

# Where is community psychology in South African psychology? A knowledge-based perspective

## Abstract

*Prior to 1994 community psychologists played a significant role in South African psychology as a distinct critically oriented grouping advocating for social change. However, the more widespread endorsement of social justice principles in the democratic period shifted the focus of many community-oriented psychologists to participating in more widespread national transformation initiatives. This article highlights changes in the knowledge landscape of community psychology through a comparative analysis of articles published in the SAJP and PINS from 2000 and 2009. This analysis synthesises authorship trends, article types, participants and preferred methods from this corpus. Trends in published work illustrate the shifts and tensions in community psychology in relation to psychology. The article underlines the importance of reconfiguring community psychology to provide a critical, reflexive lens on psychological theory and practice, and considers emergent issues for community psychologists in post-apartheid South Africa.*

Does it matter what types of research we publish? If we acknowledge the importance of knowledge in society and accept that it is desirable to conduct socially responsive, socially relevant research, the answer to this question is surely a resounding 'yes'. This position implies the assumption that published research, as a language-based enterprise, is a form of social practice, that creates and excludes possibilities in the social world (Fairclough, 1992), and that knowledge is interconnected with power relations in society – institutional, historical and contextual (Foucault, 1982). Drawing on this premise,

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this article provides a knowledge-based perspective on community psychology in post-apartheid South Africa through the examination of published articles. This paper aims to document the predominant trends in authorship, types of publications, topics, and methods that are evident from published studies in community psychology, and situates this in relation to psychology. This analysis informs a discussion of current thinking, key conceptual debates and future priorities for community psychology in South Africa.

## **In search of community**

Community psychology aims to develop psychological knowledge that is relevant to community life and responsive to structural, psychosocial and wellness issues affecting communities, and to engage in actions that counter suffering and oppression and create optimal community change (Angelique & Culley, 2007; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Rappaport (1977) defines this as a confluence of scientific enquiry and political action, underpinned by a coherent value base. Globally, community psychology has emerged from the critique of mainstream psychology's failure to acknowledge or respond to social conditions (Carolissen & Swartz, 2009; Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom, & Siddiquee, 2011; Seedat et al, 2004). Gaining traction in social transitions, community psychology captures the dialectical interface between *disciplines* and *contexts*. This paper situates published work in community psychology in relation to its history in South Africa and contemporary developments in psychology. This constitutes a critical time for examining trends in published work as it poses new challenges for reconfiguring the identity of community psychology, and there are several potential trajectories that are possible, as is evident across the globe.

## **Community psychology in South Africa**

The history of community psychology in South Africa is intricately tied to colonisation and liberation (Stevens, 2007). Community psychology emerged here as a small, but influential, sub-discipline that challenged apartheid complicity within psychology (Bhana, Petersen & Rochat, 2007). However, Seedat and Lazarus (2011) identified its precursor as the Carnegie Commission Study in 1932, as it was one of the first wide-scale social-community interventions, though aimed at preserving white privilege. Critical forms of community psychology only emerged later as part of an activist anti-apartheid agenda. This illustrates the contestations surrounding the term 'community', which has, at different points, reflected conservative and progressive ideologies. During the 1980s, in the midst of massive social upheaval and intensified apartheid resistance in South Africa, community psychology was adopted by liberation-aligned psychologists as a way of challenging the status quo through coordinated resistance organisations and activities (Bhana, et al, 2007; Stevens, 2007). This was premised on the 'relevance' debates which questioned psychology's relevance to the country's black majority (Butchart & Seedat, 1990), as psychological

services were targeted towards the privileged minority white, middle-class (Bhana et al, 2007). Community psychology emerged due to a confluence of growing political pressure and psychology's unresponsiveness to the social upheaval and crisis in mental health service provision created by apartheid (Bhana et al, 2007). Community psychology was used to challenge and transform psychological theory and practice. South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 led to profound societal changes. Community psychology experienced significant successes and challenges in this period. Critical and community-oriented psychologists sought to align themselves with a social justice agenda and establish relevance through their commitment to the country's democratic vision (Seedat, 2010). Several renowned community psychologists assumed instrumental positions in the institutional leadership of psychology nationally. By the early 2000s, community psychology was more formalised in South Africa and had successfully secured its position in many undergraduate, postgraduate and professional training courses (Bhana et al, 2007). The democratic dispensation presented new possibilities for knowledge production. Community psychology, along with psychology, was positioned against a backdrop of a global knowledge economy, which established new priorities and challenges for its insertion into global psychology networks and international scholarship (Long, 2013). However, some scholars surmised that the abolition of apartheid also brought an end to an era of critical thinking in universities and in psychology due to the emergence of entrepreneurial scholarship and academic-corporate research partnerships (Painter, Kiguwa, & Böhmke, 2013).

In the early 2000s, the first locally authored community psychology textbooks emerged for postgraduates and professionals, namely *Community Psychology: Theory, Method and Practice* by Seedat, Duncan and Lazarus (2001), and *Self, Community and Psychology* by Ratele, Duncan, Hook, Mkize, Kiguwa and Collins (2004) for undergraduate teaching. Additional textbooks followed, *Contextualising Community Psychology in South Africa* by Visser (2007); and *Community psychology: Analysis, Context and Action* (Duncan, Bowman, Naidoo, Pillay and Roos, 2007). However, subsequently, there was a significant decline of interest in community psychology, among students, scholars and professionals alike. While psychology today is popular in universities (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012), declining enrolment of students in community psychology courses is evident at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and in some cases, even resulting in debates about programme closures. This is offset against the ever-popular clinically oriented modules and programmes, and a surge of global interest in cognitive neuropsychology against the rising tide of individualism and neoliberal market pressures. Academics have noted few dedicated conference papers on community psychology in local psychology conferences (Carolissen et al, 2016), and few recent textbooks. There is still no specific professional category (Bhana et al, 2007) or specialized doctoral programmes.

