

**Contextual Analysis of the Curriculum in the Department of Psychology, University of
Cape Town, 1994-present**

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Abstract

The discipline of psychology has existed within specific socio-historical, political, and economic contexts. The curriculum of psychology acts as a mechanism whereby the discipline articulates and produces itself, reflecting what kinds of knowledge is produced, disseminated, and ultimately utilised in practice. The aim of this research is to document the curriculum of psychology at the University of Cape Town in the post-apartheid era through a contextual lens to showcase how societal, economic, and political factors may relate to the contents of the curriculum. Data was drawn from faculty handbooks and course outlines from undergraduate to honours level and analysed by investigating both international and local trends in psychology to locate the curriculum within a broader context. Overall, two broad trends have emerged namely, the rise of neuropsychology which mirrors broader international trends of the discipline and the decolonial turn which is related to local events. These findings suggest that psychology continues to develop within specific contexts reflecting the close tie to the powers of the day, highlighting the international split in the discipline and the divide between culture and materiality.

Keywords: curriculum, post-apartheid, context, neuropsychology, decolonial turn

Introduction

Psychology as a discipline operates within specific socio-historical, political, and economic contexts (van Ommen, 2008). Accordingly, the development of the discipline has been closely tied to its relationship with power where societal factors have often contributed to the trajectory of the discipline (Long, 2020). Specifically, the university setting provides the opportunity for psychology to develop as it is here that knowledge is produced, articulated, disseminated, and consequently utilised in practice (Godin & Gingras, 2000). What this means, is that the psychology curriculum acts as a mechanism by which the discipline articulates and reproduces itself. Psychology, therefore, does not develop in a social vacuum but reflects instead the discipline's relationship with a broader societal context. Indeed, the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa's leading university, is a case in point (Rumble, 2018), where the progression of the department can directly be related to the socio-historical context both globally and within South Africa.

The relationship between South African psychology and society

Before and During Apartheid

South African psychology historically aligned itself with the powers of the day (Long, 2016a; van Ommen, 2008). The origin of the discipline involved the perpetuation of a Western-centric psychology that aided the political objective of colonialism and apartheid. Psychological knowledge such as scientific racism through the eugenics movement and standardised intelligence tests assisted in the justification of institutionalised racism supporting racial segregation and economic exploitation (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000; Bowman et al., 2008; Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). The idea of psychological knowledge as objective due to its scientific credentials endorsed the racist ideology of the state such as using psychology to address the 'poor white problem' which threatened the racialised social order (Nicholas,

2014; van Ommen, 2008; Yen, 2016). This notion of truth allowed psychology to appear as apolitical as it claimed to offer knowledge on the 'natural' way, thereby masking how it was supportive of the apartheid state (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). Psychology was thus seen as scientifically disinterested in the context in which it was embedded and applied, despite its alignment with local and global ideological and political forces which supported the project of scientific racism (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). Psychology in South Africa, therefore, offered its usefulness, aligning itself with the powers of the day.

University institutions provided the platform for systematic knowledge to be produced which consequently influenced the practical application of psychological knowledge in broader society (Godin & Gingras, 2000; Mamdani, 2019). The knowledge produced within these institutions is related to the trends and demands of social, political, and economic imperatives of local and international forces (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000; Nicholas, 2014). While both English and Afrikaans universities produced knowledge that aligned with international trends in psychology and contributed to fulfilling the demands of the state, there was a difference between the universities in their orientation towards psychology and the way it would be applied in society. English universities were influenced by British empiricism and Lockean liberalism whilst Afrikaans universities were influenced by Dutch and German traditions of idealism and rationalism (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). Based on these orientations, English universities tended to teach basic psychology and were more orientated towards behaviourism whilst Afrikaans universities tended to prioritise applied psychology and emphasised humanistic therapies (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000).

The focus on teaching basic psychology at English universities meant that emphasis was placed on the theory that had been derived from reputable scientific methods (Long, 2020). Based on the positivist notions of scientific empiricism, behaviourist theories were generated from observing phenomena in a controlled environment to produce replicable

experiments that would yield similar results (van Ommen, 2008). These methods of observation and experimentation existed within a scientific framework that aimed to establish psychology as a real science emphasising objectivity, neutrality, and rationality. Most English universities taught content on behaviourism with more specified programs offered at the postgraduate level. Training at these universities focused on measurement, aptitude, performance, and modification of behaviour (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000).

