student, allowing for basic training requirements and individual needs and commitments to be expressed. Likewise, when considering the breadth of professional specialities a core programme could be offered to all while specific training could be negotiated with each of the speciality training programmes.

The courses could include appropriate sub-discipline input (e.g. social, developmental, personality psychology) as well as specific areas pertinent to community psychology. In addition, input from other disciplines such as law, social work, history, sociology, economics, political science, philosophy, community health, etc., should be appropriately introduced. It is suggested that a problem-centred approach be used whereby interdisciplinary input is used for the purposes of understanding and responding to real-life issues. In addition to this pragmatic approach, some in-depth studies around the fundamental theoretical issues would need to be undertaken.

Although specific skills and knowledge areas would be largely determined by the particular context and programme aims, the following areas are recommended for inclusion: an overview of community psychology in South Africa as well as other contexts; community research (including areas such as needs assessment, programme evaluation, epidemiology, action and participatory research); group processes and facilitation skills; change processes and strategies; use of traditional psychology skills and exploration of new roles for community psychology practice;

organizational theories and development strategies; community development; consultation; community education; forensic/legal work pertaining to community psychology in South Africa; crisis intervention; interdisciplinary resource usage; psychology in Africa and South Africa; a broad awareness of South African socio-economic-political context; interpersonal skills, appropriate general and research administration; personal professional identity issues (such as personal needs and values clarification, self-criticism of one's role as psychologist in South Africa, job market issues, etc); and theoretical explorations of the fundamental theoretical issues and relationships underpinning the community psychology approach (which would include particularly the disciplines of sociology, philosophy and political science).

The actual training level at which each of the above should be introduced would be mainly determined by the particular students and staff concerned, but appropriate grading of depth and breadth of training would naturally have to be examined and coordinated.

The need for a theory-practice dialectic would have to reflect itself in the programme's curriculum, ensuring that ample opportunities for this to occur are built into the course content and structure. Practical training would therefore constitute a large part of a community psychology training programme curriculum

Ultimately, the content should equip the student to understand the broader contextual issues and to respond practically in specific ways that are appropriate to the community settings identified as important (Murrell, 1984; Thomas, 1984; Trickett et al, 1984)

### Teaching and Learning Methods

In order to achieve the educational objectives set out for community psychology training in a particular context, a variety of teaching and learning methods could be utilized. However the emphasis should be on methods which facilitate participative democracy, the development of a critical stance, team work, practical experience, and real-life problem-solving. The

principle of a theory-practice dialectic should also underpin the methods used for helping students to achieve their educational goals.

A number of interesting and undoubtedly useful teaching and learning activities have been identified by other community psychologists (Glidewell, 1984; Iscoe et al, 1977; Kalafat, 1984; Kelly, 1970; Lewis & Lewis, 1977; Meyers, 1984; Rappaport, 1977 & 1981; Trickett et al, 1984; Zax & Specter, 1974). These include methods such as workshops, case studies, peer group supervision, experience-based learning exercises, role-playing, didactic instruction, reading, team work, system simulation, field work, problem-solving experiences, supervised on-the-job work, observation, presentation of written work, joint reports, etc.

With regard to the question of supervision, it is suggested that some form of graduated supervision be set up, whereby the student commences her/his training within tightly supervised structures, gradually receiving more responsibility and less supervision as s/he proceeds through the various levels of training. As accountability to the community is highly valued, students should not be encouraged to become involved beyond their personal ability and other practical restrictions. The gradual introduction of the student into the community reality is therefore emphasized. Gradual responsibility within that context can be nurtured by allowing the student to commence practical work as an observer, then as a helper or assistant, then as a co-worker, and finally, on her/his own.

### Assessment

In order for the assessment procedures to reflect the wider philosophy of the programme it is suggested that the students, at the commencement of the training, participate in defining what is to be assessed, how it will be assessed, when this will occur, and who will be responsible for the assessment. In addition to promoting the aims of participatory democracy this process allows the students and staff to clearly outline the aims of the training, generating clear criteria for learning, teaching, and

assessment purposes. It is suggested that contracts be entered into with each student at the beginning of the training, outlining the specific goals to be reached. Thereafter, assessment should form a continuous process throughout the training, and should be formative in nature, providing the student with feedback for personal and professional development purposes. Some form of evaluation that determines the student's readiness for 'graduation' from the programme would also have to be included. In this regard it is suggested that certain baseline requirements be clearly articulated and that the student not be allowed to graduate before adequately reaching those goals.

With respect to who assesses the student, it is suggested that some form of self-assessment, peer-group assessment, supervisor-assessment, and community organization assessment be organized and coordinated in a reliable way. This would include both evaluative and formative aspects of assessment.

#### The Market Place: Employment

The educational outcome or end product emerging from the process described above is not only dictated by the needs of the market place and philosophical framework on the one hand, but also by the market place realities on the other hand. The issue of employment for the community orientated psychologist is therefore a crucial one to be considered. With the present context in mind therefore it is suggested that student have a presently marketable role to offer, one which would take care of basic remuneration needs. Bender et al (1983) raises this need to juxtapose training needs with employment opportunities, suggesting that graduates develop saleable, flexible skills.

Within the context of receiving training in areas presently offering employment opportunities, for example, clinical, educational, industrial/organizational, research/academic, counselling psychology, the community perspective could inform the way in which the psychologist approaches her/his work within a traditional context, changing the way in which problems are defined within that situation, and possible strategies pursued. In addition to working within present job structures, the

psychologist could become involved in non- or less remunerative work with community groups who do not have the resources for or accessibility to helping professionals. This could be done as an extramural activity. However it should be noted that in the present context of South Africa there are a number of remunerated jobs for people trained in community psychology within voluntary community organizations. Advertisements in a major South African newspaper, The Weekly Mail, reveal a number of possible involvements for community trained psychologists in South Africa. However the fact that many of the posts advertised are funded by overseas funders creates a very real problem in the face of pending repression from state authorities in this regard.

It is suggested that within the training period students be encouraged to explore various possibilities for viable professional roles in the market place. Innovative utilization of traditional practice as well as new roles, should be explored. The process of acquiring reliable funding for community psychology work should also be extensively confronted and specific skills in that area gained. Students should be encouraged to be innovative and realistically hopeful about opening up new avenues for psychological practice (while retaining a critical attitude towards the professionalization of the community approach within this context).

It is strongly suggested that an informal infrastructure for community psychology work be developed, allowing for the freedom needed for work that is often anti-status quo in nature. Relationships with more formal structures, for example, the welfare system, could also be pursued, but with possible informal and 'community-appropriate' links in mind.

The job-market issue therefore limits the fantasies one could have about community psychology in South Africa; and supports the suggestion that community psychology should not be developed as a separate professional programme, but should rather be incorporated into the present professional specializations, and general training programme.

### Conclusion

While an attempt has been made to present an inherently flexible proposal, it should be reiterated that the above recommendations arise out of and address a specific historical context and should be constantly sensitive to the changing elements of that context. Secondly, it should also be restated that the above proposal is not a blue-print for an ideal community psychology training programme for South Africa, but is rather an attempt to work within the present structures, with existing resources, in as innovative and socially accountable manner as possible. One could argue with certain assumptions of these suggestions on a number of levels. However it is hoped that his proposal will be viewed as one contribution to a broader attempt to make psychological practice more appropriate to the needs of South Africa, and the training of psychologists more relevant to the demands that an appropriate practice would bring.

CHAPTER SEVEN  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to make some suggestions for an appropriate community psychology practice in South Africa, and to explore the implications for the training of psychologists within this context. In order to achieve these aims an understanding of the South African social context and the location of psychology in that context was sought. In addition it was considered necessary to reflect critically on the community psychology approach in other contexts. Thereafter an exploration of the views of various people on an appropriate role for the psychologist in the broader socio-political arena in South Africa was conducted. These included key community psychologists in other contexts, psychologists in South Africa, psychology students, members of other social sciences, members of the public, and community organizers. An exploration of theoretical issues and relationships fundamental to a community psychology was then pursued, using a Critical perspective as a basis.

The issue of responsibility and therefore accountability emerged as a major defining factor when considering the role of the psychologist in South Africa. It became clear that the way in which the psychologist interpreted and responded to the issue of accountability would be an important defining factor in terms of the professional role assumed.

Two major issues arising out of an exploration of the role of the psychologist in the broader socio-political context in South Africa related to values and power. The presence of values within psychology, challenging the traditional assumption of value-neutrality, is acknowledged. Based on that, the need for psychology in South Africa to examine its fundamental interests, values and assumptions is emphasized. Thereafter, it is argued that the psychologist and psychology profession needs to make certain value choices which should be overtly recognized when working within a community context. Within the South African reality, this would result in an intentional or unintentional alignment with certain ideologies or groups, resulting in access

to come communities and not to others.

The issues of power and oppression are salient for the community psychology approach. They not only form a focus for analysis and intervention, but are defining aspects of the role of the community psychologist. The need to address the issue of power within the professional-client relationship arose as a major factor in this regard. The empowerment framework which is fundamental to the community psychology perspective necessitates a reversal of traditional power relations between the professional and client system. The emphasis on mutual responsibility and collaborative action is a fundamental premise in this regard. The need for the psychologist to examine her/his own interests, values and needs in this regard arose as a major aspect of the process of working within such a framework. The role of the psychologist as a resource in a collective process rather than as a traditional 'expert' was emphasized. However, it became clear that what was needed was not a deprofessionalization of valued skills and knowledge-bases developed during the psychologist's training, but a redefinition of professionalism. In this regard, the development of skills and expertise in a particular area is considered to be both necessary and valuable. What one does, and how one utilizes that expertise are the central foci, with appropriate usage being a fundamental principle. Within an empowerment framework, the emphasis would be on sharing skills and knowledge where appropriate; offering them as one resource for the purposes of fulfilling a particular goal; and respecting and learning from the existing resources within the community.

When considering an appropriate community psychology for South Africa, the following major suggestions were made. Firstly, that a comprehensive critical social theoretical framework form the basis for this approach. This framework should incorporate social theories which address both individual and structural issues in a dialectical manner.