However, there are pockets of significant activity, like the Community and Social Psychology division of the Psychological Society of South Africa in 2011 (PsySSA, 2017), and the successful hosting of the international community psychology congress in Durban (Malherbe, Helman & Cornell, 2016). In addition, special journal issues have emerged from this related to decoloniality (see Seedat & Suffla, 2017; Carolissen & Duckett, 2018), as well as an edited book series see (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019). This shows efforts to revisit pedagogic approaches, stimulate networks, and promote critical scholarship. However, the tensions persist along with debates about the critical orientation of community psychology (Seedat et al, 2004; Painter et al, 2006; Seedat, 2010). In addition, community psychology's distinct identity has diminished as community ideals, values and discourses are more widely infused and accepted. Thus, the democratic dispensation has had varied and contradictory implications for its future trajectory. This study considers these issues from a knowledge production perspective.

### **Empirical study of published work in community psychology**

Empirical studies of community psychology publications have been used since its inception to promote disciplinary reflexivity, and international literature has been assessed for aspects such as topics and methods (Lounsbury, Leader, & Meares, 1980; Luke, 2005; Novaco & Monahan, 1980; Martin et al, 2004; Speer, Dey, Griggs, Gibson, Lubin, & Hughey, 1992; Graham & Ismail, 2011), gender (Angelique & Culley, 2000, 2003); culture and ethnicity (Loo, Fong, & Iwamasa, 1988; Bernal & Enchautegui-de-Jesus, 1994); diversity (Gutierrez, 2010); social marginalisation (Graham & Shirley, 2012; Graham, 2017); social power (Angelique, Rodriguez, Culley, Brown, & Binerre, 2013); intradisciplinary boundaries (Boyd & Angelique, 2002; Boyd, 2014; Duncan, 1991); interdisciplinarity (Watling Neal, Janulis, & Collins, 2013) and institutional ranking (Leonard, Pokorny, Patka, Adams, & Morello, 2007).

In South Africa, empirical studies of published work have focussed on psychology rather than its sub-fields, including topics, authorship and methods (e.g. Macleod, 2004; Macleod & Howell, 2013; Visser & Van Staden, 1990; Van Staden & Visser, 1990), race and racism (Duncan, 2001; Stevens, 2003; Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997); gender (Shefer, Shabalala, & Townsend, 2004; Kiguwa & Langa, 2011); and teenage pregnancy (Macleod, 2001; 2003a; 2003b). Analyses of published work in community psychology are scarce. However, Seedat (1990; 1998; 2001a; 2001b) examined topics, race and gender in psychology under apartheid, including aspects of community psychology. Later, Seedat et al (2004) found that publication trends in community psychology revealed that the field was depoliticised, decontextualised, individualistic, and predominantly positivist (Seedat et al, 2004). This signals a profound change from its activist orientation, which necessitates further study in this area. From a knowledge

production perspective, Foucault (1982) privileged questions related to uncovering ‘what we are’ (at any particular time), as this reveals how power relations are engaged at particular historical junctures. Within this framework, entrenched patterns of dominance suggest the presence of unequal power relations and thus insight into these patterns is important for the trajectory of community psychology.

## **Method**

### *Research approach*

The study is located within the critical-emancipatory paradigm, which seeks to advance the agenda of social change (Seidman, 2004). A critical-emancipatory orientation asserts that all knowledge is tied to power structures in society and that reality results from interacting and conflictual social forces (Swart & Bowman, 2007). Due to its empirical base, this study falls within the tradition of critical empirical psychology (Teo, 1999) and it views community psychology as embedded in wider network of power relations and upholds the assertion that knowledge can contribute to social inequalities (Macleod & Howell, 2013). It supports the value of developing a retrospective historical lens in psychology through identifying collective patterns in psychological research. Therefore, this study endorses the importance of research collation (Macleod, 2018), to inform reflexivity about research choices in community psychology and beyond. The study uses a mixed method research approach, as the data analysis includes both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Critical-emancipatory mixed methods research focuses on the politics of research, with an emphasis on promoting social justice and pluralism, and maintaining sensitivity to issues of power (Mertens, 2003).

### *Dataset*

The dataset included all articles published the between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2009 in the *South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP)* and *Psychology in Society (PINS)* in order to gain insight into community psychology, within the disciplinary context of psychology, in the democratic period. Studies of knowledge production in community psychology typically focus on a time frame of 5 years for general trends, and up to 30 years for specific issues (Graham & Ismail, 2011). This study opted to balance the length and breadth of its focus by selecting the time period of a decade for analysis, as it contains both general and specific elements. This decade was selected as one which witnessed a significant shift in South African community psychology, from heightened post-transition popularity to relative ‘obscurity’ (Carolissen, 2014). Thus, it holds potential for developing our sense of historicity about how disciplinary changes might be evident in published work. The *SAJP* is renowned as “the most popular and privileged journal in South African psychology” (Seedat et al, 2004, p. 600), and is established as the country’s foremost research journal (Cooper &

Nicholas, 2012). *PINS* has an historical reputation for its critically oriented scholarship (Seedat et al, 2004), particularly acting as a forum for resistance against apartheid (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). Thus, *PINS* and the *SAJP* have both played a prominent role in the development of psychology in South Africa, and thus provide a sound platform for continued intellectual inquiry into knowledge trends in the discipline. These journals have been extensively used as data sources for studies of knowledge production in South African psychology and are useful for developing a greater historical consciousness about these processes (Long, 2016).

