The social practice of psychology and the social sciences in a liberal democratic society: an analysis of employment trends

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the relevance of psychology and the social and human sciences in a changing South Africa. The new South Africa embraces a liberal democratic approach to government. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a policy document that articulates the goals of this liberal democratic society and the transformative approach to be followed to achieve it. The RDP policy document advocates massive social change and the steps that have been taken to implement the goals of the policy need to be assessed. In this paper, this has been analysed at the level of employment practices. Employment advertisements for social and human science graduates, in three national weekly newspapers, from 1976 to 1996, were investigated. The results are interpreted within a framework based on the ideas of Nickolas Rose about the role played by the discipline of psychology in a liberal democratic society.

Introduction[1]

THE RELEVANCE of psychology has been a contentious issue in South Africa for the past two decades (Prinsloo 1992). In 1981 Holdstock stated: "Psychology must certainly rate as one of the most irrelevant endeavours in South Africa today" (p.123). What has been

called "the political crisis in psychology" has led psychologists to question their role in the current and future South Africa. Much of the practice of psychology has centered around white, middle-class individuals in urban areas and in industry, where increased productivity, application of psychological tests for employee selection and labour relations have been the focus (Louw G.P., 1990; Louw J., 1990; 1992). The effects of *apartheid* government have been widespread and psychology and the social sciences more generally have been criticized for their role in maintaining this oppressive regime (Beit-Hallahmi 1974; Foster & Swart, 1997; Whittaker 1991; Vogelman 1987).

South Africa has undergone considerable social and political change since 1990. The new South Africa embraces a liberal democratic approach to government. Vast transformation is required to reach this ideal. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a social policy document which outlines the transformation approach to be followed in the move from an *apartheid* mode of government towards an increasingly liberal society. During the early stages of this process, Freeman (1992: 1) stated that "the central question of the early 1990s in South Africa is not whether there is a need for political, economic and social change, but what form reconstruction should take". As we enter the new millennium we need to ask what role social and human scientists have played in the transformation process so far, and what future contributions could be made.

This paper seeks to analyse this role through an historical perspective on employment trends. These trends are taken to provide an indication of the practices actually carried out by the social and human sciences. The methodology facilitates an assessment of the relevance of these disciplines in the new South Africa and so seeks to encourage critical reflection.

Psychology and the liberal democratic society

THE DISCIPLINE of psychology has found application in a wide variety of settings, including business corporations, hospitals, factories, mines, government departments, private practice, schools and others (Louw 1990). During the *apartheid* era psychology was used for

purposes of government and support of this oppressive regime in a variety of ways (for a detailed discussion see Whittaker 1991). The usefulness of the discipline as a justification for various political practices lies in its claim of scientific neutrality. "Scientific" evidence was produced in support of racist ideology, in particular, the intelligence test. In 1939 a South African psychologist, M.L. Fick, standardized the intelligence test for South African conditions. He stated that "the inferiority of the Native (African) in educability, as shown by the measurement of their actual achievement in education, limits considerably the proportion of Natives who can benefit from education of the ordinary type beyond the rudimentary" (cited by Whittaker 1991: 58). Such scientific evidence was later used as a justification for the separate education of black and white children that culminated in the Bantu education scheme. In a similar vein, the National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) functioned largely to provide selection procedures for white army personnel and administrators and black mine workers. The Mental Health Act of 1973 made it mandatory for "any doctor who regarded a person as 'dangerous to others' to report this to the nearest magistrate or police official" (Whittaker 1991: 61). This law was eventually used against pass-offenders. In the early 1980s the importance of training black psychologists became evident and scholarships to overseas universities were made available. Many of these newly trained psychologists were placed in black schools as counsellors, one of the main focuses of this counselling being an emphasis on behavioural norms and conformity to the demands of the workplace (Whittaker 1991).