Secondly, while a broad definition of community psychology might be appropriate in the long-term, short-term priorities for this approach in South Africa need to be identified and addressed. Furthermore, the focus on power and oppression with

the community psychology approach suggest priorities for this approach. It is argued that these are particularly crucial issues within current South African society and need to form the focus for community psychology in this context. A narrow definition of community psychology - one which construes 'community' as oppressed groups - is therefore one which is favoured within the present proposal. The empowerment framework which emphasizes the need to facilitate the development of personal power and collective strategies to gain access to basic resources in society within oppressed groups (recognizing the need for both educative and political action change strategies), is perceived to be an appropriate one for this context.

Having stated a particular preference in terms of the priorities of community psychology in South Africa, it should be noted that it is not expected that a radical interpretation of this perspective will be accepted within the psychology profession as a whole. It is felt that while issues of power and oppression are perceived by many of the participants in the empirical studies conducted to be central foci for a community psychology in South Africa, the embedded nature of the psychology profession in the society it 'serves', reflecting particular material and self-interests, will act as a major constraint in its attempt to respond to the current crises.

With regard to an appropriate practice within this context, a number of roles and activities were suggested. The need to critically examine psychology's present role in South African society, that is, the ideological role it is currently playing in perpetuating and maintaining oppressive social structures, was emphasized. The applied psychologist's position in this regard needed to be addressed. The emphasis was also on going beyond a self-critique towards a reconstruction of the psychologist's role in South Africa; exploring how the psychologist could contribute towards the social transformation process. In this regard, the role of the psychologist in responding to short-term needs in the form of crisis reaction; medium-term goals in helping to move through a transition period within South Africa; and long-term goals contributing towards the development of a 'post-apartheid' South Africa, were emphasized.

Specific practices or intervention strategies considered to be appropriate for this context included crisis intervention, community education, consultation with key community members and organizations, advocacy, public education, negotiation and conflict resolution, community programme planning and evaluation, and community research. The process of empowerment was considered to be an important underlying theme, and in this regard, specific strategies for enabling this process were discussed.

While a number of settings were considered to be appropriate some were considered to be particularly relevant for community psychology in South Africa. These included community organizations, unions, religious organizations, and universities.

The implications for the training of psychologists were considered in depth. In this regard, the criteria for educational soundness and appropriateness to South Africa provided fundamental anchors for the discussion. It was stressed that the particular philosophical framework adopted would determine not only the particular community psychology developed, but also the training programme offered. The need for a congruence between the philosophy and aims, and the actual educational structures and processes, was emphasized. Within that context, the programme would need to reflect the basic values inherent in the empowerment framework, reflecting themselves in the overall structure, selection of students, staff selection and development, curriculum, teaching and learning environment, methods of teaching, and assessment procedures. In addition the need for the training programme to take cognizance of both market place needs and employment possibilities was emphasized.

It was felt that training in community psychology should be included at all academic levels of training. At the pre-professional levels (undergraduate and honours) the emphasis should be on understanding the perspective of community psychology, and gaining an understanding of the major concepts and theoretical issues relevant to this approach. At the professional or masters level, it was suggested that a core training programme, focusing on various skills and knowledge

areas and professional identity issues, be offered to students from all the existing sub-specializations of psychology, providing a cross-specialization course for all or some students. The provision of a generally critical approach to current practice and exposure to the community psychology perspective for all students, but specialization in terms of developing community psychology practices and knowledge-bases as an option for some, would be a personal preference in this regard. In addition to training at the undergraduate, honours, and masters levels, the need for continuing education in community psychology was emphasized. In this regard the provision of specific training aimed at helping existing professionals to respond to the demands of 'community' practice in South Africa was considered to be a priority in terms of current training needs.

The training proposals offered were an attempt to utilize existing professional structures for the purposes of providing appropriate training in community psychology in South Africa. It should be noted however that the need to radically examine these structures and develop ones which are perhaps more appropriate to the South African context, should not be overlooked. In particular, the present length of training required to practise as a psychologist, resulting in an immediate inaccessibility to the profession of the majority of South Africans. This is particularly pertinent when considering a community psychology in this context. The need for a model that incorporates a 'barefoot' community psychologist is therefore suggested.

While every effort has been made to gain an overview of theoretical issues inherent in developing an appropriate community psychology; to explore how psychologists in other contexts are attempting to address the question of the role of the psychologist in the broader socio-political arena; to explore the views of various groups in South Africa; and to learn from direct experience in the community within the realities of contemporary South Africa, the limitations of the present study are acknowledged.

The breadth of the exploration allowed for little depth in certain areas which need intensive and extensive investigation.

The need for further exploration in terms of developing an appropriate theoretical framework for a community psychology in South Africa is particularly highlighted. In this regard, the present thesis has merely placed itself in a wider debate, and as such, has offered no solutions.

A further limitation relates to the exposure to further views and experiences, which would no doubt inform and transform the development of an appropriate community psychology in South Africa. The research journey experience has revealed the progressive nature of this search, transformation being constantly facilitated by discussions and experiences. It is argued, however, that the proposals offered are not ends, but a contribution to the dynamic development of an appropriate community psychology for this context.

The bias inherent in the proposals are acknowledged, an awareness of personal values being a recognized component of the present study. It is argued, however, that this issue was addressed. Firstly, by attempting to examine and overtly present these biases so that the reader might examine the proposals in that context; and, secondly, by attempting to elicit as broad a spectrum of views as possible when exploring the relevance of the community approach for South Africa. It is however recognized that there was an inherent bias in the samples who were selected and who chose to participate; in the specific aims of the research; in the particular questions or areas of discussion forming the focus for the investigation; in the issues highlighted for discussion within the thesis; and in the particular theoretical frameworks utilized for the purposes of the study. Furthermore, my own community involvement has been situated in the broad 'left' or progressive democratic movement in South Africa, a particular reality not shared by all, either in the psychology profession itself or in the broader South African social context.

It is also recognized that within the many discussions and teaching settings within which the research questions were pursued, a certain amount of 'researcher effect' must have been present. In that regard, my personal biases and influence (particularly in a teaching situation) must have been apparent.

However, it is believed, and feedback supports this, that my genuine interest in the views of others, my recognition of diverse perspectives and inherent paradoxes in reality, a respect for the views of others, and an ability to facilitate congruent participation, all contributed to minimizing this effect. The emergence of many views diametrically opposed to my own, would support this argument.

At the level of presenting the views of others in the form of a summary of findings, every effort was made to present these descriptively and fairly. A safeguard in the empirical work was evident in the fact that the descriptive findings of all the studies were shared and checked out with all the participants concerned. The feedback of research findings to the participants was considered to be both an ethical necessity and an accuracy safeguard (Antaki, 1981; Armistead, 1974).

It is recognized that a different philosophical framework and value-base, as well as different community exposure would result in different priorities and issues being highlighted. It is hoped that psychologists embedded in a different reality will engage in the exploration of a community psychology that would address that complex South African reality. The need for ongoing debate on the various issues arising from the study is emphasized.

While the limitations of the study are recognized, they open the doors to many potential areas for further research. The need for further debate and exploration in terms of developing appropriate theoretical frameworks for a community psychology approach in South Africa is clear. Perspectives of an appropriate community psychology from other philosophical perspectives and value systems would constitute a further contribution to the field. A theory-practice dialectic as a basis for exploring further appropriate practice in South Africa would need to be an ongoing venture. At a theoretical and practical level the issues of power and oppression as they pertain to the South African context need a great deal of attention. In this regard, empowerment as a method of addressing issues in South Africa needs to be further understood, critiqued, and developed. The psychologist's contribution towards building

a less oppressive South African society needs to be further explored. These and many other areas constitute an opportunity for all who are interested to contribute towards the development of an appropriate community psychology in South Africa.

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## APPENDIX A

### THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATION OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OPINIONS

As a result of both a personal investment in contributing towards social change in South Africa, and an awareness of a growing need being expressed for a psychology that is relevant to the South African social context, the question of the role and responsibility of the psychologist in the South African social context: her/his response to social issues implicated as partial causes or aggravators of problems in living, forms the focus of the researcher's present investigation.

A number of empirical investigations and an in-depth theoretical inquiry into the issues arising out of this question were planned. It was considered both appropriate and important that people in South Africa be consulted. In this regard psychologists' views on their role and responsibility, and the views of other social scientists and helping professionals were explored. In addition, an investigation of how this question is being addressed in other contexts was considered necessary, and in this regard, questionnaires and interviews abroad were conducted. The major purpose of this being to highlight the issues, both theoretical and practical, inherent in this important research question.

In the present study, an exploration of the views of South African psychologists was conducted. The overall aim of this investigation was to explore (a) their views on their role and responsibility in the South African social context; (b) their opinion on the relevance of the community approach in this country; and (c) the implications of this approach for the training of psychologists in South Africa.

## **METHOD**

### 1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was mailed to a sample comprising all psychologists registered with the Professional Board for Psychology of the South African Medical and Dental Council, reflected in the Register of Psychologists as of April 1984, N = 1350 (excluding psychologists residing outside of South Africa). Of these 200 responses were received, yielding an absolute rate of 14,8%. Of these 36 responses

were in the form of letters and were therefore not included in the analysis. The sample used for analysis in the present study therefore constitutes 12,2% of the total population of psychologists in South Africa.

All psychologists registered at the time were included in the study in an attempt to counter the problem created by a poor response which is usually associated with mailed questionnaire research (Bassa and Schlebusch, 1984). In addition to the normal factors related to poor response in this type of research, it is believed that certain factors inherent in the nature of this particular questionnaire were also responsible for the low percentage response, that is, the thought-provoking and therefore time-consuming nature of the questions, and the fact that participants were required to write essay-type answers to many of the questions. Although it was realized that this would act as a deterrent to answering the questionnaires, it was felt that the qualitative nature of the responses would yield richer and more important data for the purposes of the present study.

The Questionnaire sample was representative of all psychology registrations and major geographical areas in South Africa (Table 1).

TABLE 1 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

<u>Registrations</u> (not mutually exclusive)	<u>Frequency</u>
Clinical	71
Counselling	39
Industrial	36
Educational	30
Research/Academic	33
Not stated	8
 <u>Geographical Regions</u>	
Cape	47
Transvaal	63
OFS	4
Natal	19
Other	4
Not stated	<u>27</u>

N = 164

## 2. Interviews

Semi-structured taped interviews were conducted by the researcher with 47 psychologists. An attempt was made to select psychologists from various groupings in order to attempt a representation of the views of the population of psychologists in South Africa. The researcher planned a round trip of the country, incorporating twelve universities, in an attempt to represent the different groupings in terms of geographical regions, registration categories, race classification and language. The details of the sample are outlined in Table II below.