#### *Method of data collection*

Articles from the *SAJP* were sourced electronically from the research databases of the *University of the Witwatersrand*. Articles from *PINS* were sourced from the *PINS* website. Copies that were unavailable electronically were generously supplied by the editor. A sub-group of articles with a community psychology focus was generated by identifying keywords (e.g. community, community-based, community psychology) as well as theoretical principles, values and content by manually reviewing each article. As in Seedat et al, (2004), a broad and inclusive definition of community-relevant articles was adopted due to the limited proportion that explicitly referred to community psychology. A total of 8.5% of the total publications were categorised as community psychology (CP) articles (n = 52). Of the articles in the *SAJP*, 8.3% (n = 39) were community psychology articles, whilst 9.3% (n = 13) of articles in *PINS* were in this subgroup.

#### *Data analysis*

The study views articles as important containers of information in keeping with the long-standing tradition of social scientific document analysis (Prior, 2008). The analysis of the data combined both inductive and deductive coding (Patton, 2002). While some coding categories are consistent features of the academic enterprise, others were novel features of the data. A coding framework was informed by previous international and local studies of published work, publication rate; article types; author characteristics; methods (research approach, methods of data collection, topics and participant characteristics). The changing nature of published work necessitated the modification of prior coding and the creation of new codes to capture the data features. The data were therefore content analysed using both an inductive and deductive approach, and frequencies were counted across the dataset (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2007). Frequencies and percentages were calculated using SPSS. For variables where more than one response was applicable, multiple response frequencies were generated using response (rather than case) totals.

## Results

### *Publication rate*

The dataset comprised 611 articles – 471 articles from the SAJP (77.1%), and 140 articles from PINS (22.9%). The articles were further divided into a sub-grouping of community psychology articles (n = 52), made up of 8.3% of articles from the SAJP (n = 39) and 9.3% (n = 13) from PINS. Table 1 details the number of articles published by year, in each journal, and in the community psychology and psychology sub-groupings.

**Table 1: Number of publications by year**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
2000	37 (7.9)	1 (2.6)	10 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	47 (7.7)	1 (1.9)
2001	42 (8.9)	4 (10.3)	21 (15.0)	5 (38.5)	63 (10.3)	9 (17.3)
2002	42 (8.9)	2 (5.1)	10 (7.1)	1 (7.7)	52 (8.5)	3 (5.8)
2003	45 (9.6)	7 (17.9)	10 (7.1)	2 (15.4)	55 (9.0)	9 (17.3)
2004	47 (10.0)	4 (10.3)	13 (9.3)	1 (7.7)	60 (9.8)	5 (9.6)
2005	52 (11.0)	3 (7.7)	22 (15.7)	1 (7.7)	74 (12.1)	4 (7.7)
2006	53 (11.3)	6 (15.4)	18 (12.9)	1 (7.7)	71 (11.6)	7 (13.5)
2007	58 (12.3)	4 (10.3)	18 (12.9)	1 (7.7)	68 (11.1)	4 (7.7)
2008	53 (10.8)	3 (7.7)	9 (6.4)	1 (7.7)	60 (9.8)	4 (7.7)
2009	44 (9.3)	5 (12.8)	17 (12.1)	1 (7.7)	61 (10.0)	6 (11.5)
Total	471 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	140 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	611 (100.0)	52 (100.0)

The publication rate in these journals as a whole was relatively steady. The publication rate in the SAJP was consistent, whilst more variable in PINS. There was greater variation in the publication rate of community psychology articles than in psychology more broadly.

### *Number of authors*

The coding of the number of authors per article was identified as significant in previous studies of knowledge production in community psychology and psychology (e.g. Seedat et al, 2004). About half of all articles were singled authored (49.6%). 31.4% were dual authored, 11.6% had three authors, 4.4% had four authors, and 3.1% had 5 or more authors. PINS had more single author contributions (79.3%), compared to the SAJP (41.0%). No articles had more than 3 authors in PINS, whereas the SAJP had up to 8 authors.

**Table 2: Numbers of authors**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
1 author	192 (40.8)	10 (25.6)	111 (79.3)	11 (86.6)	303 (49.6)	21 (40.4)
2 authors	167 (35.5)	13 (33.3)	25 (17.9)	2 (15.4)	192 (31.4)	15 (28.8)
3 authors	67 (14.2)	7 (17.9)	4 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	71 (11.6)	7 (13.5)
4 authors	27 (5.7)	6 (15.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	27 (4.4)	6 (11.5)
5 or more	18 (3.8)	3 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (3.1)	3 (5.7)
Total	471 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	140 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	611 (100.0)	52 (100.0)

Most community psychology publications were single (40.4%) or dual authored (28.8%). Collaborative authorship was more frequent for community psychology articles in the SAJP (74.3%), than PINS (15.4%). There were also far fewer multi-authored contributions.