South Africa has now rejected the oppressive practices of the past in favour of the creation of a liberal society. Rose (1992) has alerted us to the role played by psychology[2] in the government of people in a liberal society. This role is far subtler than the directly oppressive role psychology at times fulfilled in the past as described above. The increasing infiltration of psychological practice throughout society

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[2] (And the social and human sciences, many of which make use of psychological knowledge and practice (cf.Foucault, 1972, Sarup, 1992).

has been seen to provide a subtle form of social control, suited to liberal government. Psychological knowledge, which extends to the family, the workplace and various other contexts thus has direct impact on our everyday lives, and is not only descriptive, but becomes normative (Danziger 1997; Rose 1992). Psychological practices are based on principles of discipline and "seek to produce the subjective conditions, the forms of self-mastery, self regulation and self-control, necessary to govern a nation now made up of free citizens" (Rose 1993: 289). More specifically, psychological techniques and the various types of intelligence, attitude and aptitude tests have been described as a means of rendering individuals calculable, and so manageable (Rose 1992). The location of psychological knowledge within the realm of scientific study serves to make ethical this new form of discipline and self regulation of individuals. Further, through psychological knowledge we are taught to "work on ourselves", to improve our lives based on psychological norms such as freedom and autonomy which are consistent with a liberal ethos (Rose 1996: 363).

The emergence of a liberal mode of rule requires that individuals become active in governing themselves as opposed to direct state authority as was used during *apartheid* (Rose 1996; Gordon 1991). One of the sites of this activity is the community through which subtle regulatory mechanisms operate (Rose 1993; 1996). Society is to be governed through the "building of responsible communities prepared to invest in themselves" (Rose 1996: 333). This focus is evident in the RDP with its emphasis on participation in all aspects of transformation and government in the new South Africa. This participatory approach applies particularly to the community. Development is to occur through community participation (ANC, 1994a). Since the mid 1980s the focus on community psychology in South Africa has grown steadily. This could be linked to the beginnings of the transition to a liberal society in this country and may serve as the latest site through which psychological knowledge extends to the self-governing individual.

It has been suggested that we analyze the social role of psychology as a history of "problematisations"; the kinds of problems to which psychological know-how has come to appear to provide solutions and,

reciprocally, the kinds of issues that psychological ways of seeing and calculating have rendered problematic (Rose 1992: 353). This study will provide an indication of the practice of psychology in South Africa, in an attempt to provide some understanding of the types of problems to which South African psychology and related disciplines has been and is being applied. This will facilitate an assessment of psychology's role in the transition from an apartheid system of government to a liberal democratic one.

Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

IN 1994 WE saw the election of South Africa's Government of National Unity. At the political level the transformation process had been underway for some time before this. During the election campaign the African National Congress (ANC) had begun to spell out some of the changes needed to create the new South Africa. These were formalized in the RDP White Paper released in September 1994.

The RDP states that society is to be transformed to take the leading role and people are accorded rights and responsibilities for their own development and for the development of a new nation (Lewis 1997; Lor 1996: 14). The purpose of these principles is to deepen democracy and to move towards a liberal mode of government (ANC 1994b). Four broad priority areas of the RDP were identified: meeting basic needs; the development of human resources; building the economy and democratizing state and society (ANC 1994a). The discipline of psychology and the social and human sciences more generally have the potential to make an important contribution to the realization of these aims. Based on an analysis of the RDP policy document (ANC 1994a), various areas were seen to be of particular importance.

According to the RDP, education and training are essential in order to develop human resources. This should increase employment opportunities and decrease inequalities linked to previous Bantu Education practices and the exclusion of people from skills training opportunities. Van Zyl and Albertyn (1995) have emphasized the role of personnel practitioners in the training of those previously excluded from training programmes. Productivity improvements are needed for economic development, calling for input from psychology and

human resource graduates working in industrial settings. The implementation of Affirmative Action programmes and change management are also central to the democratization of the workplace. The RDP calls for the extension of trade union rights to all employees, and procedures to increase workplace democracy and collective bargaining. Those working in the human resources and industrial relations fields have an important contribution to make in this regard. Personnel practitioners "are seen as the driving force behind affirmative action and change programmes and are responsible for managing the transformation of worker groups into multi-cultural teams" as set out in the RDP (van Zyl & Albertyn, 1995: 10). This will require a total move away from the traditional oppressive role of industrial psychologists who were required to minimize trade union activity, a change process that has been under way in recent years.

Further, the need for conflict resolution and negotiation skills to aid in the transformation process is noted in the RDP and will also require input from the social and human sciences (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC] Symposium, 1994). Research into this and other areas related to social transformation is needed. According to the HSRC Symposium (1994), government databases do not contain information accurate enough for sound policy making. The importance of social research should thus not be underestimated. There is also a need for monitoring and evaluation of programmes that are carried out in terms of the RDP. The RDP includes a section that focuses specifically on the disabled people of South Africa, especially the mentally ill. Special attention is to be given to mental illness arising from trauma and violence. The development of primary psychological service interventions will be needed as will a move to community-based services.