TABLE II: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE

Registration Category	Frequency	Percentage
University-based/applied psychologists	31	56
Clinical	23	48,9
Research/Academic	8	17,1
Counselling	5	10,6
Educational	6	12,8
Industrial	5	10,6

### Universities included in this study

#### Geographical Region

Blomfontein	UNISA	Port Elizabeth
Transvaal rand	Durban-Westville	Western (34)
Cape	Natal	Stellenbosch
Natal	UNITRA	Cape Town
OFS		

Other (Transkei) department in each of the universities on 16,4 travel route were contacted. Interviews were requested with psychologists,

Race Group Classification, who would be prepared to talk with the researcher about the research topic which was outlined in the questionnaire.

White Where necessary, this was followed up with phone interviews. Black treatments were made. Participants were given the choice of an individual or group interview.

Of the twelve universities, 10 of the twelve universities had individual or group interviews. Of the twelve universities, 10 of the twelve universities had individual or group interviews.

Coloured participants in six of these were interviewed in groups (comprising 2 - 5 members at a time). The same questionnaire was used for the purpose of the interview. Where necessary, quantitative responses were required, individual interviews were conducted.

Afrikaans interviews were asked for their particular requirements. 51,1% of the participants were interviewed in Afrikaans.

Although the use of a group interview could be questioned in terms of additional bias inherent in giving opinions in a group context, it is

argued that the more important aim of the study was to highlight the theoretical and practical issues inherent in this research question and that within a group discussion/debate, this was often more fully achieved.

The representativeness of the samples used in the present study, in terms of generalizations that can be made about the views of South African psychologists, can be questioned because of the possible biases inherent in the methods of sampling used. It could be argued, for instance, that only those psychologists who had some interest in the research question returned their questionnaires and made themselves available for interviews. While accepting the biases that surely do exist, some attempt was made to counteract the above-mentioned problem by ensuring that psychologists who were interviewed were not drawn solely from the questionnaire sample and it is felt that the fact that the majority (57,5%) of these participants did not answer the questionnaire supports this attempt to address that methodological issue.

Although the samples were not randomly selected, and therefore cannot be presented as a scientific representation of the population of psychologists in South Africa, it is argued that the biographical data emerging from the sample are fairly representative of the population of South African psychologists as revealed by statistics drawn from three separate studies (Bassa and Schlebusch, 1984; Jordaan and Jordaan, 1984; SAMDC, 1984). These statistics reveal that, in accordance with the sample in the present study, the majority of psychologists in South Africa are white, registered as clinical psychologists, employed in university settings, reside in the Transvaal, are male, and almost equally Afrikaans and English speaking.

While a scientific representativeness of the samples of the present study would enable one to deduce that the trends emerging from the study are representative of the views of psychologists throughout the country, this was not considered to be of importance for the purposes of this investigation. The major aim was to highlight some of the theoretical and practical issues inherent in the research question and it was believed that communicating with a variety of psychologists from various sectors of the South African population would suffice in this regard.

### 3. Analysis

The questionnaires were content analysed by an independent research assistant. The analysis was then summarised by the researcher who also conducted a content analysis of the 47 interviews. The questions used in both methods provided the predetermined categories for these analyses. Within each of these predetermined categories, emergent categories were developed, reflecting the similarities and trends in the responses given to the various questions. Where appropriate, frequencies under these emergent categories were noted. The predetermined categories used in both analyses were (a) the responsibility of the psychologist to respond to social issues in South Africa; (b) the psychologist's role in the responding to social issues (how s/he should intervene); (c) the issues in South Africa which should be addressed; and (d) the relevance of the community psychology approach to the South African context. Two further areas were explored during the interviewing process, providing the additional categories of (e) the relationship between psychology and politics; and (f) the implications for the training of psychologists in South Africa.

## RESULTS

An overview of the results of the two sections of the study will be briefly outlined, but for the purpose of this paper, only certain sections will be discussed in more detail. For both studies, only emergent categories scoring more than 5 frequencies of response will be mentioned.

### 1. The responsibility of the psychologist to respond to social issues in South Africa

	<u>Frequency</u>
1.1. - Yes, we do have a responsibility	132
- No	6
- Unsure	7
- No response	19
1.2. Individual must be seen in her/his social context	75
1.3. Psychologist has skills/knowledge to offer in this regard	53
1.4. Prevention is important and more economical	30
1.5. There is a responsibility, but as a citizen, NOT as a psychologist	22

1.6. Psychologist has an ethical responsibility to respond	19
1.7. Psychologist should serve and be more relevant to society	19
1.8. If this is not taken seriously, only symptoms are treated	8
2. <u>The psychologist's role in responding to social issues</u> <u>(how s/he should intervene)</u>	
2.1. To conduct socially useful research	84
2.2. Helping individuals in the community through community centres, etc.'	60
2.3. Corporate action with other disciplines and psychology registrations	49
2.4. Consultation to policy makers and community leaders	44
2.5. Conscientization and public statements through the media	41
2.6. Public education/psycho-education	38
2.7. Work in specialized settings (school and industry)	26
2.8. Planning and running community programmes	17
2.9. Training of non-professionals as care-givers	9
2.10 Conflict resolution/intergroup mediation	7
2.11. Identification and utilization of community support networks	6
3. <u>The issues in South Africa which should be addressed</u>	
3.1. Political issues (for example, racial/sex/class oppression (44), inter-group conflict (28), and discrimination (16))	149
3.2. Economic issues (e.g. poverty, housing, unemployment, and distribution of resources))	73
3.3. Family life (in many cases related to socio-economic factors e.g. migrant labour)	73
3.4. Cross-cultural understanding	53
3.5. Education	29
3.6. Alcohol and drug abuse	29
3.7. Work/industrial problems	25
3.8. The training of psychologists	14
3.9. Stress management	13
4. <u>The relevance of the community psychology approach</u> <u>to the South African context</u> (An outline of the community psychology approach was sent to every recipient of the questionnaire)	

4.1. - Yes	127
- No	8
- Unsure	2
- Partly	7
- No response	20
4.2. Emphasis on structural/environmental change	64
4.3. Emphasis on working with the individual in the community (community mental health model)	48
4.4. All models appropriate	33
4.5. American models need to be adapted - indigenous model needed	6

#### Section B: Results of interviews

1. <u>The responsibility of the psychologist to respond to social issues in South Africa</u>	
1.1. - Yes	45
- No	1
- It depends	1
1.2. Yes, because of the effects/impact of the environment on the individual, who cannot be studied without her/his context in mind	22
1.3. We need to move away from working with the individual	7
1.4. Prevention is important	7
1.5. Yes, but we are not trained to do this	6
1.6. The psychologist has some special skills to offer in this regard	6
1.7. Psychology needs to be more relevant to society	5
2. <u>The psychologist's role in responding to social issues (how s/he should intervene)</u>	
2.1. - Working in an interdisciplinary context is important	39
2.1. - Awareness of the problem of role confusion/professional territoriality in this regard	20
2.2. Psychologist has a special contribution:	44
2.2.1. Understanding and working with individuals	33
2.2.2. Research skills and expertise	15
2.2.3. Developing a theory of the context	9
2.2.4. Understanding the interpersonal/group perspective	9
2.2.5. Identifying ideological slants	5

2.3. Specific ways of responding	
2.3.1. Socially useful research	19
2.3.2. Training of non-professionals as care-givers	4
2.3.3. Providing accessible community services	3
2.3.4. Planning and running community programmes	3
2.3.5. Consultancy	3
2.3.6. Cross-cultural work	3
3. <u>The issues in South Africa which should be addressed</u>	
3.1. Cross-cultural understanding	25
3.2. Family issues (in many cases related to socio-economic factors)	17
3.3. Political issues (issues of power and policy)	14
3.4. Economic issues (poverty, housing, etc.)	13
3.5. Education	9
4. <u>The relevance of the community psychology approach to the South African context</u> (An outline of the community psychology approach was verbally given at this point of the interview)	
4.1. Yes, this approach is relevant to South Africa	47
4.2. All models/approaches should be used, depending on the problem being addressed	22
4.3. Most realistic to start with the mental health/individual orientated model because it is small and manageable	15
4.4. Structural/environmental change should be the emphasis	9
4.5. None of the U.S.A. models are suitable for South Africa - an indigenous model is needed	5
4.6. Problems/limitations of this approach in South Africa	
4.6.1. Resistance or control from the political/status quo powers	10
4.6.2. Resistance from the community itself	7
4.6.3. Money/funding	6
5. <u>The relationship between psychology and politics</u>	
5.1. <u>Scale: Degree of agreement of psychologist's involvement in politics:</u>	
1 No involvement whatsoever	5
2 Cautious involvement	23
3 Strong involvement	18

0	Unable to obtain a picture of the participant's position in this regard	1
5.2.	Psychologists should help to shape public policy	14
5.3.	Relevant, scientific research is important	14
5.4.	Psychologist must get involved if the political environment is affecting the individual	6
5.5.	We have no choice to be involved - the role of the psychologist is always a political one	10
5.6.	Psychologist cannot be politically aligned - s/he must maintain a value-neutral position	13
5.7.	Involvement as a citizen, but <u>not</u> as a psychologist	7
6.	<u>The implications for the training of psychologists in South Africa</u>	
6.1.	Psychologists should be trained in this approach	46
6.2.	Specialisation vs non-specialisation in community psychology	
6.2.1.	Community psychology should be a specialisation/registrable category in South Africa	18
	(a) But a great deal of preparation in terms of theory and practice needs to be done first (9)	
	(b) Specialisation gives one a power base (5)	
6.2.2.	Community psychology should <u>not</u> be another registration/specialisation	21
	(a) Specialisation just creates another division in psychology and the social sciences (6)	
	(b) Because ALL psychologists should be aware of these things and specialisation would make those who are not registered in that field opt out of their social responsibility (6)	
6.3.	Level of training	
6.3.1.	Community psychology should be <u>incorporated</u> in the <u>present</u> registrable training programmes	29
6.3.2.	Community psychology should be offered as a specialised Masters course	17
6.3.3.	Community psychology should be offered as a Post-Masters specialised training	16
6.3.4.	'Continuing education' in community psychology should be offered to existing professionals	14
6.3.5.	Community psychology should be included in undergraduate studies	5

### Section C : Summary of Results

In both sections of the study the vast majority of psychologists indicated that the psychologist in South Africa has some responsibility to respond to social issues believed to be implicated in some way as causing or aggravating problems in living.