#### *National affiliation*

Overall, 88.8% of all authors were from local institutions (n = 978), whilst 11.2% were international (n = 123). 89.8% of all authors in the SAJP were locally based (n = 834), and 10.2% were from international institutions (n = 95). In PINS, 83.7% of authors were from local institutions (n = 144), and 16.3% were international (n = 28). In community psychology, 99.1% of articles were by local authors, compared to 0.9% by international authors (n = 1). For community psychology articles in the SAJP, 99.0% of authors were from local institutions (n = 97), whilst 1.0% were from international institutions (n = 1). In PINS, all of the community psychology articles were locally authored. This indicates low levels of international collaboration in psychology and community psychology.

#### *Regional affiliation*

Most authors were from Gauteng (32.7%), followed by the Western Cape (22.5%), and KwaZulu-Natal (14.8%). In community psychology, the same three provinces dominated as in psychology, but with a different ranking. Most authors were from the Western Cape (38.1%), Gauteng (28.3%) and KwaZulu-Natal (20.4%). This reflects the knowledge prominence of these provinces in psychology and community psychology.



**Table 3: Regional affiliation of authors**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
Multi-Region	9 (1.0)	1 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (0.8)	1 (0.9)
Gauteng	322 (34.6)	30 (30.6)	38 (22.1)	2 (13.3)	360 (32.7)	32 (28.3)
Western Cape	230 (24.7)	41 (41.8)	18 (10.5)	2 (13.3)	248 (22.5)	43 (38.1)
Eastern Cape	76 (8.2)	5 (5.1)	20 (11.6)	1 (6.7)	96 (8.7)	6 (5.3)
KwaZulu-Natal	98 (10.5)	13 (13.3)	65 (37.8)	10 (66.7)	163 (14.8)	23 (20.4)
Free State	29 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	30 (2.7)	0 (0.0)
North West	40 (4.3)	4 (4.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	40 (3.6)	4 (3.5)
Limpopo	17 (1.8)	2 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.5)	2 (1.8)
Mpumalanga	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Northern Cape	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
Africa (excl. SA)	4 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	6 (0.5)	0 (0.0)
Europe	65 (7.0)	1 (1.0)	25 (14.5)	0 (0.0)	90 (8.2)	1 (0.9)
Australia	17 (1.8)	1 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.5)	1 (0.9)
North America	21 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	22 (2.0)	0 (0.0)
South America	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)
Asia	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)
Total	930 (100.0)	98 (100.0)	172 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	1102 (100.0)	113 (100.0)

In community psychology, most authors in the SAJP were from the Western Cape (41.8%), followed by Gauteng (30.6%), and KwaZulu-Natal (13.3%). PINS showed a high proportion of community psychology articles from KwaZulu-Natal (66.7%), followed by Gauteng (13.3%) and the Western Cape (13.3%). Authors of community psychology articles were mostly locally affiliated. International authors (largely repatriated South Africans) were mainly in Europe or Australia. No authors hailed from Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America in community psychology.

#### *Types of institutional affiliations*

The vast majority of authors were exclusively affiliated to universities (84.8%), though this was slightly lower among community psychology authors (78.8%). Several types of collaborations with universities were also evident in the dataset. With collaboration between authors across different types of institutions being scarce on the whole, the most common types of linkages were evident between staff from universities and hospitals (2.5%), followed by universities and government (2.1%), and then universities and private individuals (2.0%).

**Table 4: Types of institutional affiliations**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
University	392 (83.2)	28 (71.8)	126 (90.0)	13 (100.0)	518 (84.8)	41 (78.8)
NGO/CBO	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
Hospital/clinic	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
Company	3 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.5)	0 (0.0)
Government	4 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	5 (0.8)	0 (0.0)
Private	13 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	11 (7.9)	0 (0.0)	24 (3.9)	0 (0.0)
University-NGO	2 (0.4)	1 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	1 (1.9)
University-hospital	15 (3.2)	3 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (2.5)	3 (5.8)
University-company	5 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (0.8)	0 (0.0)
University-government	13 (2.8)	4 (10.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (2.1)	4 (7.7)
University-private	11 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	12 (2.0)	0 (0.0)
Other	11 (2.3)	3 (7.7)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	12 (2.0)	3 (5.7)
Total	471 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	140 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	611 (100.0)	52 (100.0)

*Unit type*

For academic institutions, the types of departments to which scholars were affiliated mostly included *psychology* departments (73.0%), then *research institutes* (8.2%) and then departments in *health sciences* (6.8%).

**Table 5: Unit type of authors**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
Psychology	629 (71.9)	49 (52.7)	127 (79.4)	13 (86.7)	756 (73.0)	62 (57.4)
Other Humanities	39 (4.5)	9 (9.7)	11 (6.9)	2 (13.3)	50 (4.8)	11 (10.2)
Health Sciences	64 (7.3)	11 (11.8)	6 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	70 (6.8)	11 (10.2)
Science/Agriculture	12 (1.4)	2 (2.2)	2 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	14 (1.4)	2 (1.9)
Commerce/Management	29 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	31 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
Research Institute	73 (8.3)	17 (18.3)	12 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	85 (8.2)	17 (15.7)
Counselling Unit	25 (2.9)	3 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (2.4)	3 (2.8)
Unspecified	4 (0.5)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.4)	2 (3.9)
Total	875 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	160 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	1035 (100.0)	108 (100.0)

For community psychology, unit affiliations varied from the rest of psychology. Fewer writers were from psychology departments, although these were still the most common (57.4%). More articles were produced from research institutes (15.7%). This was followed by contributions from departments in humanities and health sciences (10.2%, respectively). In the SAJP, the proportion of community psychology articles from psychology departments was even lower (52.7%), with 18.3% of the articles from research institutes, and 11.8% from health sciences. In PINS, most community psychology articles were written by academics in psychology departments (86.7%), followed by humanities departments.