At the ideological level the RDP calls for a change in the ethos that the "government will provide" and a move towards strengthening social networks and community-based initiatives which the RDP document hopes will empower civil society. This notion of democratizing state and society necessitates interaction between government, civil society and the community and puts a strong focus on education of the community. This is the community orientation of

the RDP. There is also the need to encourage tolerance and the acceptance of different cultures and to work towards the eradication of "apartheid beliefs" (ANC 1994a). These objectives are central in the transition to a liberal democratic society. The social and human sciences have the potential to make a rich contribution in these areas. "If ever there were a time when the disciplines which concern themselves with the human condition, human values, and human flourishing are needed in South Africa it is surely now" (Leatt 1992: 4).

The role expected of the social and human scientist may become increasing difficult with the introduction of the ANC's macro-economic approach, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy which follows international neo-liberal principals. The publication of this policy in June 1996 signalled the beginning of a move away from direct social investment (characteristic of the RDP) to economic investment dictated by market forces. The tension between social and economic approaches to state policy and intervention has been and currently is a highly debated issue (Blake 1998, Boulding 1967, Hardiman & Midgeley 1982, Lafitte 1962). There has been much criticism of GEAR and its potentially negative impact on the poor in the country (Blake 1998). The new emphasis on fiscal discipline and the importance of the private sector in development has been said to undermine the people-driven aspect of the RDP (Blake 1998; Molebatsi 1998). The data used in this paper provides a tentative indication of the effects of this economic policy on the types of employment being advertised for social and human science graduates.

Method

Advertisement selection

JOB ADVERTISEMENTS in three national weekly newspapers, The *Sunday Times*, *The Rapport* and the *Mail and Guardian* were analysed. The study spanned the years from 1976 to 1996 except for the *Mail and Guardian,* which started publication in 1985. Ten weeks were randomly selected and held constant across the newspapers for each year. The advertisement selections were done

in the Natal Society Library where the newspapers are archived. Three research assistants were trained in the advertisement selection procedure.

The parameters of the search were wide and included any job which:

- specified the professional title of "psychologist" or "psych-ometrist";
- was in a traditional area of work for psychologists (for example, counselling or human resources);
- called for a graduate in the social, behavioural or human sciences generally,
- or was judged to consist of primary tasks capable of being done by a graduate with a major in psychology (regardless of other qualifications).

To ensure that borderline advertisements were not overlooked the initial approach was over-inclusive (that is, an extensive approach was adopted) rather than under-inclusive. Two rounds of newspaper selection were completed and all advertisements selected in both selection rounds were included in the final sample in order to ensure that no applicable advertisements were overlooked.

Content analysis of selected advertisements

An elaborate coding scheme was developed through 14 revisions, with categories operationalized to record the social context of the employment offered and the specific types of psychological practices required. An inductive approach was followed, such that the categories emerged from the data, rather than being decided on beforehand (Holsti 1969; Patton 1987). The purpose of the analysis was to look at the data both in a broad sense (general trends in the industry) and more specifically (the tasks required and the purposes of these tasks, which was taken to represent the required practices of psychology). The categories were specifically defined in order to minimize differing interpretations.

Four coders were trained and worked together until complete agreement was attained in the coding process. The data set is comprehensive, covering a wide range of variables that can be

identified within the advertisements under review. However, the practicalities of this amount of data make it difficult to calculate a statistical inter-rater reliability for the coding process. The reasons for this are threefold. The advertisements have been regarded as texts and as such there are a number of readings that can be made of each of these. We read and coded the texts with our specific purposes in mind. These categories were imposed jointly and consensually. In addition, it was felt that consensual coding was the most appropriate method to use since many of the categories were interpretative in nature, with fuzzy boundaries. The coders were thus trained to code according to a common interpretative framework. Furthermore, not all advertise-ments necessarily included all the information that the coding scheme allowed for. Hence there were some categories that were not coded in a number of advertisements, making the number of observations unequal. This would have resulted in an inflated overall reliability as factual categories were generally filled and little variation in these categories is likely (cf. Franklin, Gibson, Merkel-Stoll, Neufelt & Vergara-Yiu, 1996).