Various reasons were given for this, the major factors identified in both sections were because (a) the individual can only be viewed within the framework of her/his social context and is affected by this environment within which s/he lives; (b) the psychologist has some special skills and understanding to offer in this regard; (c) prevention is important and more economical; and (d) psychology needs to be more relevant to society. A further point made was that there is a responsibility to respond to these issues, but as a citizen, and NOT as a psychologist.

In the interviews the issue of involvement of the psychologist in politics was raised. In this regard a number indicated a clear support of involvement in politics but there were also a substantial minority who were not in favour of this. Those strongly in favour indicated that direct involvement in shaping public policy and the conducting of relevant, scientific research were important contributions in this regard. The main reasons given for this support for involvement in the political realm were that the psychologist has a responsibility if there are clear indications of political factors affecting the individual: and secondly, it was pointed out that the psychologist in fact has no choice as to whether or not to be involved as one's actions as a psychologist are always informed by one's values and political stance, either in support of or against the status quo. Participants who were against the psychologist's involvement in politics felt that the psychologist could not be politically aligned because of the need to adopt a value-neutral position, and that therefore, this responsibility should be taken up as a citizen rather than as a psychologist. With regard to the role of the psychologist in attempting to respond to social issues, both sections of the study clearly revealed the need for the psychologist to work within an interdisciplinary context, providing cooperate action with other disciplines AND other psychology specialisations. The interviews highlighted the problem of professional territoriality in this regard.

Within the context of interdisciplinary cooperation, there was a strong feeling from the participants in both sections of the study that the psychologist had some special skills and perspectives that would

constitute a valuable contribution to society. In this regard, the major contributions identified were (a) the understanding of individuals and groups from a psychological perspective; (b) skills with which to help individuals and groups; (c) research skills and expertise; (d) development of theories related to the context and process of social change; and (e) analyses enabling the deconstruction of ideological slants.

Specific ways of responding included a number of activities believed to be helpful in responding to wider social issues. In both sections of the study the major role was that of conducting socially useful research, and the dissemination of findings as a means of conscientizing the public. Other major activities included the provision of accessible services to the community; consultancy to key persons in the community, and policy makers; public/psycho-education; the training of non-professionals; the planning and running of community programmes; conflict resolution/inter-group mediation; identification and utilization of community support networks; and working within settings such as schools and industry.

When identifying which social issues in South Africa should be addressed by the psychology profession, both sections of the study revealed that political issues such as oppression, inter-group conflict and the effects of apartheid policy should be addressed. Economic issues, including housing, unemployment, poverty and distribution of resources were also emphasized. The issue of cross-cultural understanding also emerged as a major concern for these participants. Family life, including marital, parenting problems and working with children, as well as issues related to socio-economic factors (e.g. migrant labour), was also considered important. Other issues receiving a relatively high frequency rate were education, alcohol and drug abuse, work/industrial issues, stress management and the training of psychologists.

Participants from both sections of the study indicated a strong support for the aims of the community psychology approach in terms of its relevance to the South African context. However, it became clear that this approach, which houses a number of different ideologies and intervention methods, was supported for different reasons and in different ways by the participants of this study.

With reference to the level of analysis and intervention, a number of participants indicated that psychologists needed to work on all levels i.e.

individual, groups, communities and structures, and that the actual level of intervention chosen would depend on the particular problem being addressed. However, many felt that although ideally one should be aiming to change the structures and therefore be engaged in social rather than individual change, the most realistic point to start with was the individual level. The community mental health model was therefore strongly supported. It should also be noted that a small number of participants of the study felt that the U.S.A. models of community psychology were possibly not suitable for this country and should either be adapted or replaced by models developed indigenously.

Problems and limitations of the use of this approach in South Africa perceived by the participants are worthy of note. The major issue identified was that of resistance, both from the political/status quo powers and from the community the psychologist wishes to serve. In addition, the problem of funding for this kind of work was raised.

In the interviews, the implications for the training of psychologists in South Africa were explored. There was an almost unanimous support for psychologists to be trained to respond effectively to social issues in this country. Different views were expressed with regard to the details of when this training should take place. The participants were almost equally divided with regard to whether or not a specialised community psychology should be available in this country. There was a strong support for this approach to be incorporated in the present categories/specialisations, one of the main reasons being so that all psychologists take their responsibility in this regard seriously.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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SANDY LAZARUS

October, 1985.

## APPENDIX B

### REPORT

On findings of a Questionnaire sent to key community psychologists in the United States of America.

This study constitutes a part of a wider Ph.D. research investigating, both empirically and theoretically, THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT: THE QUEST FOR AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY.

### AIMS

The researcher sent a brief 'open-ended' questionnaire to some of the key community psychologists in the United States of America, in order to

- (a) make contact, for future interviews;
- (b) to open up discussion on the research question;
- (c) and to gain some impression of how community psychology is presently perceived, both theoretically and practically, by thought-leaders in this field. The researcher felt that this was necessary in order to obtain up-to-date views on this question.

The purpose of this report is not to interpret the data emerging from the responses to the questionnaire but is rather an attempt to merely give a brief description of the major trends arising out of the responses to the open-ended questions.

### PROCEDURE

70 questionnaires were sent to key community psychologists in the U.S.A. The names and addresses were obtained from Division 27 (community psychology) of the American Psychological Association.

Of these, 21 questionnaires were returned, constituting a 30% return. There was a general feeling that the questionnaire was very thought-provoking and therefore time-consuming, hence the request for interviews by the majority of the respondents.

Of the 21 respondents, 17 indicated that they were lecturers/professors in a university setting, 11 of which indicated that they were also researchers.

## ANALYSIS

The researcher content analysed the completed questionnaires. That is, categories were formulated as trends emerged from the written responses to the various questions. Frequencies of each category of response were noted (indicating some degree of similarity of responses made). Only comments with frequencies of two or more have been noted below.

## FINDINGS

1. Question: WHAT IN YOUR OPINION IS THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST IN RESPONSE TO SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES THAT ARE IMPLICATED AS PARTIAL CAUSES OR AGGRAVATORS OF PROBLEMS IN LIVING.

Categories of responses emerging: (frequencies are indicated in brackets)

- Research (8)  
(identifying problems and solutions, socially useful research, documentation of effects of environment on the individual)
  - Dissemination of information (5)  
(mainly to key people in the community)
  - Interventions (5)  
(programme development and implementation in an attempt to resolve issues)
  - Consultation with key people (3)
  - Varied roles and responsibilities (3)
  - Evaluation of interventions (2)
  - Separate scientist/political activist responsibilities (2)
2. Question: WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEFINITION AND AIMS OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY.

Categories emerging

- Prevention of mental illness/problems in living (9)  
(particularly primary prevention)
- Intervention - attempting to find solutions to social problems (8)
- Working on different LEVELS of intervention (6)  
(particularly the system/ecological level)

- An attempt to understand social problems from a psychological perspective (6)
    - Attempting to understand the effect of the social environment on the individual and vice versa (4)
    - Empowerment/development of competence in socially devalued groups (4)
    - Improving the quality of life of community members (4)  
(with the emphasis on strengths rather than weaknesses)
3. Question: IN WHICH SPECIFIC WAYS ARE YOU AWARE OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY BEING APPLIED AT PRESENT.

A variety of applications were identified.

- Socially useful research (6)
  - Early childhood education and interventions (5)
  - Empowerment/competence enhancing programmes (4)
  - Education/school mental health (4)
  - Social-support programmes (4)
  - Self-help programmes (3)
  - Various community programmes (including community and organizational development, human services planning and evaluation, working with parents of handicapped children, work with adolescents, coping with stress skills programmes, rape counselling, litter control, electrical usage, media language, etc.)
  - Extension of clinical work (community mental health services, consultation, family therapy, traditional clinical work with a socio-ecological awareness)
4. Question: HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS TO-DATE (REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS OR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THIS FIELD WOULD BE HELPFUL).

A wide range of responses were given to this question.

(a) Areas of Effectiveness in community psychology

- Use of research data to effect change (5)
- Making the clinical field more socio-ecologically aware (3)
- Pre-school/school preventive programmes
- Services to women
- community development

(b) Problems perceived in the community psychology approach

- Funding is a major obstacle
- Available research information is not used in policy decisions
- Change projects are resisted politically
- Little solid data is available on programme effectiveness
- Lack of a clear conceptual base
- Problems are encountered in the relationship between academia and the community

5. Question: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AND RELEVANT TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT.

A number of respondents (5) stated that they did not know enough about the situation to comment. Accepting this as a realistic limitation, the following suggestions were nevertheless made.

- The issue of apartheid/black-white relations/empowerment of blacks was identified as a crucial issue for a South African community psychology to address (9)
- Psychologists need to be trained in this approach
- A system for identifying socio-psychological problems needs to be developed
- Service delivery systems should be assessed
- One should focus on highly valued parts of the culture (e.g. family, retarded, work groups, etc).
- Use of psychological knowledge in community problems
- Identify and work with community leaders and public forums
- Focus on civil rights movements
- Focus on womens issues

SUMMARY

Based on the responses of 21 key community psychologists in the United States of America, it appears that the community psychology approach is believed to be an attempt on the part of the psychologist to respond to socio-political issues that are implicated as partial causes or aggravators of problems in living. The aim of this approach seems to be a preventive interventive approach to problems in living, striving to understand the relationship between the social environment and the individual in an attempt to find solutions to social problems and improve the quality of life of individuals in society.

The way community psychologists are presently responding on a practical level is varied. Interventions are executed on various levels, ranging from an emphasis on systems/social change to working with the individual in the extension of clinical services. The major interventions include socially useful research (including the dissemination of relevant information to the appropriate people) as well as various community programmes primarily aimed at empowering or enhancing competence of community members and developing support systems. Early childhood interventions are seen to be a major preventive strategy.

Although there is little solid data available on the effectiveness of many community programmes, this approach has been evaluated as being moderately effective in a variety of ways, particularly in terms of the effect that it has had on the clinical field in developing more of a socio-ecological awareness in traditional clinical work, and in the use of research data to effect change. A variety of problems experienced in this approach were identified, with the funding of community programmes being a major obstacle.