### Publication type

Publication type was coded using the APA categories, which are also used in several previous studies (e.g. Graham & Ismail, 2011; Loo et al, 1988; Novaco & Monahan, 1980), namely: *empirical* (original research or novel secondary data analysis); *literature review* (synthesis or evaluation of previous research); *methodological* (focussed on a methodological issue or approach); *theoretical* (focused on theory advancement or a theoretical issue); and *case studies* (case-specific material on a problem for future research) (APA, 2009). Additional categories were *editorials* (pieces by the editor of a special issue/section); *book reviews* (of the contents of a book); *commentaries* (critiquing a specific article); *short reports* (less than 3 pages); *conference reports* (for conferences); and *tributes* that (reflections on the lives of prominent academics) and *other*.

**Table 6: Publication types**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
Empirical	275 (58.4)	29 (74.4)	19 (13.6)	2 (15.4)	294 (48.1)	31 (59.6)
Methodological	10 (2.1)	4 (10.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (1.6)	4 (7.7)
Review	40 (8.5)	0 (0.0)	5 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	45 (7.4)	0 (0.0)
Theoretical	36 (7.6)	2 (5.1)	22 (15.7)	2 (15.4)	58 (9.5)	4 (7.7)
Editorial	7 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	8 (5.7)	0 (0.0)	15 (2.5)	0 (0.0)
Case study	13 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	17 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
Book review	65 (13.8)	3 (7.7)	72 (51.4)	9 (69.2)	137 (22.4)	12 (23.1)
Short report	13 (2.8)	1 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (2.1)	1 (1.9)
Commentary	10 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	14 (2.3)	0 (0.0)
Conference report	2 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.0)	0 (0.0)
Tribute	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
Other	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
Total	471 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	140 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	611 (100.0)	52 (100.0)

Empirical articles were most prominent (48.1%), followed by book reviews (22.4%), theoretical papers (9.5%) and literature reviews (7.4%). Empirical articles were the most common in the SAJP (58.4%), followed by book reviews (13.8%) and theoretical articles (7.6%). Book reviews were most common in PINS (51.4%), then theoretical (15.7%) and empirical articles (13.6%).

In community psychology, most articles were empirical (59.6%), followed by book reviews (23.1%), methodological (7.7%) and theoretical papers (7.7%). There was less variation in the types of community psychology publications across the journals, but overall trends were similar to psychology, rather than trends in the SAJP or PINS. In the SAJP, most community psychology articles were empirical, whereas in PINS, most were book reviews (69.2%), with fewer empirical (15.4%) or theoretical contributions (15.4%).

### *Research approach*

Table 7 indicates the research approach of empirical studies, including *empirical* articles and *case studies* with empirical data (n = 306). Research approach has been previously studied in several local and international studies of knowledge production (Graham & Ismail, 2011; Lounsbury et al, 1980; Seedat et al, 2004; Speer et al, 1992; Martin et al, 2004). The study drew on Graham and Ismail's (2011) coding of research approach, where a *positivist* research involved measurement, the use of correlational, experimental or quasi-experimental research designs, quantitative data, and statistical analyses; *interpretive* research aimed to understand subjective experiences of participants, and the perceived meaning of phenomena, using interpretive methods (e.g. unstructured interviews and participant observation) and analytic approaches (e.g. phenomenology, narrative analysis); *critical* research aimed to uncover and rectify power asymmetries (e.g. used critical social theory or discourse analysis); *mixed method* approach used quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, interpretation or analyses; and *applied* research was action-oriented (e.g. needs analysis; policy research; participatory action research; or programme evaluation).

For psychology, *positivist* studies constituted almost two thirds of empirical research (64.1%), followed by *interpretive* studies (16.3%), and then *critical* research (10.5%). Although comparatively small (7.8%), a *mixed method* approach has gained popularity.

**Table 7: Primary approach**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All	CP	All	CP	All	CP
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Positivist	195 (68.4)	12 (41.4)	1 (4.8)	0 (0.0)	196 (64.1)	12 (38.7)
Interpretive	46 (16.1)	8 (27.6)	4 (19.0)	0 (0.0)	50 (16.3)	8 (25.8)
Critical	19 (6.7)	2 (6.9)	13 (61.9)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.5)	2 (6.5)
Mixed	22 (7.7)	4 (10.3)	2 (9.5)	1 (50.0)	24 (7.8)	5 (16.1)
Applied	3 (1.1)	3 (7.7)	1 (4.8)	1 (50.0)	4 (1.3)	4 (12.9)
Total	285 (100.0)	29 (100.0)	21 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	306 (100.0)	31 (100.0)

In community psychology studies, a positivist approach was more common (38.7%), then interpretive (25.8%), and mixed methods (16.1%). Critical research was the least common (6.5%). Applied research was more popular in community psychology (12.9%) than psychology (1.3%).

#### *Method of data collection*

The data collection methods were drawn from Zebian, Alamuddin, Maalouf and Chatila (2007), namely: *self-report survey*; *a test or scale*; *experimental methods*; *quasi-experimental methods*; *qualitative methods* (e.g. interviews or focus groups); and *archival studies* using pre-existing records (e.g. hospital records, police statistics). Additional categories included *multi-method studies*; and *other* (e.g. GIS coordinates). The results appear in Table 8.

