Decolonization and Liberation Psychology: The Case of Psychology in South Africa

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Introduction

During the 2015-2016 period, South Africa experienced student protests on an unprecedented scale. The main issue that sparked the national student protests was the call for free university education, but it was generally also a time of questioning the very nature of universities. Decolonization of the curriculum became a rallying call – a call that is still reverberating within the South African academy today. Although the rhetoric was different, the call for decolonization has had a long history in South African psychology. From the late 1970s there was an articulation of the lack of relevance of psychology, as an academic discipline and as a profession, to the South African socio-political context which was shaped by centuries of racial and other forms of oppression.

In many parts of the world there is a debate about the relevance of psychology to the lives of indigenous communities, oppressed groups and to addressing social injustices. From an Australian perspective, Gillies (2013) articulated how institutional racism within psychology as a discipline has the potential to negatively impact forensic outcomes within indigenous communities. More recently, Turiel, Chung and Carr (2016) called for more attention in psychological research to issues of equity and social justice and Moane et al (2016) put forward a cogent rationale for linking psychology and social justice issues to enhance relevance.

This chapter focuses on psychology in South Africa as a site of epistemological contestation shaped by racial identity and relations of power as it also addresses more broadly the need for decolonising the field of study in other nations plagued by histories of racial oppression. The history of race in South Africa occupies a unique space in global race relations. After centuries of colonialism followed by decades of apartheid, an official government driven policy of racial segregation and sanctioned violence, South Africa surprised the world by achieving democracy through peaceful negotiations and hand over of political power. Still, discord and violence are features of a contemporary South Africa that

could provide an impetus for psychologists to persist in surfacing and dismantling the roots of the nation's structural problems.

This chapter illustrates how psychology as a discipline and profession in South Africa was shaped by a violent, dehumanizing political context. The chapter also describes how liberation approaches are used to help re-define and construct practices in psychological research and education to best protect and honor the human rights of all people. The chapter draws examples from other societal contexts in which the matters of personal, political, and economic emancipation on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, and intersecting identities have keen relevance. In examining and proposing concrete measures to promote equality and combat oppression of any kind, this chapter is in keeping with a variety of United Nations instruments, including the Millennium Declaration (2000) and the Declaration on the Elmination of Violence Against Women (1993), as well as the 2001 Durban Programme of Action and General Assembly resolution 68/237 proclaiming the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Psychology has contributed and holds the potential of further developing valuable contributions to create cultures of peace in racialized societies. It is the goal of this chapter to glean a sample of the current practices of liberation-oriented psychologists who positively influence psychological research and education in South Africa and elsewhere.

Psychology and Apartheid

Apartheid, literally 'separateness," refers to a system that evolved post 1910 when Afrikaans exacted a series of policies and legislative acts for the total exclusion of Blacks from participation in political life. This system of separation would gradually emerge as the creation of 'locations" for Blacks in fringes of the cities and towns, and a succession of legislative acts to legalize all forms of discrimination against Blacks, including forced removals, demolition of homes, economic exclusions through reserving jobs for Whites, and inferior education. By all accounts, the majority of psychologists in apartheid South Africa were silent, some reinforced and gave substantiation for (through the proof of racial inferiority of Blacks relative to Whites) the 'bedrock goal' of racial, cultural and political superiority of White people relative to Black people (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003, p. 144). Sanctioned violence through the use of law enforcement was implemented to enforce this system which disenfranchised Blacks and reduced them to second-class citizens and to sub-par existence in South African society (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003).

In 1989 there was a landmark conference on psychology and apartheid in Cape Town, South Africa, where the historical intertwinement between the apartheid system and the discipline and profession of psychology was made manifest (see Cooper, 2014).

From the 1980s into the early 1990s a growing number of South African psychologists earnestly debated the question of how psychology could become more relevant to the local socio-political context. Such was the fervour of the debates among some groups of psychologists that psychology was argued to find itself in what was labelled "a state of crisis". This reference to a crisis was not uniquely South African as, at the same time, internationally, there was a growing critique of the tradition of positivistic empiricism in psychology in particular and in social science in general with a questioning of whether it could be regarded as relevant to the everyday lives of people living in vastly different social contexts (e.g., see also Luque-Ribelles, Garcia-Ramirez, & Portillo; 2009; Smith, 2002).