With reference to a community psychology that would be relevant for the South African context, a number of respondents stated that they did not know enough about the situation to comment. Nevertheless, with an awareness of this realistic limitation, a number of suggestions were put forward. The major issue believed to be central for a South African community psychology was that of black/white relations, specifically expressed in the South African apartheid policy.

Sandy Lazarus

November, 1984.

## APPENDIX C

### REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### INTRODUCTION

As part of an investigation into *the role and responsibility of the psychologist in the South African social context*, the researcher met with a number of key community psychologists in the U.S.A. and Puerto Rico, to explore the community psychology approach in those contexts, and to look at other issues arising out of the research question. Although much can be gleaned from literature searches, face-to-face discussion about issues which often fall between the published lines was considered to be necessary.

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of this study in a descriptive form.

#### AIMS

The overall aim of the study was to further explore and highlight important issues arising out of the research question, and to critically pursue the relevance of the community psychology approach for the South African context.

More specifically, the goals were

- (1) To gain a critical awareness of the community psychology approach in the U.S.A.
  - (a) exploring its historical, contemporary and futuristic development;
  - (b) to understand its theoretical perspective;
  - (c) looking at its relationship with other 'radical' or critical perspectives;
  - (d) understanding the predominant research paradigm and methodologies used in community research; and
  - (e) looking at the process and content of training provided in the community psychology approach.
- (2) To explore the participants' views on the relevance of community psychology in the South African context;

- (3) To elicit the participants' comments on specific issues arising out of a recent study conducted with South African psychologists, on their views of the role and responsibility of the psychologist in the South African social context.

## METHOD

### Participants

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 13 key community psychologists; 5 women, 8 men, and 3 of whom were representative of minority groups in the U.S.A. Further details of the participants, as set out in Table 1, reveal that they constitute a diverse representation of the field.

TABLE 1 ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS OF FORMAL INTERVIEWS

### Geographical Representation

North East	(Bloomsberg)	1
East	(New York)	1
	(Washington)	1
South East	(S.Carolina)	3
Mid-West	(Chicago)	4
	(Michigan)	2
Caribbean	(Puerto Rico)	<u>1</u>
		13

### Programme Base

Social/community	5
Clinical/community	4
Industrial/community	3
Undergraduate	1

### Representativeness

(Not mutually exclusive)

Directors of Community Psychology Programmes	5
Regional Coordinators	4
National Coordinators	1

Council of Community Psychology	
Directors - Chair	1
Minorities Issue - Chair	1
Womens Issues - Chair & Exec.	2
Editor "The Community Psychologist	1
Ex-presidents of APA Div.27 (Community Psychology)	3

In addition, participants represented three generations of community psychologists, ranging from 1960 founders to 1980 'rising stars'.

The diversity of the sample was considered to be invaluable in the attempt to further understand the diversity of the community psychology approach and to gain richer insights into the various issues discussed. It was regretted that the vastness of space and limitations of time did not allow for a more extensive search.

Participants were selected from the APA Division 27 lists of key people (consisting of executive members, regional, task and programme directors). Geographical areas which were considered to reflect similar contextual/social issues as South Africa and which were demographically densely populated with community psychologists were chosen. Individuals interviewed were finally selected because of their regional or task (speciality) representation and, of course, their accessibility.

The one regrettable lack of representation was from exclusively applied community psychologists. Although all the academic-based participants were also involved in applied work, only one of the sample was working exclusively in an applied setting. The lack of more applied community psychologists' views must therefore be taken into account when viewing the findings of this study.

### Procedure

After making initial contact through a questionnaire and thereafter through correspondence with various people, interviews were organized with 13 key community psychologists. The taped interviews were approximately two hours in length and semi-structured in nature. Each participant was asked the same open-ended questions.

In addition to the formal interviews the researcher met with other individuals and groups at the various centres, and through informal discussions and observations was able to extend her insights. A daily diary was kept for this purpose.

The interview transcripts were content analysed, the questions used in the semi-structured interviews providing the framework for categorization of responses. Under each category predetermined by the questions asked, a number of emergent categories of responses or themes were formulated, representing trends and similarity of responses.

The predetermined categories consisted of

1. Community psychology in the U.S.A.
  - 1.1. Critical evaluation
  - 1.2. Future
  - 1.3. Theoretical framework
  - 1.4. Relationship with other 'radical'/critical psychologies
2. Community research.
3. Training in community psychology.
4. Community psychology in South Africa.
5. Issues arising out of South African survey.
  - 5.1. Psychologist's contribution to social change
  - 5.2. Role of the psychologist
  - 5.3. Politics and psychology and the issue of value-neutrality.

As the participants are small in number, actual frequencies of responses will not be reported. Where there is a strong convergence of agreement on an issue this will be indicated. It was considered valuable to report all the responses, irrespective of strong agreement, so that the richness of the information would not be lost.

### **DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS**

The descriptive report on the findings will be summarized under the categories referred to above. It should be kept in mind however that in some cases issues discussed were relevant to more than one category.

#### **1. COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN THE U.S.A.**

##### **1.1. CRITICAL EVALUATION**

*The relationship between community psychology and the wider socio-political climate* was constantly referred to. In particular

was the perception of its radical beginnings being a reflection of the social turmoil of the 1960's, and its present conservative trends being a reflection of present conservative times, influenced primarily by the Reagan administration.

Many participants felt that *the field of community psychology* was presently in a period of contraction. Its present foothold in the academic world was not considered to be strong, and was therefore commonly combined with other sub-discipline specialities, particularly clinical psychology. This was not considered to be a negative move, but rather a practical one, particularly as the community psychologist needed a professional niche in the community which the other specialities were able to provide.

The *diversity* that characterized the field of community psychology was referred to by a number of participants. This was seen to be prevalent in the diverse roles, activities, settings, training, combination specialities and ideologies existent in this approach. Although community psychologists had not developed a set of unique skills, it was felt that community psychology had opened up new role options for the psychologist, going beyond the traditional towards the provision of alternative service delivery. Community psychology was regarded as having contributed some useful working models in this regard.

Many participants felt that community psychology was still grappling with *identity* issues, presently emerging out of its adolescence stage. The identity issue was considered to be particularly related to the fact that community psychology constituted a marginal field in psychology and as a result had not become well institutionalized. This was not considered to be a problem as its strength was considered to lie in its *influence on other sub-disciplines* rather than on the development of itself. While the majority supported this view, the point was also made that community psychology was in fact not marginal; that in fact it had shifted from being a scientific society to a guild, despite its efforts to avoid the traps of professionalism.

The *clinical roots* of community psychology was seen by many of the participants to have had a lasting *effect on the field*, particularly in terms of the personalistic perspective that still pervaded the field. The community mental health model had in many cases therefore remained the focus for many community psychologists, although the

point was made that over the last 20 years community psychology had been moving away from this model towards a more environment-change-orientated focus. The close connection with the clinical field had also resulted in a continued confusion, on the part of other psychologists and professionals, between community mental health and community psychology.

The emphasis on *prevention* in community psychology was mentioned by the majority of participants. It was pointed out that over the last 20 years this emphasis had moved from an emphasis on tertiary and secondary prevention to that of primary prevention. While this perspective was considered important by many, some reservations were expressed. Firstly it was stated that primary prevention constituted a lengthy process, not lending itself to easy or quick rewards and evaluation, and that the level of systemic change was very different to realize in action. Secondly it was argued that the focus on prevention was often pursued at the expense of more fundamental issues. Lastly, the point was made that despite its commitment and valuable contributions, community psychology lacked sufficient knowledge about either the prevention process or about the problems it tried to prevent.

When reflecting on community psychology's contribution over the last 20 years, the majority of participants felt that its major contribution had been its influence in *expanding the individualistic view; characteristic of traditional psychology towards a wider ecological perspective*. It was perceived to have provided an alternative perspective resulting in different approaches to problems in living. Community psychology, it was suggested, had influenced the way people see the world.

A number of *problems* encountered in the community psychology approach were highlighted. The major issue appeared to be the pressures created by academic-institution expectations, which were perceived to be a major cause for the rhetoric-action discrepancy that appeared to be prevalent in this approach. In this regard expectations related to obtaining tenure and therefore a secure job position, as well as expectations arising out of the publishing world, often resulted in community psychologists doing and writing about things that were 'acceptable' to the scientific community rather than to grassroots' needs and situations.

A further major problem was the funding and job cut-backs that had

occurred over the last 15 years, a further reflection of the conservative socio-political climate in which community psychology presently found itself. Although a critical approach was supported theoretically, the need for money and work often resulted in community psychologists avoiding the exploration of more fundamental issues.

The split between academic and applied community psychologists was considered to be another problem by many of the participants. In this regard the lack of communication and partnership work between the two groups was mentioned.

Additional problems identified were (a) that community psychology lacked a common value/theme base resulting in a lack of collective action on important social problems; (b) that interdisciplinary work had been difficult to do, one reason being the lack of sufficient interdisciplinary training in community psychology programmes; (c) the ease with which one could be coopted into various systems e.g. medical or industrial settings; and (d) the lack of support and understanding on the part of fellow psychologists and others because of confused perceptions of the community psychologist's role. Finally, some participants felt that while some psychologists had contributed to human problems on a wider level, for example, desegregation, on the whole community psychology had not been at the forefront of addressing social issues in the U.S.A.

## 1.2. THE FUTURE

Although there was a low convergence of views on the subject of the future of community psychology in the U.S.A., a number of *predictions* were made. There was a general feeling that community psychology would continue in one form or another, but that it was likely to remain a marginal field, possibly absorbed into other sub-discipline areas. New and diverse roles and settings were expected to emerge, with an emphasis on more action on current social issues. The wider socio-political climate of the U.S.A. was considered to be a major predictor of the direction community psychology would take, and in this regard, it was suggested that the present build-up of U.S.A. social problems would once again challenge community psychology to more radical action. On the whole, a number of participants felt optimistic about the future because of the valuable resources present in the new generation of community psychologists in the U.S.A. In addition to specific predictions, participants expressed their views

on where they thought community psychology *should go*. In this regard it was felt that community psychologists should enlist the aid of other professions and people in trying to fulfill their aims. In addition, applied and academic community psychologists needed to work more closely together, forming a potentially powerful partnership. Furthermore, community psychology needed to expand its research approach and methodologies and develop wider conceptual frameworks. While the value of research is accepted, it was suggested that community psychology should investigate whether its faith in scientific data change was in fact justified. A further point made was the need to focus more on empowerment rather than prevention. Lastly, it was strongly stated that although community psychology had encountered many problems, it had also experienced many successes and that these should be documented and built on in the future.