#### *Racial descriptors*

Racial descriptors were coded as: *apartheid categories* (for descriptive use); *critical redress* (apartheid categories specified for critical redress); *black*; *proxy for black* (e.g. historically disadvantaged; Zulu-speaking previously disenfranchised); *black and white* (no further description); *white*; *proxy for white* (Caucasian; European descent; historically advantaged); *no racial markers*; *other* (e.g. racially mixed). Table 9 shows trends in racial descriptors. Most studies in psychology used no racial markers (31.3%) and apartheid categories (22.1%).

**Table 8: Racial descriptors**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP N (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP N (%)
Apartheid categories	60 (21.9)	7 (25.0)	5 (25.0)	1 (50.0)	65 (22.1)	8 (26.7)
Critical redress	7 (2.6)	2 (7.1)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.7)	2 (6.7)
Proxy for Black	34 (12.4)	6 (21.4)	2 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	36 (12.2)	6 (20.0)
White	16 (5.8)	0 (0.0)	5 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (7.1)	0 (0.0)
Proxy for White	3 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)	0 (0.0)
Black and White	30 (10.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.9)	0 (0.0)
No racial markers	91 (33.2)	7 (25.0)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	92 (31.3)	7 (23.3)
Other	6 (2.2)	2 (7.1)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.4)	2 (6.7)
Total	274 (100.0)	28 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	294 (100.0)	30 (100.0)

There was greater use of apartheid categories (26.7%) and proxies for Black participants (20.0%) in community psychology than psychology, and fewer studies with no racial markers (23.3%). No community psychology studies used White, a proxy for White, or Black and White participants. Thus, community psychology focused more exclusively Black populations.

### Gender

Gender was coded as *male* (male-only); *female* (female-only); *other* (intersex or transgender); *mixed* (males and females); and *not specified* (no gender information). Table 9 shows most studies in psychology used mixed gender samples (70.4%), followed by female (13.6%), then male samples (9.5%). 6.5% did not report on gender, and none used an alternative gender. In the SAJP, mixed gender groups were common (71.9%), whereas in PINS, half of the studies focused on mixed gender groups, and 45.0% had solely male participants.

**Table 9: Gender**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
Male	19 (6.9)	1 (3.6)	9 (45.0)	1 (50.0)	28 (9.5)	2 (6.7)
Female	39 (14.2)	6 (21.4)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	40 (13.6)	6 (20.0)
Mixed	197 (71.9)	19 (67.9)	10 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	207 (70.4)	20 (66.7)
Other	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Unspecified	19 (6.9)	2 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (6.5)	2 (6.7)
Total	274 (100.0)	28 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	294 (100.0)	30 (100.0)

In community psychology, trends were similar to psychology – 66.7% used mixed gender samples, followed by all-females (20.0%), and then equal proportions of males or unspecified (6.7%).

#### *Marginalised groups*

Given that a focus on marginalised groups is one of the most defining values of community psychology (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010), participant features that denoted belonging to a marginalised group were coded according to Graham (2017). Marginalised groups were defined by *race* (all people of colour), *gender* (female, transgendered or intersex) and *socio-economic status* (poor, disadvantaged); *HIV status* (HIV seropositive), *disability* (physical or cognitive), *location* (farm, rural area, peri-urban, township or informal settlement), *migration status* (displaced persons, refugees), *sexual orientation* (homosexual, bisexual), and *age* (above 65 years). *Marginality* (1 = yes; 0 = no) denoted an exclusive focus on a marginal group, and categories of marginalisation were coded using multiple response frequencies.

In community psychology, substantially more articles (66.7%) focused on a marginalised group, than in psychology (36.7%). Marginality centred on race (36.6%), gender (30.7%) and location (19.0%). Neglected groups were those marginalised by sexual orientation (1.3%), disability (1.3%), migration status (1.3%), HIV status (2.1%), and age (1.1%). Similar trends were found in the SAJP and PINS, which suggests this is a consistent feature in South African psychology.

**Table 10: Types of marginalised groups**

	SAJP		PINS		Total	
	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)	All n (%)	CP n (%)
Race	55 (35.5)	9 (27.3)	10 (41.7)	1 (33.3)	65 (36.6)	10 (28.6)
Gender	36 (23.2)	5 (15.2)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	37 (30.7)	5 (14.3)
Sexual orientation	3 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
HIV status	4 (2.6)	2 (6.1)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (2.8)	2 (5.7)
SES	19 (12.3)	4 (12.1)	4 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	23 (12.8)	4 (11.4)
Disability	2 (1.3)	1 (3.0)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.7)	1 (2.9)
Migration	2 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
Location	29 (18.7)	12 (36.4)	5 (20.8)	1 (33.3)	34 (19.0)	13 (37.1)
Age	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.2)	1 (33.3)	2 (1.1)	0 (0.0)
Other	4 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.2)	0 (0.0)
Total	155 (100.0)	33 (100.0)	24 (100.0)	3 (100.0)	179 (100.0)	35 (100.0)

Within community psychology, race was an important marker (28.6%), but location was a far more common (37.1%). Gender was less frequent in community psychology (14.3%) than in psychology (30.7%).

## Discussion

Identifying persistent trends in knowledge production over time are important in uncovering power imbalances (Foucault, 1982). Thus, it is important for researchers to acknowledge how social and disciplinary context influences knowledge, and to remain cognisant of stabilisation or change in knowledge indicators over time. This study illustrates important ways in which community psychology scholarship overlaps with and deviates from general psychological scholarship in democratic South Africa, but also shows shifts in community psychology.