Whilst it was not unique, the "relevance debate" took on a special character in South Africa. Due to the socio-economic and political inequities promulgated by the policies of the apartheid regime, at the time, South African psychology was almost the exclusive preserve of what was perceived as an elitist group of middle-class white men. Largely, for this reason as well as the limited efforts to employ psychological knowledge and practice to address the many social problems endemic to South Africa, psychology in this country was increasingly burdened by a crisis of legitimacy, leading to a search for alternative paradigms.

Within the context of apartheid, several psychologists argued that the proper objective of South African psychology was to focus on (with the aim of addressing) the human rights abuses to which the majority black population was subjected by apartheid policies. This resulted in a significant body of research and publications on the condition and rights of various groups marginalised and rendered subaltern by the apartheid State, including research and publications on children (e.g. Dawes & Tredoux, 1989; Reynold, 1989; Richter, 1994), political detainees (e.g. Foster, Davis & Sandler, 1987; Straker, 1992), the youth (e.g. Stevens & Lockat, 1997; Straker, 1992) and women (e.g. Magwaza, [dates]; Parekh & De la Rey, 1997).

The predominant message emanating from these publications was that apartheid programmatically undermined the human rights of the majority of South Africans, a view echoed in 1985 by Hinds who observed that "the most cursory review of the practice of apartheid indicates that it violates all the provisions of the Declaration [i.e. the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights] without exception" (Hinds, 1985, p. 8). Furthermore, as illustrated by publications such as those listed above, the effects of this system were consistently deleterious to the well-being of South Africans, particularly black South Africans.

For example, Cooper (2014) noted that "when the Whtes-only apartheid government came to power in May 1948, this was followed within two months by the formation of the South African Psychological Association. the first national psychological organization" (p. 839), which was reserved solely for Whites and in practice and in teaching, followed in step with the socio-political developments within the South African social formation. The Aptitutde Test Section for the South African Airforce during WWII provided "scientific" basis for the inferioriziation of Blacks   Cooper further noted that during the apartheid area,

> Generally, psychologists were very repressive, rigidly hierarchical, and fixed in their views on the uses of psychology; they were unquestioning, were uncritical, and served a narrow racial and political ideology (Cavill, 2000). Psychologists played roles in the military, in the police force, in the prisons, and in the secret police and intelligence structures and participated in the evaluation of anti-apartheid detainees (Nicholas 2014), believing that Whites were under all manner of threat from the inferior Black majority (p. 840).

Following a period of intense focus on the impact of apartheid on the rights of particularly black South Africans there was a growing turn among a cadre of professionals to liberation psychology in South Africa.

Liberation Psychology

The term liberation or liberatory psychology is broad; encompassing a range of meanings and approaches. Moane (2003) noted that when the term liberation is combined with psychology feelings of thriving, belonging and well-being are combined with social inclusion, human rights, equality and emancipation. Pertaining to South Africa, there are a number of defining features that have been summarized in a chapter by Don Foster (2004) who noted that "liberation psychology involves questions of the psychological processes, dynamics, capacities and practices through which people may achieve emancipation, freedom, liberation and escape from particular power structures of oppression and exploitation" (p. 560).

Montero and Sonn (2009) propose a convergence of liberation psychology with peace psychology to emphasize the need for professionals to address both direct and structural forms of violence that people experience throughout the world, and with particular attention to those in the Global South, as a result of oppression. This convergence also is reflected in the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in Duran, South Africa, there was affirmation that "racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, where they amount to racism and racial discrimination, constitute serious violations of and obstacles to the full enjoyment of all human rights and deny the self-evident truth that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, are an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among peoples and nations, and are among the root causes of many internal and international conflicts, including armed conflicts, and the consequent forced displacement of populations" (see Durban Review Conference Report, 2009, p. 3).