To ensure that the consensual coding methods used were reliable, a number of precautions were adopted. Initially, all coders were trained until 100% agreement was reached. This ensured that each coder had a complete common understanding of what each category encompassed, as well as the correct application of each of the options within a category. Any discrepancies were addressed and agreement reached on the optimum categorization. In addition, during coding there was constant questioning and deliberation upon uncertainties, problems were marked to be checked and discussed at a later time and random checks were conducted at various points throughout the coding period.

Due to the vast amount of available data (approximately 12 000 advertisements from 20 weeks in each of 21 years) and the time constraints of the study, it was decided to further sample the dataset into bienniums, including each month of the year once, with the exception of November and December which had fewer advertisements. The final dataset consisted of 3050 advertisements.

The categories "social change" and "grassroots approaches" were especially important for this study. It was recognized that such terms can be problematic and may have various meanings. For this reason these categories were specifically operationalized. The category "social change" was defined as "any move away from the *apartheid* mode of government". The "grassroots" category included all jobs that specified grassroots, community-based, people-driven, participatory or empowerment approaches. It was generally found that this was clearly specified in the texts of the advertisements. To assess whether the RDP requirements for worker and trade union empowerment were being met and to clarify further the types of practices being conducted in the industrial sphere, a category was included to distinguish between those jobs advancing the aims of management versus those advancing the aims of workers or the collective.

The tasks specified in the advertisements were coded into six categories for analysis:

- *technical psychosocial skills* which included all tasks which traditionally fall in the domain of the psychologist or psychologically trained person (recruitment, selection, person evaluation, manpower development, data analysis and research, group work, counselling and psychotherapy);
- *education and training*;
- *progressive tasks* (organizational change management, socio-political and participatory research, project evaluation, community development or organization, capacity building, social investment, affirmative action and policy work);
- *administrative tasks* (reporting or presenting, liaison, general administration, interpersonal communication);
- *industrial relations* and
- *negotiation* (including conflict management).

Methodological limitations

IT IS RECOGNIZED that the selection of newspaper advertisements is not necessarily a comprehensive representation of all employment opportunities available as other recruitment methods are used, including recruitment drives, employment agencies and by word of

mouth. Edely and Molin (1993) found that networking and word of mouth were the most effective means for Bachelor of Arts graduates from the University of the Witwatersrand to find employment. It was not possible to sample from these other avenues in this study. Newspaper advertisements are, however, a first level indicator of the types of employment on offer to psychology and other social and human science graduates (cf. Richter, Griesel, Durrheim, Wilson, Surendorff & Asafo-Agyei 1998); especially in the public sector which is obliged to use publicized advertisements. In a similar study conducted in Australia the authors concluded that sampling from newspapers would be unlikely to favour the psychological or any other professions more than others (Franklin *et al.* 1996).

Many of the positions advertised could potentially be filled by graduates from a variety of academic backgrounds, not only psychology or the social and human sciences (cf. Franklin *et al.* 1996). This would be influenced by the courses selected for study at various academic levels. The human resources field is a particular example in this regard (van Zyl & Alberton 1995). Many commerce graduates (possibly with psychological training, but not necessarily) find employment in this area. This study does not refer narrowly to psychology graduates, thus this limitation should not be overly problematic.

FIGURE 1: NO OF ADVERTISEMENTS PER YEAR
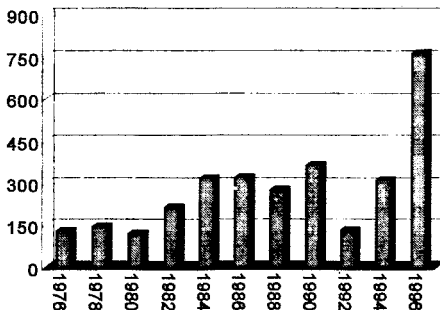
Results and discussion

General employment trends

OVER THE two decades covered in this study (1976–1996) there has been a steady increase in the number of jobs advertised within the selected pool for psychology and social and human science graduates. In 1976 129 jobs were advertised: by 1996 this figure had risen to 762. This represents a growth rate of 83% over 21 years. This growth was fairly consistent (approximately 25–30% on average) until after 1992, when a marked increase occurred, 57% from 1992 to 1994 and 60% from 1994 to 1996. This growth is higher than either the population or economic growth of the country and probably represents a true increase in demands for psychologically and socially insightful employees.