The proportion of community articles in the SAJP and PINS was relatively low at 8.5% of the total publications. However, this was higher than the 5.7% from 1984-1988 (Seedat, 2001b). This suggests some growth in the field. However, since this increase is in line with the general increase in the publication rate in psychology, it is more suggestive of stabilisation or possibly stagnation. A significant decline in community psychology scholarship was noted in PINS, which was historically the journal selected by community psychology scholars (Seedat, 2001b), where community psychology articles constituted only 9.3% of all articles. This shift suggests reduced interest in community psychology among critically oriented academics, and a redirection of



community psychology scholarship to the SAJP or other fora. This supports the idea of the more widespread diffusion of community psychology ideals into mainstream psychology. The publication rate of community psychology articles was extremely variable (ranging between 1% and 18% of contributions per annum), compared to a more stable publication rate in psychology of 7.7% to 12.1%. This signals the vacillating interest in community psychology among scholars evident in published work.

Similar to Macleod (2004) and Macleod and Howell (2013), the regional affiliation of authors shows that most authors hail from the country's wealthiest, most resourced provinces. In psychology, most scholars were in Gauteng. In community psychology, though, most authors were based in the Western Cape. Regional comparisons showed that for authors in Gauteng, publishing community psychology articles was far less common than other areas of psychology,

Only a few international scholars in community psychology published in South African journals, and that there was less collaboration between local and international authors in community psychology than in psychology. Macleod (2004) and Macleod and Howell (2013) found a paucity of inter-country collaboration in published research in psychology broadly, especially between South African and other African scholars. International collaboration is an important priority for South African psychology to address, but this area is especially relevant to community psychology scholarship. In particular, the data reveals that greater efforts to extend research collaboration beyond countries in the Global North are needed, and linkages forged with countries in Africa and the Global South.

Authors were largely academics who were mostly affiliated to psychology departments. This trend underlines the strong academic base of professional psychology in South Africa. Internationally, the academic base of knowledge produced in community psychology has been problematised (Martin et al, 2004; Speer et al, 1992). In South Africa, community psychology articles hailed from a more diverse range of academic units than articles in psychology, but ties between community psychology and professional training are still evident. Where connections exist between academic scholars and scholars from other institutions outside of academia, there is a greater range of connections with institutions outside of universities in community psychology, compared with psychology, despite the overall picture of academic insularity that characterises the knowledge production landscape. Most institutional relationships between scholars in community psychology are associated with other academic departments, government and teaching or public hospitals. This suggests alignment of community psychology to government institutions and institutions that benefit from research and teaching subsidies. This is significant given the historical alignment

of community psychology with the NGO sector pre-1994 (Yen, 2008). This change suggests that community psychology in South Africa has become more academic and state-institution aligned with weaker connections to community-based organisations, echoing the academic-practitioner split in community psychology noted in the United States (Wolff & Swift, 2008). This echoes Bhana et al (2007)'s contention that academic advances in community psychology, have not translated into practice.

In the dataset, empirical articles were the most frequent publication type, in psychology and community psychology. However, the overall proportion of empirical articles was fairly low at just less than half of the overall types of publications. This suggests that greater research productivity is needed in psychology to facilitate the discovery of innovative, contextually embedded knowledge for understanding the mental health concerns of the populace. The representation of empirical studies in community psychology (59.6%) was higher than in psychology (48.1%). In psychology, empirical studies in the SAJP (58.4%) were comparable to results found by Macleod and Howell (2013). In the same journals, 38.8% of community psychology articles were empirical from 1994-2003 (Seedat et al, 2004), and thus the current study indicates substantive empirical growth in this area. However, the overall proportion of community psychology articles here is relatively low. The presence of theoretical articles has decreased from 31.9% in the same journals (Seedat et al, 2004) to 7.7% here, signalling a deemphasis in theoretical development in the field. Seedat et al (2004) also found that most articles in community psychology were single authored (63.9%), but this proportion decreased substantially to 40.4%.

Macleod (2004) and Macleod and Howell (2013) identified that a positivist approach to empirical research as typical in psychology. However, the current study suggests a decline in the popularity of positivist research. Positivist research is also less common in community psychology, and a similar trend is noted internationally (see Graham, in press). Within community psychology, there was a greater diversity of methodological approach. The use of qualitative research methods was particularly popular in community psychology (41.9%). However, empirical contributions in psychology used critical methodologies more than community psychology. South African scholars frequently chose surveys and qualitative methods for data collection in both psychology and community psychology. The use of standardised scales was scarce in community psychology, reflecting its less positivist bias.

This study illustrates the shifts in the critical orientation of community psychology (particularly critical research), which has significant identity repercussions. The data therefore supports the view that community psychology and critical psychology have begun to sever their ties (Painter et al, 2013). This poses a dilemma for critical

community psychologists going forward in terms of re-configuring community psychology or reconfiguring their own identities and roles in relation to the critical and the mainstream polarities. Recently, a resurgence of knowledge production activity in community psychology have coalesced around social protests related to decolonisation. A more sustained critical research trajectory and critical praxis is needed.

Race continues to be an important marker for researchers, and racial descriptors reveal dilemmas around the inclusion of race. The positions articulated suggest tensions between using apartheid categories and being critical of them, attempting to find politically correct or indirect proxies for racial terminology, polarising race, and silencing race. The variation of positions reflects ideological tensions, and a lack of consensus about the treatment of race. This is indicative of South Africa's 'race trouble' evident within psychology (Durrheim, Mtsose, & Brown, 2011).