The concerns of liberation psychology translated into conundrums for South African psychology, as the psychology taught and researched for the better part of the twentieth century in South Africa, in the main, did not reflect an endeavour to end social inequality and oppression and to advance the human rights of all South Africans. Indeed, Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat, & Statman (1990) wrote of the role of white South African psychologists in fuelling violence and injustice in apartheid South Africa. Thus, there was a crisis in confidence regarding the applicability of psychological knowledge and practice to the social problems in South Africa. Consequently, the call for liberation psychology gained traction and a psychology for empowerment emerged, with some psychologists arguing that psychologists should also take on the role of activists.

At the centre of liberation psychology is self-definition. Foster (2004) articulated the central motif as the philosophical conundrum of "individual-social" dualism. The notion of an autonomous self, distinct and separate from community and society is a defining feature of twentieth century psychology. The individual self, distinct from the social has shaped much of psychology as a discipline and a profession, which is at odds with the African philosophical concept of Ubuntu. In a new book, James Ogude (2018) explains that the African idea of self is that the full development of personhood comes with a shared identity and the idea that an individual's personhood is fostered in a shared network of relationships (p. 1). Thus, mainstream psychology's foundational conceptualization of personhood is at

variance with the perspective that frames how Africans locate themselves in the world. Moreover, liberation authors emphasize that the individual-social dualism is influenced by and entrenched in histories of violent exploitation and oppression (e.g., Martin-Baro, 1996; Moane et al., 2016). Consequently, the variance between mainstream psychology and African cosmologies is yet one outgrowth of the challenges inherent in psychological science, teaching, and practice to rectify centuries of violence (Bulhan, 2015; Grier & Cobbs, 1969; Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994; Seedat, 1997)).

In a similar vein, Lykes (2000) pointed out that the articulation of human rights in the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was shaped by the implicit assumption that it is the rights of individuals that need to be asserted or protected. In writing about liberatory psychology, health and human rights, she foregrounds the work of professionals who work internationally in conflict situations and who come to acknowledge that a focus on the person-in-community is essential for healing, reconciliation and human rights.

Empowerment and Relevance

The integration of theoretical critique and political activism became a motif for some who began to work within a paradigm which stressed the importance of a psychology in the interests of community empowerment.

Indeed, one of the key shifts in the 1980s and early 1990s was a turn to community. At the time, the impact was such that Seedat, Cloete and Shochet (1988, p. 39) noted that "many psychologists have boarded the community psychology wagon". The turn to the discourse of the community in response to the crisis of relevance was not done uncritically. Several psychologists published papers, which raised problems with the simplistic manner in which some psychologists adopted community psychology models (Yen, 2008). Today, most departments of psychology teach community psychology and almost all professional training programmes in clinical and counselling psychology have a community component. As Montero (2014) points out, the concepts of empowerment, power and strengthening have marked community psychology but these concepts continue to be the subject of contestation. Nonetheless, it is within these constructs that a measure of continuity exists between community psychology and liberation psychology.

With the demise of apartheid and the advent of democracy in 1994, the call for relevance also manifested in concerted efforts to change the demographic profile of psychologists. In an attempt to shift the racial and gender bias evident in psychological

research, a number of projects aimed at the development of authorship among black psychologists were initiated. Shortly after the launch of the Psychological Society of South Africa in 1994, the first non-racial professional organisation for psychology, a special issue of the Journal was published focussing on black authorship. Ten years later, a threefold increase in articles published by black authors was reported (Duncan, Townsend & van Niekerk, 2004).

Beyond the demographics, the call for relevance was about the political ramifications of the focus and content of psychology. A national Psychology conference held at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, in 1994, marked a historical milestone as it saw the demise of the previous white professional society and the launch of a new non-racial organization, the Psychological Society of South Africa as well as the public acknowledgement of the complicity of psychology with apartheid (Suffla, Stevens & Seedat, 2001). Following this, any claim of psychology to being a neutral science was shattered irreversibly.