At UCT, the knowledge produced often reflected local and global trends (Phillips, 1993, 2019). Although UCT from its founding years, generally took a liberal stance that advocated for academic freedom and critical thinking, The Department of Psychology, like other English-medium universities, was originally grounded in behaviourism and scientific empiricism where the first textbook supported evolutionary theory and eugenics (Phillips, 1993; Rumble, 2018). Furthermore, the focus on scientific empiricism was aligned with the mental hygiene movement in Europe and America which advocated for the reduction of mental illness in all spheres of society (Rumble, 2018; van Ommen, 2008; Yen, 2016). Scientific empiricism relied on evidence gained from experiments that would aid the prevention and reduction of mental hygiene issues at the time, such as feeble-mindedness and delinquency (Foster, 2008). This included mental testing devices such as standardised intelligence tests tailored for the circumstances in South Africa, providing a tool to solve the state's problems that related to mental deficiencies and economic and social inadequacy. This included the 'poor white problem' and the mental tests developed by the Department of Psychology at UCT in its early years as well as the university's collaboration with the Carnegie study, assisted in developing ways to economically and socially uplift poor Whites (Rumble, 2018). The Department of Psychology at UCT in its founding years thus represented both a Western-centric knowledge discourse and assisted in producing

knowledge that had practical consequences in fulfilling the demands of the state (Rumble, 2018).

The curriculum of Psychology at UCT from its founding years up until 1968 was constantly changing, particularly in the senior-level courses (Phillips, 1993, 2019). The curriculum of first-year psychology generally remained the same covering topics such as thinking, learning, perception, motivation, and memory embedded within the formulation of psychology as a behavioural science. However, senior-level courses were often influenced by the interests of the head of the department at different times (Phillips, 2019). For example, the rise of liberation and anti-apartheid movements in the 1950s and 1960s saw a small number of psychologists being concerned with psychology's alignment with state power (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Nicholas, 2014). In 1960, Kurt Danziger headed the Department of Psychology at UCT where he advocated for psychological knowledge that would lead to social emancipation (Foster, 2008; Phillips, 2019). Danziger strongly believed that the growth of psychology in South Africa was due to the practical value it offered the apartheid state and the focus in the Department at that time was on social and political psychology. This focus mirrored the growing discontentment with the use of psychology and the purpose it served for South African society (Foster, 2008). Although the current literature (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000; Phillips, 2019; Rumble, 2018) only covers the curriculum of Psychology at UCT from 1920 to 1968, the curriculum trends during that time had been related to global processes represented by Western-centric discourses such as empiricism and behaviourism as well as local processes relating to the apartheid state.

Post-Apartheid

The protest years before the end of apartheid in the late 1970s, the 1980s and the 1990s led to increasing concerns about the relevance of psychology in South Africa leading to the rise of critical psychology (Cooper, 2014; Foster, 2008; Long, 2016b). This discourse

which challenges mainstream psychology and emphasises the need for psychology to be politically conscious of its role and power has become a common feature in post-apartheid South Africa as part of the democratic ideals perpetuated by the new state power (Yen, 2016). The new democratic era thus called for a transformation of the curriculum and re-evaluation of the purpose of psychology in South Africa (Sigogo et al., 2004; Stevens, 2003). To this day, much of the academic literature produced about the state of the discipline relates to relevance debates, decolonisation, and transformation (Pillay, 2013, 2016; Ratele et al., 2018). Research on the discipline in the post-apartheid era has thus continued the same trajectory since the end of apartheid (Cooper, 2014). Psychology in the post-apartheid era has therefore aligned with democratic ideals and research on the discipline reflects this.

Whilst there has not been much research done on the curriculum of psychology at South African universities, with no research being conducted on the curriculum of psychology at UCT in the post-apartheid era, existing research has generally considered issues of relevance. Much of the research has focused on specific programs through a critical lens. For example, a study conducted on the community psychology masters program at the University of Witwatersrand focuses on the entirety of the program and the purpose it may serve to be equitable, inclusive, and relevant (Carolissen et al., 2017). Furthermore, other studies have researched the community psychology program as a decolonial project (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011; Sigogo et al., 2004). Research has also focused on the inclusivity and relevance of the curriculum by investigating students' perceptions of how they view the curriculum (Carolissen et al., 2015; Cornell & Kessi, 2016).

Most studies regarding curriculum have focused on the clinical masters program throughout the country's institutions where all of them take a critical perspective looking at racial demographics and the irrelevance of the program to the South African context (Pillay et al., 2013; Pillay & Kramers-Olen, 2014; Pillay & Nyandeni, 2020). A few of the clinical

masters studies with a focus on relevance, offer calls to action such as introducing an African psychology as a form of decolonising the curriculum (Baloyi, 2020; Cooper, 2014; Edwards, 2014). Studies done on teaching research methodology at universities take a staff perspective with a similar focus on relevance and critique of mainstream Western methods (Fynn & van der Walt, 2019; Wagner & Maree, 2007). The limited research on the psychology curriculum in South Africa in the post-apartheid era, has thus focused on specific programs and has engaged with the research more critically focusing on social and cultural relevance, equity within programs, inclusivity, and decolonisation. Research on curriculum has thus aligned with broader research trends in the discipline as well as with democratic ideals.