Most prominent was the use of no racial markers, apartheid categories, or proxy terms for Black participants. The use of no racial markers can represent an avoidance, denial or an elision of issues of race (Franchi & Swart, 2003). However, the use of proxies may also dilute or tacitly invalidate issues of race. While the uncritical acceptance of apartheid categories is deeply problematic for its re-inscription of race, the use of these categories may be necessary as a barometer of social transformation.

Most of the participants in both psychology and community psychology were largely adults with a mixed gender composition. While gender has become an increasingly popular research topic in psychology (Kiguwa & Langa, 2011), studies of specific gender groups were low. Evidence of a critical orientation in community psychology can be found in its research participants, with a greater proportion involving marginalised groups than in psychology. This suggests some alignment in community psychology between its research and its rhetoric. Like Macleod and Howell (2013), this study indicates psychology still predominantly focusses on more privileged groups. Race continued to be the leading feature of marginality in both psychology and community psychology. Within community psychology articles, location was a prominent marker of marginality, along with race and gender. This reflects research targeted at impoverished areas in community psychology due to a legacy of apartheid segregation, that is interfaced with conceptualisations of communities as geographical spaces (Kloos et al, 2013). Studies on participants marginalised by sexual orientation and migration status were absent from community scholarship, and studies on disability or HIV status were rare. This signals the prominence of structural inequalities, and a need for research on intersecting and hidden forms of marginalisation in contemporary community scholarship. When considering population characteristics as contextual features, the findings suggest

that inequalities are evident in knowledge production, despite the profound changes in post-apartheid psychology (Cooper, 2014; Cooper & Nicholas, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

In their early study of knowledge production in community psychology, Novaco and Monahan (1980: 144) identified the possibility that “community psychology is actually two fields” rather than a single one. This speaks to the complex tensions between different theoretical frameworks, between theory and practice, as well as between mainstream and critical positions. There are different potential positions that community psychology in South Africa may assume. In the global arena, such tensions have prompted debates about whether community psychology has ever been critical (Evans, Duckett, Lawthom, & Kivell, 2017). Already we have witnessed a discursive shift towards a distinct branch of ‘critical community psychology’ as an offshoot community psychology (see Kagan et al, 2011). For others, this signals the need to reposition criticality within community psychology (Evans et al, 2017). However, even within critical community psychology, the tensions between criticality and professional practice in psychology still remain. Considering these theoretical, ideological and practical tensions may be potentially generative of new forms of knowledge and practice, if criticality is retained.

Trends in knowledge production reveal that the relationship between community psychology and psychology is highly complex. Community psychology is situated in articulation to mainstream psychology as an intradisciplinary counterpoint (Kagan et al, 2011). In this vein, community psychology has been critiqued as absorbing the criticisms of mainstream psychology, leaving mainstream psychology unaltered (Painter et al, 2006). However, the current appropriation of community psychology values within mainstream psychology in South Africa, has led many to community psychologists differentiating themselves as ‘critical community psychologists’ or as ‘critical psychologists’, signalling ruptures within community psychology itself. Community psychology hasn’t broken its ties to psychological discourse (Smail, 1994), and within South Africa, community psychology is still connected with professional psychology. It has thus shifted from adopting contested, adversarial and complimentary positions, but is nonetheless marginal. These tensions too are manifested within published work. Thus, while community psychology and psychology may have a complex relationship, it has nevertheless proven difficult for community psychology internationally to traverse the ‘conceptual precipice’ beyond psychology (Rappaport, 2000). This is also evident in South African community psychology even though the democratic dispensation has opened up community discourses to a wider audience. However, this opens possibilities for reconfiguring its identity and for different community psychologies to coexist. Examining community psychology

through the lens of knowledge production reveals its internal contradictions, as there are both continuities and discontinuities between predominant values, methods and aspirations of the field. While academic knowledge production is only one form of knowledge, it is highly influential. Within knowledge production, disciplinary processes shape and endorse the types of knowledge that are considered valuable (Seedat, 1990). Moreover, the knowledge economy is the global backdrop for the positioning of this knowledge (Long, 2013).

While community psychology has lost popularity among many critical psychologists in South Africa, it still has a significant international presence. From a knowledge-based perspective, more consistent growth in South African community psychology can be stimulated by investment in the generation of knowledge, through dedicated journals, regular conference presentations, local books, and PhD specialisation programmes, along with strengthening interdisciplinary and global networks, and integrating community psychologists into public practice in healthcare, housing, social development, and education.

In sum, community psychology, has had an impactful presence and voice in the history of South African psychology. Its adoption a strong activist position that has served it well in navigating the transitional period in South Africa, but this position has had contradictory implications for its post-apartheid identity. Changes in the state, in psychology and in the global configuration have impacted on its growth and necessitated a repositioning of the field in democratic South Africa. This shift within knowledge production is evident in the low or inconsistent production of published research outputs, the paucity of critical studies, and the shift from publishing in PINS to the SAJP. However, a focus on marginalised groups is still more characteristic of community psychology. These trends offer opportunities for thinking about the future of community psychology, generating new forms of research and knowledge, and considering the positions the field occupies in psychological literature. We need to open up more discussion about the ideological tensions in community psychology, knowledge production, and how they relate to the critical project. We also need to be reflexive about knowledge gaps and patterns, and the potential reasons for changes in research trajectories.

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