### 1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Community psychology has been criticized for its lack of a clear conceptual base and when questioned about this, participants were generally in agreement with this criticism. However, while recognizing the need to further develop its theoretical base, it was felt that this criticism was not necessarily a negative factor. By virtue of the diversity of the field, community psychology needed to draw from various frameworks to guide interventions, the particular theory being determined by the specific situation.

It was further argued that while community psychology may not be very theory-based, it did hold particular perspectives and operated out of clear assumptions. Finally, it was pointed out that applied fields did not generally generate theories and that experiential knowledge often constituted sufficient basis for action.

With reference to the *major theoretical frameworks/perspectives* utilized by the community psychologists in the U.S.A., the social ecology model was considered to be the most predominant perspective in community psychology. Other theoretical frameworks commonly utilized include systems theory, person-environment interactional theories, prevention models (including stress management models), organizational theory, behaviourism, community organization/empowerment models, and marxist models.

#### 1.4. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER 'RADICAL'/CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGIES

When exploring various 'radical' or critical psychological perspectives in the search for the psychologist's role in society, the researcher observed that, despite the apparent commonality in broad aims, there appeared to be virtually no debate or cross-fertilization between community psychology and other critical analyses and perspectives. Participants in the present study were asked if this was in fact the case and, if so, what they would hypothesize to be the reasons for this lack of communication.

It was generally agreed that this observation was accurate and various hypothetical reasons were put forward. The majority of participants felt that it was probably a reflection of the U.S.A. psychologist's tendency towards *parochialism*, suggesting an attitude of arrogance on their part. In this regard, psychologists in the U.S.A. tended to limit their reading to American literature and usually did not seek views or perspectives beyond their own borders.

A further major point made was that, despite its potentially radical objectives, *community psychology in the U.S.A. was at present conservative* in its action. It was suggested that in fact more radical perspectives would be threatening to most community psychologists. *Marxist* perspectives were cited as being particularly *unacceptable* to psychologists in the U.S.A. This rejection was considered to be partly because psychologists tended to be misinformed about or unexposed to marxist analyses, and partly because of the general anti-marxist ideology in the U.S.A., which either pervaded the psychologist her/himself or made it difficult for her/him to voice feelings in a more radical way. It was also suggested that community psychology fundamentally differed from other radical approaches in that it was concerned with helping the underdog to gain access to capitalism rather than to challenge the system itself.

Another major hypothesis was that American psychology *culture* was fundamentally different from that of e.g. European psychology, and that these cultural differences were reflected in psychological action. In this regard America was described as being ahistorical, non-philosophical, apolitical, positivistic, personalistic, pragmatic and reformist in nature while European psychology often reflected the very opposite of these characteristics.

There was a general feeling amongst the participants that there was a *need* for U.S.A. community psychologists to expose themselves more to other critical approaches, in and outside of America, and that in fact there would be much to be gained by all if more cross-fertilization were encouraged.

It should be mentioned that while the lack of communication referred to above appeared to be true for psychologists in the U.S.A., this did not seem to be the case for Latin American community psychologists, who appear to draw much more on other critical approaches to inform and guide their work.

## 2. COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Participants were asked if community researchers operated from traditional research paradigms utilizing traditional methodologies or whether their work differed from mainstream approaches in any way.

It was generally felt that while community psychology mouthed the need to work from a perspective which reflected clear alternative values, in practice this was usually not evident. It was suggested that community psychology research was slowly moving into a new paradigm, with alternative approaches and strategies developing, but that at present it tended to be caught between two major traditions.

Major *values* that were upheld up as fundamental to this approach were (a) the need for a participatory or collaborative approach, where the issue of the research relationship was considered to be of fundamental importance, and (b) the need for action research, where the social usefulness and action emphasis of research was stressed.

Participants referred to a number of *constraints* that existed in working with an alternative research paradigm in the U.S.A., and that these constraints were in fact responsible for the rhetoric-action discrepancy that existed. Publication restraints were considered to be a major factor in preventing alternative studies from being more visible. The dominant 'research ideology' of the U.S.A. was still positivistic in orientation, making it difficult to find publication outlets for research conducted in alternative ways. A second major problem was that community psychologists lacked sufficient training in alternative approaches, resulting in the continued use of the 'known' traditional approaches in research ventures. Thirdly, it was pointed out that while participative or collaborative work was an

ideal, in practice it was very difficult to do and that it tended not to be reinforced, particularly in an academic setting, because of its time and financial demands.

While stressing the need to further develop alternative approaches, the use of *traditional* research approaches and strategies was still considered to be necessary. Its use in bringing about change was of particular importance, in that it provided an acceptable base from which one could challenge the status quo. It was a language understood by influential people and should therefore be used to challenge the structures that exist.

The general feeling appeared to be that the approach and methodologies used were largely dependent on where you were located and who you wished to influence or serve, and that an appropriate use of approach and strategy was more important than a dogmatic adherence to one style.

### 3. TRAINING IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

With respect to the *structure* of community psychology training many of the participants stressed the need for community psychologists to receive training in both community psychology and another specialisation, primarily because of the need to find a professional niche in the community. It was noted that community psychology training at present predominantly took place together with another field of training, e.g. clinical/community, social/community, or industrial/community. Although it was felt that this often resulted in a lack of depth in training in community psychology areas, the combination of the community psychology approach with other specialisation areas was considered to provide a practical solution to job market problems as well as a fulfilment of its marginal role as a critical perspective rather than as another sub-discipline. It was argued however that some kind of specialist training in community psychology was needed if significant contributions were going to be made.

The *process* of training was considered by many participants to be more important than the content offered. In this regard, the how and who of training were seen to be particularly important.

The need to encourage a theory/practice dialectic at all levels of training was encouraged. Secondly, the importance of developing a

critical consciousness in the student was stressed. The need to provide the students with varied experiences in order to learn to understand and cope with diverse cultures was considered to be very important, and in this regard, varied training niches needed to be found for the student. If possible, it was suggested that students receive unique training contracts, ones which reflected their own particular strengths, interests and speciality choices. Finally, it was argued that the student needed models in their training. In this regard a participatory training model was considered to be important, providing a learning environment and educators who reflected the values considered to be fundamental to the community psychology approach.

The issue of *student selection for community psychology* was considered to be a crucial factor in the issue of training in community psychology. It was suggested that the community psychologist needs to be a person with particular personality traits and value frameworks. Some characteristics suggested were (a) a commitment that would be able to carry one beyond the pulls of self-interest; (b) an active social conscience; (c) a great deal of 'staying power' to prevent the high burn-out rate apparently characteristic of community psychology, and (d) the ability to be flexible and to cope with ambiguities. It was pointed out, however, that even after a careful selection process it was not possible to ensure that the student would emerge with the 'right' values. A final point made was that students representative of minority groups should be encouraged to enter community psychology training programmes, particularly as a major value held by community psychology was a sensitivity and commitment to working with oppressed or under-represented groups in society.

With respect to specific *content* areas which should be included in community psychology training programmes the following major areas were suggested (a) traditional and alternative research methodology; (b) an overview and historical analysis of community psychology; (c) the empowerment and preventive perspectives; (d) various theoretical frameworks, e.g. social ecology, organizational theory, and systems theory; (e) relationship between psychology and society; (f) social change; (g) futurology; (h) minority issues; (i) different modes of intervention including, e.g. consultation and community education; (j) interpersonal skills training; and (k) professional identity and personal value systems. In addition to the above, a thorough training in basic psychological theories, e.g.

personality and developmental psychology, was considered to be important.

Specific *inter-disciplinary content* areas which should be included in the community psychologist's training included philosophy of science, sociology, anthropology, political science, education, economics, law, and communications.

#### 4. COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

While accepting that the lack of experience of life in South Africa severely limited the U.S.A. community psychologist's insights into the issues and dynamics prevalent in that context, participants were nevertheless asked to share their feelings about the possible role of community psychology in South Africa.

While a few participants questioned the utility of community psychology in the South African context at present (questioning, firstly, whether it wasn't a luxury right now and whether it could in fact contribute anything useful to the explosive socio-political situation at the moment; and secondly, whether it could be housed in an academic setting and still be relevant), it was generally felt that the community psychology approach provided a *useful perspective* in that context. It gave the psychologist a present and futuristic perspective that was helpful in understanding what was happening at multiple levels, in terms of individual reactions (e.g. fear and aggression) as well as wider social processes.

The major *issue* the participants felt should be a prime focus for community psychology in South Africa was the inter-racial tensions. Other issues considered to be of importance included the education system; access to basic resources (e.g. food and power); social class inequalities; public policy - particularly the apartheid structures; and a preparation for a future South African society. Many participants argued that the empowerment/social action perspective should form the basis of community psychology interventions in South Africa.

With respect to *who* community psychology should serve in South Africa, there was a general feeling that community psychologists should participate in the dismantling of oppressive structures, and in that sense, work for (but not necessarily with) the goals of oppressed groups in South Africa. Although many felt that community

psychologists should share their resources directly with oppressed groups, it was considered to be equally important that they work with 'oppressor' groups, particularly if they were a member of that group themselves. The overall aims and values of change remained the same, but the target for change was different.

With respect to specific *roles* that the community psychologist in South Africa could play, a number of participants felt that s/he could not take an objective, value-neutral position but rather needed to speak out against the injustices in society. In this regard it was considered important for the community psychologist to challenge unjust social policies, either on scientific or moral grounds.

However, the need for a mediation or facilitative role within the inter-racial tensions was considered to be of fundamental importance. It was also suggested that psychologists in South Africa needed to publically express their viewpoints, e.g. through the media, on issues of oppression, and that they could play a valuable role in organizing those who felt similarly to express their points of view before it was too late. In this regard the Nazi and American 1960's experiences were cited as examples of situations where people had difficulty coping with their feelings of guilt because they did not voice their protest at the time, and that this could be avoided in South Africa if people were encouraged to voice their protests now.

The need to form coalitions and to work with existing progressive organizations and groups was stressed. A number of participants commented on the apparent relevance of the church as a particularly active social change agency in South Africa and that community psychologists should find ways of working within that setting in order to contribute meaningfully to change in South Africa. It was also suggested that connections with Zimbabwe would help South African psychologists to understand and prepare for social change in South Africa.