Various publications have reflected on the question of how a discipline ostensibly intended to promote human well-being, evolved in a way that failed to challenge the injustices that pervaded South African society for most of the twentieth century (Duncan, Van Niekerk, De la Rey & Seedat, 2001). Referred to earlier, the participants of the Durban, South African 2001 world conference placed a decided emphasis in this U.N. report on comprehensive and structural strategies to end *racism,* not merely racial discrimination, as well as xenophobia and other intersecting forces that are internal to states as well as global in scope. In the report, these societal and global ills are clearly linked to the perpetuation of human rights abuses (Durban Declaration and Programme for Action, 2009).

With the election of the first democratic South African government in 1994, many psychologists refocussed their work in an attempt to contribute to the building of a new, more inclusive society based on human rights as enshrined in the constitution of democratic South Africa. The programmes of national conferences frequently began to feature government ministers who typically would call on psychologists to redirect their efforts to fulfil the objectives of the national agenda.

Some psychologists began to focus on policy development, specifically mental health policy. The provision and the accessibility of mental health services became a key area of attention (for example, Foster, Pillay & Freeman, 1997). Another response to societal events

post-1994 was the involvement of psychologists in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Gobodo-Madikizela is one psychologist who has written about her work with the commission in a moving book titled *A Human Being Died That Night* (2003). The TRC became a new key focus for South African psychology. There was the direct involvement of psychologists in the TRC process itself in the form of provision of counselling services and some of official commissioners were psychologists. Direct involvement also included psychologists who actively assisted perpetrators with applications for amnesty.

Besides direct involvement, psychologists also researched the TRC, its processes and its impact. Questions such as the efficacy of the psychological support services to those involved in the TRC processes (Hamber, 1998), healing and the TRC (De la Rey & Owens, 1998) and the impact of public testimony (Kaminer et al., 2001) constituted the focus of several studies.

Research in South Africa and in other countries in which African-descended people reside would benefit from further examinations into physical violence. Referring specifically to mass killings, like in Rwanda, Staub (2013) identified several conditions that appeared to lead to the mass killings in a variety of countries and offered recommendations for improving these practices. He identified difficult life conditions, political destabilization, rapid changes within a society, and general tendencies of people to obey authority as contributing to the violence that preceded the reconciliation processes. Although Staub addresses issues of scapegoating as a feature that tends to exist across contexts of extreme killings, Thompson (2019) warns that the research from these cross-national studies rarely examined the racism intrinsic to the violence, particularly in ways that evince an understanding of how the phenomenon is reproduced between *and* among members of a targeted group. This latter issue would include examinations of violence between ethnic groups, as well as the violence that occurs in Black communities throughout the world, like in South Africa, the U.S., and Brazil. Thompson concludes that the absence of such examinations hampers processes toward reconciliation because it is often believed that 'black-on-black' crime is remotely associated with colonialist origins and therefore, is only partially understood and addressed.

A sentiment held by many was that psychology would only be relevant in South Africa once it moved away from its white elitist image and knowledge bases and embraced knowledge held by laypeople and traditional healers (Louw, 1992). Another position was

that Africans required their own unique psychology. Holdstock (1981) was one of the earliest scholars to argue for the necessity of a psychology that is sensitive to the African cultural milieu, by suggesting that South African psychology should incorporate indigenous knowledge systems. Other scholars who address similar issues of the sustaining and revitalization of African culture to the well-being of African-descended people throughout the Diaspora include Bulhan (2015), Fanon, (1963), Nobles (2013, 2014), and Sutherland (1996). Opening the channels of communication between psychological practitioners and traditional healers was viewed as a means to widen access to mental health services. Other scholars have gone even further in arguing for the development of a psychology which is utterly distinct from Eurocentric models of psychology, in recognition that "Africans have a cosmology, ontology, eschatology, epistemology and axiology that is quintessentially their own" (Bodibe, 1993, p. 54).