From Figure 1 it is evident that in 1992 there was a sharp decline in the number of jobs advertised. This was a trend common to the employment industry as a whole as the country was in the midst of a recession and much uneasiness about the future of South Africa was being voiced (*Race Relations Survey* 1990/1991, 1991/1992). This decrease in 1992 must be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the results to follow.

Advertisements were coded to provide an indication of the area of psychological practice required of graduates. Industrial psychology

FIGURE 2: AREA OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE
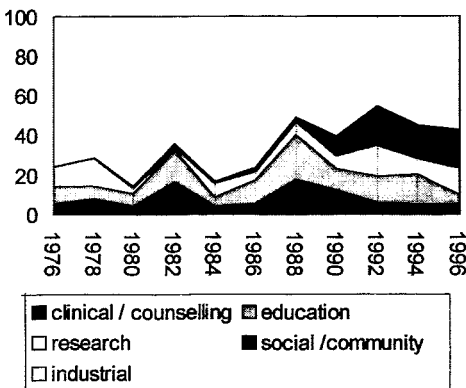
was consistently the highest requirement, accounting for 64% of all advertisements across the 21 years. This category has however declined since 1984–1986. Conversely, the areas of research and social or community psychology have been on the increase since that time.

Figure 2 shows the high demand for graduates working in the industrial area. The requirement for clinical or counselling graduates peaked at 18% in 1988 and is specified in only 5% of jobs advertised in 1996. In 1996 social or community psychological activities were the second most frequently required at 19% of all advertisements. This increase in community and social psychology may indicate that the employment sector is responding to the changing socio-political environment. The research area has been relatively low across time, but has shown some increase since 1990. Educational psychology was the least required practice in 1996 (4% of all advertisements that year).

Societal transformation and the RDP

THE RESULTS INDICATE that the job market began to respond to the need for social change in South Africa as early as 1984–1986, eight years before the election of the new government and the publication of the RDP policy framework in 1994. In fact, by 1994 40% of all jobs advertised for social and human science graduates expressed a commitment to or support of social change. It thus seems that psychology and the social and human sciences more generally have (since 1984–1986) been seen to have a significant role to play in the transformation process. The community as the focus of transformation has been widely popularized and grassroots approaches specifically called for in the RDP. Like social change, grassroots approaches (defined in the methods section) have shown a general increase from 1984–1986, with 13% of jobs advertised in 1994 being community-based.

Figure 3 shows the growth in social change and grassroots approaches over the 21-year period of the study. Up until 1984 psychology and related disciplines were largely unquestionir.g of apartheid practices and unresponsive to the needs of the wider

population. This period has been described as that of "inadvertent psychology" (Richter *et al.* 1998:1). In 1986 the *Mail and Guardian* (then the *Weekly Mail*) began publication as a progressive newspaper seeking to challenge *apartheid*; this launch in itself suggesting that social awareness about the need for change was on the increase. More recently both social change and grassroots approaches have shown a decrease (in 1996). At this point we cannot be clear whether this represents a future trend unfolding and further employment data would be needed to assess this. We can speculate though that this may herald a change in focus consistent with the introduction of GEAR, away from direct social investment towards economic development.

FIGURE 3: SOCIAL CHANGE AND GRASSROOTS APPROACHES ACROSS TIME
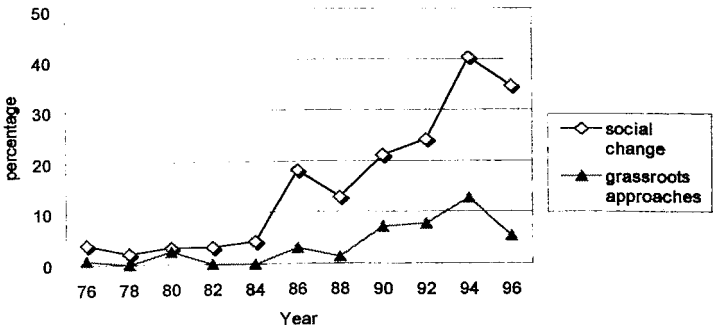
It was noted above that in 1994 13% of the jobs advertised were community-based. Given the importance placed on community development in the RDP and transformation processes more generally, this is a fairly small percentage. This was judged by looking at the jobs advocating grassroots approaches and social change across employment sector. The non governmental organizations (NGOs) which began to advertise employment in 1986 (once again linked to