When discussing the psychologist's contribution to social change in South Africa, it was suggested that the psychologist had two options. Firstly, to operate from her/his traditional professional psychologist role, focusing her/his skills on current issues; or secondly, to become a political activist, using the skills and perspectives gained from her/his training as a psychologist. Both these positions were considered to be valuable and appropriate in different contexts. In the first case the challenge would be primarily on scientific grounds

while in the second case, the challenge would probably be made more on moral grounds.

Finally, the development of *community psychology in South Africa* was considered to be a valuable move in terms of bringing like-minded psychologists together, both for support purposes and to provide a base from which to challenge the role of the psychologist in the South African society. The problem of ideological differences within such a group would have to be confronted, however, and in that regard, the need to decide on either a broad-based or more ideologically focused programme would have to be addressed.

Overall, most participants felt that the psychologist in South Africa was faced with exciting challenges, but also with potentially frightening consequences, and in that regard, a genuine concern for the psychologist who chose to risk her/himself in South Africa was expressed.

## 5. ISSUES ARISING OUT OF SURVEY ON SOUTH AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGISTS' VIEWS ON THEIR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL CONTEXT.

### 5.1. PSYCHOLOGIST'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL CHANGE.

Participants were asked to identify ways in which they felt the psychologist could contribute to social change, and whether they had experienced any problems when working within an inter-disciplinary framework.

With regard to *psychology's relationship to other social sciences*, the problem of professional territorialism was found to be a problem, particularly with respect to social work and other psychology subdisciplines. While recognizing this as a problem, it was considered by many to be an unnecessary issue and that a link up between social scientists in order to constructively contribute towards the social change process was considered to be a valuable ideal. While the psychologist was believed to contribute some unique skills and perspectives, it was also stressed that the psychologist's role should not be too strictly defined as this would provide unnecessary restrictions and thereby stifle potential innovative roles and activities. A further point made was that the issue of professional territoriality was not an issue for activists, as shared aims and immediate solutions to problems were more important than

fighters over who was trained to do what. Furthermore, it was stressed that it is the person rather than the discipline that in the final analysis brings certain combinations of skills and strengths.

The psychologist's *specific contributions* to social change included a number of factors. Firstly many participants referred to specific skills such as research expertise, group skills, the ability to conceptualize complex issues, an understanding of the change process, and information with which to affect attitudes by unloading certain destructive social myths (e.g. that the black person is innately inferior). A few participants also pointed out that applied psychology was characteristically change and action oriented and therefore brought an intervention orientation to the interdisciplinary team effort.

One participant's response to the question of what the psychologist could contribute was that s/he first needed to ask 'what do you want to do?' and then 'what skills do I have that I can use to do that?'

A final interesting comment was that it was not only society that would benefit from psychologists' contributions, but that psychology itself would be the poorer for not contributing and participating in society.

## 5.2. ROLE OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Participants were asked for their comments on the issue of the community psychologist's role assumptions, with particular reference to the perceived need for the psychologist to participate in a way that empowers citizens rather than encourages a dependence on the professional expertise of the psychologist.

There was a general agreement that the concept and ideology of *empowerment* was fundamental to the community psychology approach. It was considered necessary to recognize and utilize the competence and resources present in the community and that one's own role should be seen merely as one resource in that particular context. One participant pointed out, however, that the concept of empowerment suggested a certain arrogance on the part of the psychologist, and that the concept of liberation was more appropriate.

While *professional expertise* was recognized by most participants as presenting a potential stumbling block to working relationships with

certain groups in the community, it was felt that there was no need to be apologetic about one's expertise as it could be very valuable if used appropriately. The major problem occurred when expertise was tied up with the psychologist's own identity needs, that is, if the psychologist's sense of self-worth was dependent on being perceived as the 'expert'. On the other hand it was argued by one participant that just as an over-professional role could be destructive when working with certain communities, an extreme non-professional or 'going native' stance could be equally ineffective. What was needed was an honest appraisal of one's resources and a sharing of these in a way that encouraged a sharing of power and mutual respect for competencies. When offered in this way, it was usually accepted and valued by community groups.

Many participants felt that some community psychologists in the U.S.A. had experienced problems and feelings of ambivalence with respect to their professional role in a community context. While some were doing good 'partnership' work, generally psychologists were not very good at working in this way. The *professional-client relationship distance* that existed was identified as a major factor. However, it was suggested that this distance was often more of a class or culture rather than a professional/non-professional one. It was also suggested that it was only a problem in some contexts, e.g. when working with oppressed groups, and that it was not necessarily an issue when working from a 'prevention' framework.

Many participants expressed the view that working within a shared power/participatory democratic model was not an easy task. Psychologist's *training* tended to be elitist, encouraging attitudes and assumptions which were not conducive to mutual power-sharing. The psychologist therefore had a tendency to be arrogant, offering her/his services in a top-down manner.

Participants suggested a number of ways in which the psychologist could *overcome* or prevent some of the above problems. As personal needs were often at the root of the inability of the psychologist to do 'partnership' work, the need for the psychologist to confront her/his values and personal needs, during and after training, was stressed. Secondly, the psychologist should work with existing local programmes, sharing her/his resources in existing social change structures rather than initiating her/his own programmes. Another solution to professional distance problems would be to contribute as a fellow citizen rather than as a professional psychology. In

this regard participants had opposing views as to whether or not the psychologist's citizen/professional role could, or should, in fact be separated. A further point made was that the psychologist would find it easier to gain access and credibility in the community if s/he was associated with a university rather than a state agency institution. Another comment was that 'minority' professionals should work in minority/oppressed communities and in that way lessen the complex factors contributing towards the relationship distance issue. Following from that, it was suggested that minority 'linkers' or mediators be used to facilitate communication between different groups. Finally, it was proposed that, as this was an important issue, there was a need for research to be conducted to look at how to set up a collaborative relationship between professionals and community members.

With respect to the issue of professionalism, the issue of the *licensing of community psychology* in the American Psychological Association was raised. It was stated by some participants that the community psychology division 27 had repeatedly resisted the licensing (registration) procedure and that this was seen to be one effort to avoid further traps of professionalism on a structural level. While the majority appeared to agree with this, it was suggested that there were benefits associated with becoming more professionalized: (a) that it provided a banner under which to work, and (b) that it prevented other professions from taking over valuable, influential job positions which could be fruitfully utilized by community psychologists.

### 5.3. POLITICS AND PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ISSUE OF NEUTRALITY

When exploring South African psychologist's views on the relationship between politics and psychology, the issue of value-neutrality was raised. On the one hand some psychologists felt that their role required them to take a value-neutral stance while others argued that it was not possible to be value-neutral, either in science or practice. Participants in the present study were asked to comment on this issue.

There was a unanimous agreement that the psychologist was *not able to be value-neutral*; that one's actions were always informed by one's values and were always, in one way or another, political in nature. It was further agreed that a neutral stance, which most psychologists in the U.S.A. adhered to and often hid behind, was often

an unwitting contribution to oppressive forces, and because they were cloaked in an aura of neutrality, were often more insidious.

What was required was, firstly a *self-consciousness* about one's own assumptions and values, and then an open and honest presentation of one's position where appropriate.

A number of participants stated that a major problem was that psychologists were not usually aware of what their assumptions and values were, although these hidden values affected their work in a number of ways. While an awareness and openness about one's own values was considered to be crucial, it was argued however that the psychologist did not have the right to push these values on to others.

It was pointed out that the issue of value-neutrality reflected a complexity of issues and that there were *different kinds of neutrality stances*. In addition a value-neutral stance might be appropriate in some situations and not in others. For example, in therapy circles, it was considered more appropriate for the psychologist to take a neutral stance in order to allow the client(s) to work through her/his problem according to her/his own value framework. However, it was stated that even in a therapy situation one's values and assumptions were expressed in a number of unwitting ways, e.g. through the questions asked or not asked; the way in which the problem was perceived, etc.

The issue of *alignment* with one or other group or ideology was considered to be another issue related to value-neutrality. The majority of participants expressed the view that the psychologist was often put into a position where s/he needed to openly align her/himself with or against a particular ideology or group, and in that sense was required to choose where and with whom s/he worked. Many participants felt that this appeared to be particularly true for the psychologist working in such a charged and polarised situation as South Africa.

Some participants commented that psychologists in the U.S.A. often confronted the value-neutrality issue by creating a *citizen/professional role split*, aligning themselves as citizens while retaining a neutral position as psychologists. One's choice was, therefore, made as an individual and not as a professional, arguments being made on moral rather than scientific grounds. While disagreeing with this role split, some participants suggested that one

should play the most effective role determined by the appropriateness of grounds for argument. If one had sufficient scientific data to support an argument, then that should be used; otherwise the argument should be based on moral principles. Either way s/he acted as an individual, a part of which was her/his professional identity, skills and insights as a psychologist which was brought to the particular situation.

When questioned about the feasibility of the psychologist's role *as a mediator*, particularly in the present conflicts in South Africa, many participants saw this as an important and valuable role, but felt that it needed to be redefined outside of the traditional industrial conflict-resolution model used, which often wittingly or unwittingly supported the power structures and maintained the status quo.

While generally agreeing that the community psychologist could not operate from a value-neutral position, it was suggested by some participants that in certain instances *neutrality could be used as a tool for change*; particularly when working in an area where scientific 'objectivity' and professional neutrality was held up as ideals.

Finally, it was mentioned that while the value-neutral stance was not acceptable, *extreme radical positions* could be equally unacceptable.

### CONCLUSION

While there are a number of issues and interesting themes arising from the above findings, they will not be dealt with in this paper. The researcher would like to conclude with an expression of deep appreciation for the openness with which the participants shared their feelings and views about community psychology in the U.S.A. and the various other related issues. Their ability to be self-critical made it possible for the researcher to explore both negative and positive aspects of community psychology and to further grapple with some controversial issues relating to the role and responsibility of the psychologist in society, and in particular, the South African context.

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SANDY LAZARUS

March 1986.

## APPENDIX D

### REPORT ON THE VIEWS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS ON THE RELEVANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dissatisfaction with current psychological practice in South Africa has led to the search for a socially relevant psychology; alternative or appropriate practices which respond to the needs and concerns of the majority of South Africans in the building of a future democratic society. It is not the aim of this paper to deal with the complex and varied theoretical issues involved in this process, but rather to present the findings of an exploratory study which attempted to contribute to the present debates.