Since 1994 by and large the concept of relevance in South African psychology has been interpreted as a form of social responsiveness, particularly, judged in terms of the degree to which psychology has contributed to social and economic development. The debate about relevance waned with the increasing attention given to social issues such as racism, gender equality and HIV/AIDS, among others. The relevance debate gave way to debates about social responsiveness, particularly judged in terms of the degree to which psychology contributed to addressing the social and economic challenges of South Africa as a developing country.

Decolonization

Without doubt South Africa as a country has made considerable progress in transforming into a democratic society based on the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom. However, rising violence and inequalities in South African society in general and in the higher education sector more specifically have remained stark. These, in part, have contributed to the rallying cry amongst students for the decolonization of South African universities, including the decolonization of university curricula. While university curricula were changed with the advent of democracy in the 1990s, it is evident that relevance to the lives of new generations of students is still insufficient. This is especially true if transformation is understood as moving from one configuration to another, characterised by on-going rethinking and renewal in the pursuit of social justice – not only in higher education but also in the country at large. Reminiscent of the earlier

debates on relevance, the interlinked imperatives that have been identified include the transformation of the demographic composition, institutional culture, governance and curricula of South African universities.

When the national student protests of 2015-2016 occurred (the "FeesMustFall" Movement), authors whose work has a decolonial bent once again gained popularity. As indicated earlier, this student movement was prompted by the proposed increases in tuition which would have had a profound impact on Black students because of the disproportionately low economic standing of Black families relative to Whites. However, concerns over how university curricula were also voiced. Moreover, the demonstrations themselves brought on reactions that invoked timeworn stereotypes and linked to "necessary" actions for militarized interventions against Black people (Kiguwa & Ally, 2018).

Work by authors who during the period prior to 1994 wrestled with the role that psychology could play in bringing an end to apartheid and in establishing a new democratic order, enjoyed attention once again (e.g. Bulhan, 1985; Fanon, 1963; Manganyi, 1973). Frantz Fanon's work in particular became markedly popular among South African students arguing for the decolonization of universities and their curricula. This should not have been surprising, given that Fanon's work provided students with a conceptual framework that allowed them to begin to make sense of so many of the problems afflicting South African society. Fanon (1963) is widely considered to be one of the most influential twentieth-century writers on the topic of decolonisation and certainly one who provided amongst the most compelling analyses of the impact of colonial oppression on the psyche of the human subject, both on the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

According to Fanon (1963, p. 27),

Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock… Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content.

This statement, to some extent, provides a lens through which sense could be made of the large-scale social disruptions and ruptures that accompanied the student protests in South Africa during the 2015-2016 period. Of course, the generative consequence of social

disruptions and dislocations such as these, in the words of Fanon, is that they "influence individuals and [modify] them fundamentally. [They] transform spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors"(p. 28). Moreover, they transform the marginalised and subaltern into subjects capable of seeing the possibilities of transformed, more egalitarian society.

This attention to transformation is an important one as people within and outside of universities are expected, through Fanon's lenses, to behave differently as the mantle of oppression is disassembled and new paradigms are constructed. What university leaders at all levels within these structures can do is anticipate the succession of disordered events and prepare themselves to address them from their positionality , and therefore as occupying different levels of power not only by virtue of race (i.e., White, Black, etc.), but also by intersections that inveigh differential categorisations of influence (e.g., Black men who have middle-class standing). The preparation entails contemplations about what it means to give up these constructions of privileged status. For example, do transformations in the university translate into the perception that the institution's reputation is diminished by virtue of having a significant increase of Black people who are part of it? Will the decolonisation of the curriculum cast a pall on the legitimacy of the university and on South African universities in general by some Western scholars? Or are these changes perceived as gains to the institution and to society on whole? The battle to decolonize universities *and* societies is one that is pertinent to the *life* of societies. This is the historical process about which Fanon wrote.

It is from this position of radical or transformational agency that students of the 2016-2016 period demanded an interrogation and transformation of university curricula. Many South African academics, including psychologists took up the challenge.