the first publication of the *Mail and Guardian* at about this time)
have been the channel through which social change and community-
based approaches have been implemented with most success.
Between 75 and 100% of all the jobs advertised in the NGO sector
supported social change and between 27 and 67% were community-
based. In 1994 the private sector social change contribution increased
to 50%, suggesting that this sector was responding to the
requirements of the RDP. This contribution, however, decreased to
15% in 1996, again possibly linked to the emergence of the GEAR
policy. The public sector began to show a move towards jobs
advocating social change from 1984–1986 and fluctuated at around
20% until 1996 when 36% of public sector jobs were directed to
supporting and promoting social change. (We did not expect any social
change jobs in this sector in the early years as *apartheid* was
government policy). Similar results are seen in terms of grassroots
approaches.

FIGURE 4: RDP TASKS REQUIRED ACROSS TIME
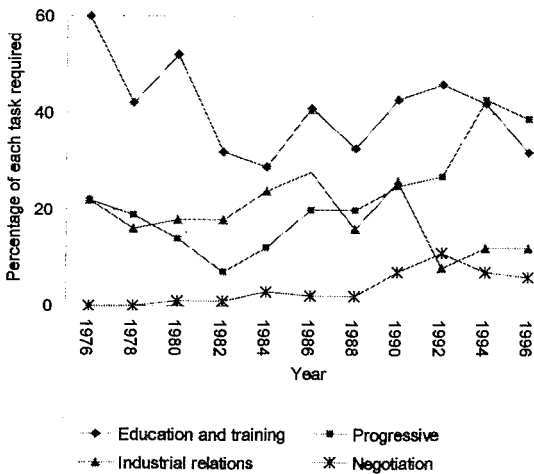
RDP-related tasks

A N ANALYSIS of the RDP makes clear that certain tasks and skills are required for the implementation and enhancement of the trans–formation process. Figure 4 shows the extent to which RDP-related tasks are being carried out by psychology and social and human science graduates. Progressive tasks have grown from 22% of all tasks required in 1976 to 39% in 1996.

The importance of education and training and industrial relations are continually emphasized in the RDP but these results indicate that since about 1992 fewer jobs involved education and training and industrial relations. The strengthening of the trade unions and worker's bargaining power as an important function of the industrial relations practitioner has also received attention in the RDP. However, the advertised employment for graduates working for trade unions or from the perspective of the workers as opposed to management have been negligible (the largest requirement was four jobs in 1990). Negotiation (including conflict handling) has increased since 1988, but only 6% of jobs advertised in 1996 included negotiation as an important part of the job description.

The analysis of the tasks specified in the advertisements was extended further to consider the types of tasks required for social change and community-based jobs as well as within each sector. The trends of task requirements for both social change and community-based jobs are fairly similar. Both show high requirements for technical psychosocial skills, progressive orientation and adminis–trative tasks. Social change jobs have a higher percentage of education and training tasks (42% of all tasks) than community-based jobs (28% of all tasks). The lower percentage of education and training in communities is inconsistent with the empowerment and human resource focus of the RDP. The three sectors showed similar requirements in the technical psychosocial category as well as the education and training category. There were, however, marked differences across sectors with respect to the other RDP-related tasks. Tasks related to progressive orientation were required more frequently in the NGO sector (76% of all tasks required). The low specification of progressive tasks by the public sector is worth noting,

since only 25% of all tasks required by the sector driving the RDP fall into this progressive category. The private sector specification of progressive tasks is 22% of all the required tasks.

Administrative tasks are in high demand in the NGO sector, consisting of 76% of all tasks advertised in this sector. The private sector shows a fairly high requirement for industrial relations; however, as noted above, there is little focus on worker-based approaches. Negotiation skills are most frequently required in the NGO sector. These trends of RDP-related tasks across sector are consistent with the findings presented above showing the low percentage of social change and community-based jobs in the public and private sectors compared to the NGO sector.

Theoretical interpretation

THE RESULTS of this study have been interpreted in terms of the social critique presented by Nikolas Rose, outlined above. This approach has been used in order to emphasize the importance of the "notion of critical reflexivity; a critical awareness of *power relations* along with the capability to *challenge* and *resist*" (Foster & Swartz, 1997: 17, emphasis added). The role of the social and human scientist in a transforming South Africa is becoming increasingly complex, especially in light of the potential social control function to which Rose (1992) has alerted us – the importance of continual questioning of our practices and their effects should not, therefore, be underestimated.