The research elicited the views of people involved in progressive organisations, on the discipline of psychology as practised in South Africa. The basic assumption underlying the endeavour was the necessity, as discussed above, for formulating alternative approaches and modes of functioning as well as determining the psychologist's position within the broader democratic movement in this country.

The participants in the study were 20 'community organisers' (13 women, 7 men) involved in different organisations in Cape Town. They were active in Christian, grassroots and general resource organisations as well as trade unions. While participants spoke in their personal capacities, it was felt that their experience within the organisations gave them some insight into the experiences, feelings and perceptions of members of the communities with which they worked. The majority of participants had received some form of tertiary education, while some had fulfilled the role of 'lay' counsellors.

After discussions with various people involved in community work in Cape Town, the researcher (S. Berger) made contact with participants. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted in a uniform manner during June/July 1985. Discussion centred around the following broad areas of inquiry:

- links between personal problems and social, political and economic conditions
- utilisation of 'helping services' in the community
- views on psychologists and psychological practice
- framework for a 'relevant' practice and future role of the psychologist

- the relationship between psychological practice and political struggles in South Africa.

A diary was kept by the researcher throughout the research period in order to record impressions of the research process during a most turbulent political time. Interview responses were content analysed and a qualitative descriptive account of responses drawn up. It should be noted that participants' comments are not statements of fact, but rather reveal their view on the issues under discussion. A brief report of the main 'findings' follows. Certain quotes from the interviews have been selected and are included to illustrate some of the points raised.

## FINDINGS

### Political nature of the 'individual's' problems

Participants outlined what they saw as links between broader political and economic structures and what are usually identified as personal problems or as 'individual pathology'. Subjective experiences of anxiety, frustration and depression were described, and seen as being generated by basic conditions of poverty, unemployment, overcrowding and lack of recreational facilities in residential areas. These, as well as the incidence of alcoholism, crime and family conflict, were to be understood as people's responses to stressful situations and extremely oppressive social conditions. Comments included:

"Work pressure, high rents really work on a person .... you don't get mad for nothing"

"Man .... his mind is entangled with family needs ..... he becomes aggressive with his family because he doesn't know how to handle it"

"Factory work is enough to drive anyone mad .... a lot comes out as violence in the family".

Many participants stressed a need for an awareness of the political nature of personal experiences and concerns; this was particularly important in order to counter feelings of self-blame and powerlessness. It would facilitate united action to challenge underlying social structures and would enable people to see that

"it's the way that society has been structured that made them be where they are, go through what they're going through".

### Utilisation of 'helping services'

Participants stated that people would often tend not to seek outside help but rather to sort problems out themselves. This possibly involved an acceptance of the situation as it existed. Thus it was said that

"people bottle up"; "people accept things"; "people get by".

The point was also made that more basic material concerns were prioritised and people were more likely to seek help and advice for 'tangible' problems, that is, more pressing concerns which were related to basic material needs. They were less motivated to look for what was termed "a shoulder to cry on". One person said that

"generally psychological problems are secondary .... are not pulled out as a problem to be dealt with .... other problems take all your energy".

Many participants stated that it was generally felt that there were few social services available and that there was a lack of knowledge of those which were. In the main, people considered professional services to be expensive and inaccessible. Nevertheless, it was said that professionals were frequently regarded and relied upon as advice-givers and problem-solvers. Organisers indicated that the support systems most frequently utilised were religious ministers, family members, friends, social workers and doctors. This naturally depended on the nature of the concern. Choice of support was also largely determined by whether or not the person was regarded as trustworthy.

### Image of psychologists and psychological practice

The clearest point made was that people have generally had very limited experience of psychologists and were basically unaware of the work that psychologists performed. Contact with psychologists appeared to be limited for two major reasons:

- (a) their inaccessibility to the majority of people in Cape Town - psychologists were not established in the community; they did not actively expose the role they fulfilled and their services were seen as expensive;
- (b) the nature of their work - psychologists treated 'mad' people and middle class people; they did not have an understanding of community issues and the concerns of the oppressed.

It was said that

"psychology is very foreign to the community"  
 "psychologists are not known in our community"  
 "people won't think of going to a psychologist".

While most people have had little direct contact with psychologists, they do have certain basic conceptions of what psychologists do, and a particular image of psychological practice. Most participants stated that psychologists dealt with 'mad' people. The following statements exemplify this:

"There's the idea of someone coming to treat your mind"  
 "If you need a psychologist you have broken down totally; you're loony"  
 "Psychologists care for sick people"

They were therefore seen to deal with severe problems and were to be met in traumatic situations. They were clearly associated with psychiatric institutions which had a very negative image. As a result psychologists were regarded with some caution, and even suspicion.

Most organisers regarded the second major focus for psychological practice as individual counselling. This was described in terms of the development of a relationship with clients, listening and talking to them in order to help them work through personal experiences and problems. There was some positive feedback about this function:

"It helps to speak about your problems .... and the psychologist gives you a hearing"  
 "They help in relieving emotions .... making you stronger".

Many organisers felt however that the way in which this was presently conducted was not appropriate for or accessible to the majority of South Africans. It was said that while psychologists could offer assistance and guidance, at the present time "the oppressed are not benefitting from psychologists' skills". Psychological practice was seen to aim at a small grouping of middle class people. Some participants felt that in fact, it could only address "middle class problems". Statements indicating this included:

"Psychologists serve the rich, help them solve their problems"

"Problems in working class areas can be addressed by others ..... don't need psychologists".

It was said that psychologists focused on "businessmen", "the elite" and "housewives with money". The cynicism with which middle class problems were frequently regarded, became generalised to psychologists through their association with and focus on those concerns. Thus it was said that

"a lot of middle class people are indulgent about their psychological problems"

"psychologists in private practice are ripping off the middle class who have problems or imaginary problems".

The framework of psychotherapy was posed as being a problematic one. Factors such as the cost of therapy and of transport, time involved, regularity of appointments and language used, precluded the involvement of most working class people and made it accessible to only a small grouping. Furthermore, organisers condemned work on an individualistic level when it attempted to 'readjust' people to "fit back into society, into the system".

The issue of neutrality on the part of the professional was also referred to by some participants who felt that psychologists and other professionals could not be apolitical: "There are claims of neutrality but this is a myth".

Psychologists were identified with the privileged and powerful classes in this country, and were perceived to have little understanding of the concerns and realities of the oppressed. Politically progressive psychologists were regarded as the exception.

#### Framework for an appropriate practice

Various areas of socially useful activity were identified by participants. Suggestions included:

- research: for example, examining the ways in which social forces interact with personal factors; how people are affected by, and respond to, social, political and economic structures, and providing feedback of research findings to the community;

- education/dissemination of information: for example, providing information about stress reactions, emotional disturbances and possible coping strategies, as well as information about existing social services;
- counselling: based on a political analysis of the problem and aimed at empowering people; also including crisis intervention work to provide short term relief;
- group work: for example, involvement with organisations around issues of group functioning and group dynamics;
- training of non-professionals: for example, in areas of counselling and research; providing psychologically-oriented skills training.

More significant than the particular area of activity was the psychologist's approach to her/his work. Participants considered this to be of crucial importance. In this regard, it was suggested that psychologists actively make themselves and their resources known and available to the general public as well as to progressive organisations. "If you don't make yourself visible people don't know you're there".

Psychologists should also attempt to demystify their work and break down the negative stereotypes associated with psychologists and psychological problems. Many participants felt that the psychologist should aim to 'deprofessionalise'. This would involve acknowledging and utilising the more valuable skills while removing the present rigid division of skills and exclusivity in training. It would serve to challenge the existing situation where "professionals tend to monopolise the skills they have". It was felt that psychologists should guard against "seeing themselves as Good Samaritans", but rather attempt to break down power inequalities and democratise the professional-client interaction, and to "move with the people and not just help them". Many participants felt that the preferred mode of operating was the collective; that psychologists would be most effective if working within a team.

The issue of credibility i.e. acceptance in the community, was also raised. It was said that psychologists should actively and consistently show their commitment to act in the interests of the community in order to gain credibility "so people trust you and know you're genuine". They could work directly with community or service organisations, or be attached to an established and trusted institution or organisation in an accessible location. "People won't respond if it's alien, use structures they're used to".

### Psychological practice and political struggles

Lastly the relationship of the psychologist to political struggles and social change was discussed. Most participants acknowledged the importance of providing immediate relief for the individual in distress. This need not imply adaptation to or acceptance of the status quo but rather the development of coping strategies in order to more effectively challenge the roots of one's problems. Counselling could facilitate the process of "mak(ing) you aware of things .... look(ing) at options and alternatives". However, reflection without action was useless -

"When people reflect on their problem and understand it but the community doesn't have the resources, what's the point?"

Psychological help should therefore be based on a political understanding of these problems and involve empowering the individual through 'reflection and action'. This would enable people to analyse their positions within the wider context -

"see the total situation and how they fit into that situation and what their contribution (is) towards making this a better society".

Participants stressed that it was impossible to remove oneself from the political situation in South Africa and that psychologists, like other professionals, needed to define their role and social responsibility in helping to bring about change in this country. As such it was considered important for them to use their "skills and insights to strengthen the democratic movement".

In speaking about the relationship between political activity and professional work, organisers suggested that psychologists put political content into their work, engage in general political activity and be available for consultations and training. However, while the potential contribution of all helping professionals was considered to be valuable, it was felt that their limitations must be accepted. Ultimately political and economic change was seen to be of primary importance because

"you can treat one Johnny today, but there will be ten thousand more Johnnies on your doorstep until things change".

### Research Process

The research process in itself became a significant aspect of the present study. The socially aware researcher within the academic environment faces the dilemma of how to conduct a study which fulfils the requirements of a 'scientific' endeavour but which is also socially useful. The balance must be maintained between satisfying conventional criteria for 'acceptable' research within the academic community, and at the same time being responsible to participants of the study and to other social groupings. The issue of accountability is therefore a central one in this context. A further issue touches on the researcher's interaction with participants and the way in which the research and researcher are viewed. In this regard, the need to establish trust and gain credibility in the eyes of participants was highlighted in this study. Some participants expressed scepticism about research in general. One person said:

"No reflection on you but ... nothing comes of it usually.  
People (are) sick of it ..... nothing they will benefit in  
the end".

With regard to willingness to participate, another person stated that

"people need to know that they have something to give and  
can get something in return".

SHIRLEY BERGER

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1987.