Impact of Decolonisation on the Psychology Curriculum

The events of 2015-2016 forced South African psychology (and indeed many other disciplines) to once again consider the challenge of decolonizing psychology curricula as a means of contributing to the development of liberation psychology within the South African context. Two themes foregrounded at the 2017 founding conference of the Pan African Psychology Union (PAPU), in Durban, South Africa, were decolonization and psychology and human rights. It is noteworthy that these themes were resonant with principle conclusions of the 2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DPPA), an outgrowth of the

World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The experts of the DPPA found that the slave trade, slavery, and colonisation represent scourges to societies throughout the world that continue to have adverse impacts on the lives of people of African descent. Among several proposed actions to address these scourges of racism, the DPPA report and its subsequent reports from annual working groups urge nations to comply with the programmes of actions that will reverse the plights of African-descended people in all spheres of life.

In numerical terms psychology is one of the most popular disciplines in South African universities as measured by student enrolments. From the perspective of liberation psychology curriculum transformation is about teaching and research that enhances well-being and advances social change to transform the circumstances that shape psychological distress (Moane et al, 2016). For example, Thompson (in progress) describes her courses in critical/liberation psychology and qualitative research, both of which reflected these twin objectives and taught to Ugandan graduate students in psychology. Taught to the same cohort of students and conflating the two courses synergistically, Thompson invited students to critically examine the contextual and historical dimensions of different African settings like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda as they also planned several studies that explored local participants' experiences with common psychological diagnoses like trauma and depression. Encouraging this interweave of events that are often silenced from "popular" knowledge --- that is, from the mainstream media --- yet are often understood locally is also a means for discovering how colonization occurs. Students implore the various impacts of colonization, such as self- or group-silencing of events, the lack of agency that occurs under some conditions (but not under all), and the violent impacts of speaking out against powerful, and often heavily armed actors were exercises that also entailed views of their own contexts in Uganda, the instructor sharing her context involving similar occurrences in the United States, and then peering into other contexts in the world, like in the DRC. In this example, the course subjects included liberation and qualitative research to illustrate just some of the variety in how decolonized curriculum can be implemented. Psychology in all its manifestations from knowledge generation to practice should be informed by a multifaceted range of considerations – ethical, legal, cultural and social.

An aspect that deserves special attention in curricular transformation is the inclusion of new voices and theories. Efforts to create inclusion and fairness need to be deliberate, as in the project described by Duncan and Bowman (2009) on the production of textbooks and other publications by black South Africans.

The following statement from Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* aptly captures the spirit and intention of curriculum transformation:

> Let us not pay tribute to [the North] by creating … institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from [there]. Humanity is waiting for something other from us than such an imitation, which would be almost an obscene caricature … But if we want humanity to advance a step farther, if we want to bring it up to a different level … then we must invent and we must make discoveries. … For … ourselves and for humanity … we must … we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new [human] (Fanon, 1963/1990, p. 254).

Moane (2016) outlines a number of elements or themes that are vital to liberation psychology curricula and practices. First among these is placing ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and other social identity markers in the curriculum and linking these to social issues, power and well-being. A second vital element is including social analysis that places domination, oppression and liberation at the core. Furthermore, she points out that almost all liberation psychology would focus on community and seeing the individual- in- community. Then, like many she emphasizes the importance of participatory methods.

Another lens for framing liberation psychology is human rights and indeed, in recent years various psychology organizations have adopted human rights as a basis of their constitutions (Twose and Cohrs; 2015). Such is the case for the American Psychological Association as well as the Psychological Association of South Africa. Gillies (2013) in her work on Australian Indigenous Peoples provides a cogent rationale for the view that psychologists have an ethical responsibility to implement human rights conventions. Nonetheless, as these Twose and Cohr (2015) noted Navi Pillay former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated in her address to the 2012 International Congress of Psychology there is still much to be done to further human rights research and practices within psychology. Pleasingly, since then there has been a growing body of work endeavouring to advance a human rights perspective in psychology that promotes change at the individual, community and social levels. In 2015 Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace

Psychology devoted a special issue to Human Rights. The themes included attitudes toward human rights, the psychology of commitment to human rights, responses to human rights violations as well as work on expanding the concept and application of human rights.