The steady increase in the number of jobs advertised for psychology and social and human science graduates can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, we could argue that the potential role of these disciplines in a transforming society is increasingly being recognized and that we are becoming more relevant to our changing society. On the other hand, along the lines of the Rosian critique, we could tentatively conclude that psychology and related disciplines are successfully infiltrating more and more areas of society and as such beginning to fulfil a more subtle social control function as South Africa moves towards becoming a liberal state. This second interpretation may explain the vast increase in the number of jobs advertised in 1996

compared to 1994. The transition to a liberal democratic society does not take place immediately after the election of a new government but happens over time. This result may support the claims made by Rose, who observed this trend in the countries of Eastern Europe in 1992, that, as a society moves towards liberalism, the importance of psychological and other social science expertise increases . From this standpoint, then, psychology and related disciplines could be said to be playing their part in transformation, becoming relevant in terms of the governance of a liberal democratic state.

The practical relevance of psychology in terms of the RDP can be considered at many levels, all of which are presented in the results section. Generally, it appears that the contribution of these disciplines to the transformation process has been recognized by the employment sector since the mid 1980s. Before this time there was little focus on "social change"' jobs. This finding may be seen to provide quantitative evidence in support of the vast number of qualitative critiques of the role of psychology in the *apartheid* regime and the lack of criticism of *apartheid* practice (cf. Beit-Hallahmi 1974; Vogelman 1986, 1987; Whittaker 1991). The response to calls for change, as represented by the percentage of advertisements supporting social change of 40% in 1994, seems to indicate that a significant contribution to the overall transformation process was being made. It may be, however, that over the past few years it has become politically correct to specify more progressive tasks and a commitment to social change when advertising for employment, and these tasks may be given priority over other more common psychological tasks, such as industrial relations, education and training.

The increase in community-based jobs since 1984–1986 could be interpreted in terms of Rose's (1996) thesis that the community becomes the site through which power operates in a liberal society. In the advertisements supporting both social change and grassroots approaches we see a high requirement for technical psychosocial skills and administrative tasks. The increased demand for these skills, especially extending to the community, could be serving the function of making individuals (previously incalculable) now calculable and so manageable (Rose 1992, 1996).

However, by 1994 only 13% of all jobs advertised were community-based. Given the importance of the community, community development and participatory approaches in the RDP, it is questionable whether the goals of the RDP are being met and whether the effects of a focus on the community as outlined by Rose are operating effectively in South Africa at present.

In June 1996 GEAR was launched and we noted a decrease in both social change and community-based approaches occurring in that year. Could we speculate that this is more than mere coincidence? The analysis of social change and community-based approaches across all sectors may clarify the issue somewhat. Transformation has seemed to occur most effectively through the NGO sector[3]. However, the contributions in these areas by the public sector has been consistently low in comparison with the NGOs, possibly substantiating critics' claims that the social investment aspect of the RDP was always intended to be replaced with an economic approach (cf. Blake 1998). Further analysis of future employment trends is needed to provide a clearer and more detailed picture of the effects of an economic approach to development in South Africa.

Conclusion

"The future for us, too, is our own place, if we can learn to see it differently, and are 'strong in will' to change it" (Handy 1996: 22).

SOUTH AFRICA has undergone substantial change over the past decade and the transformation process continues, albeit not without criticism. Those of us working in the areas of the social and human sciences have a rich potential to influence this process in many ways. We must however be constantly aware and self reflective on our practices, as it has been argued in this paper that subtle effects of social control can be an outcome of our work.

The contributions of psychology and related disciplines to the objectives of the RDP have been both adequate and inadequate in

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[3] We may expect this to change as services previously rendered by NGOs are now being seen as state responsibilities, a change to which funders have responded.

different areas. The challenge is now to recognize where we have not played our part and to build on the positive contributions made. In light of the current economic policy this role will not be simple, as social investment is rapidly losing prominence on the government agenda. If we, as social and human scientists wish actively to work towards social redress then we need to be "strong in will" continually to question and critique the transformation process of which we are a part. In the words of Franz Fanon: "O my body, make of me always a man (*sic*) who questions" (Fanon 1986: 232).

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