Finally, it is important to note that the responsibility of educating and training of psychologists resides largely with the universities, but universities alone are not responsible for deciding on what should be taught and how teaching should take place.   Within universities, academics have freedom to decide what to teach and how to do so. But, although institutional autonomy and academic freedom are values inherent in many university systems, in practice universities are not in total control of their curricula.

In practice curricula are shaped by the influence of professional bodies and government policy and funding. Efforts to transform or decolonize curriculum, therefore, are not within the mandate of universities only, rather the call for decolonization has to also be directed at the level of these professional bodies. This is especially the case for disciplines such as psychology which is also a well-established and regulated profession,

In South Africa the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) is the main statutory body that shapes the education and training of psychology. Through its Professional Board for Psychology, the HPCSA is responsible for specifying the scope of professional practice and for the registration and licensing of psychologists to practice. One of the central ways it exercises its authority is through the review and accreditation of psychology courses offered by universities. In practice expert panels review both the content and pedagogy and the consequence of non-compliance is de-accreditation.

A second statutory body, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has oversight for the quality of all university qualifications. In practice all curricula have to be submitted for accreditation and should this not be achieved, the course may not be offered. Therefore, two statutory bodies in the form of the CHE and the HPCSA as well as academics in psychology departments in universities who shape psychology curricula in South Africa.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned

For psychology to become more epistemologically diverse and inclusive, it is imperative that opportunities are created for the generation of knowledge from different philosophical and cultural contexts. To this end, it is noteworthy that there are concerted efforts to develop a framework for shared standards in psychological education and training

across the globe (for example, Sibereisen, Ritchie and Pandey, 2014). Furthermore, the growing recognition that the major challenges or grand challenges facing humanity as cogently expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have the highest likelihood of being resolved through integrated approaches to knowledge means that a step change is needed in our approaches towards more solution-oriented interventions with an explicit focus on issues critical to equitable and sustainable development.

What lessons from a liberationist standpoint have been learned in regards to curricular transformations in South Africa and other part of the world? One, the historical process that Fanon speaks of is one in which we need to recognize that there is a development aspect to change efforts. At the individual level, this development entails a gradual embrace of sociopolitical identities, as Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil (1999) has written. Thompson (2019) stresses the need for influential people, like psychologists in the various roles they assume, to examine and advance their own racial identity development to optimally prepare and contend with the racialized violence that has enrapt so many societies throughout the world. Although racial identity is often considered to be solely focused on race, it actually is a conceptualization that includes the myriad forces that shape people and contexts like gender socialization, sexism, and ethnic identity. Consequently, it is a theoretical model that can be used to explain evolving change --- as well as stagnation --- at different ecological levels. Such a theory is especially important in view of the individual-social debate; racial identity theory embraces the intersection of both as necessary to an understanding of the oppression of people of color throughout the world as well as its impact on White people.

A second important lesson is that the targets for change will need to occur at multiple levels and probably even more important at the level of professional bodies and at the executive levels of organizations of higher learning. Third, boldness is required in confronting racism and intersecting forms of oppression like sexism. In regards to race specifically, Day-Vines (2007) calls on mental health practitioners to become equipped at "broaching race," that is, concretely addressing race despite a practice in mainstream society to ignore, diminish, or even use it in coded language. These authors refer to this broaching in the practice of counselling, however, the recommendation is instructive in all areas of psychology. Only by broaching race can people begin to do the very hard work of confronting its meaning and significance in a society. Unfortunately, when uncovered and

studied carefully, race --- and racism --- touch on sharp, and often negative feelings. Wren (2016) draws attention to how dialogue aimed at social justice is complex and can lead to sharp divisions. Recognizing the dangers entailed in this discourse is yet another lesson for would-be liberation practitioners who understand that their motivations for change can also require change of self. The greatest lesson learned indeed is that everyone is affected by the abuse of human rights in all its forms and will need to overcome it in solidarity.

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