Psychology has thus always aligned with the powers of the day – for better or worse – and has been related to larger societal forces based on the demands at particular points in time. The curriculum of psychology represents the knowledge of the discipline and reflects the relationship between psychology and society. The history of psychology in South Africa and at UCT shows how societal factors can contribute to what knowledge is produced. This is also evident in post-apartheid South Africa where societal demands contribute to the kind of research produced and what is focused on. Research that delves into the curriculum of psychology can thus showcase the discipline's relationship with society. Since there has been a lack of contextual research done on the psychology curriculum, no research conducted on the curriculum of psychology at UCT in the post-apartheid period, and historical research in psychology in the post-apartheid years has declined, this research project will explore the relationship between curriculum and context at UCT's Department of Psychology in the post-apartheid years (Long, 2016b). In employing a contextual point of view, the project will shed light on how the curriculum has been related to broader societal changes and demands as a reflection of psychology's relationship with society.

Aims and Objectives

The objective of this research project is to document the curriculum of psychology at UCT from 1994 to 2022 through a contextual lens. The project aims to investigate the contents of the psychology curriculum from undergraduate to honours level and showcase how broader societal, economic, and political factors may be related to the contents and changes in the curriculum over time. In researching the curriculum of psychology at UCT, the project also aims to illuminate the relationship between psychology and South African society.

Research Questions

Main Research Question

What were the contents of the curriculum of psychology at UCT from first-year to honours level between 1994 and 2022, and how do these contents relate to the social, economic, and political contexts in South Africa during this period?

Sub-Questions

- How do these contents relate to trends in Psychology in South Africa?
- How do these contents relate to trends in Psychology internationally?

Theoretical Frameworks

Relevance and Contextualism

Relevance is often conceptualised as the state of being applicable, connected, related or appropriate to something else (Johnston, 2015). Relevance in South African psychology is a common discourse where psychology is often criticised as being irrelevant due to not being applicable, related, or appropriate to the South African context (Long, 2013). Relevance thus represents the relationship between psychology and society and can be understood in different ways (Long, 2016a). One form of relevance can be understood as social relevance, according to which psychology is relevant when it addresses itself to societal problems in a

meaningful way that secures the psychological well-being of people (Long, 2013).

Psychology in South Africa has also been criticised for utilising Western-centric models which are not culturally appropriate for the majority of South Africans (Long, 2016a).

Relevance here can be conceptualised as cultural relevance advocating for an Afrocentric psychology to be developed to meet the majority of South Africans mental health needs.

Lastly, market relevance calls for psychological practice and research to meet the needs of the industry and the market (Long, 2013). Relevance is thus considered as appropriateness or applicability to social, cultural or market demands. As society has transformed and shifted over time, the idea of relevance has therefore been contingent on changing societal influences that have required different demands at particular points in time (Long, 2016a).

Because articulations of the concept of relevance depend on the changing contexts of society, it draws attention to the context-boundedness of psychological knowledge and practices (Long, 2016a). Contextualism places emphasis on the context in which a phenomenon occurs. With an emphasis on context, the meaning and truth of a concept or phenomena only exists in relation to a specific context (Pynn, 2016). Contextualism thus places significance on the idea that knowledge is created at specific times, within particular places and is influenced by societal, economic, political, and cultural processes (Mjøset, 2010). Knowledge is therefore created in relation to context whilst simultaneously transforming and adapting to the time and place in which it exists. Contextualism thus considers the social world and its relation to phenomena and places the meaning of phenomena within this context (Pynn, 2016). Psychology has always been intertwined with the social world, often attuned to societal demands in particular contexts at different points in time. It would therefore be beneficial to analyse the past and present through a contextual lens that may provide a better understanding that evaluates phenomena when all social processes are considered specific to the context of the phenomena (Mjøset, 2010).

Relevance can be used as a theoretical framework to interpret and explain findings in terms of social, cultural and market relevance to reflect the relationship between psychology and society. Contextualism can be used to interpret and explain findings placing importance on locating psychology within a broader context and focusing on the relationship between social processes and the curriculum. Both relevance and contextualism reflect psychology's relationship with society shedding light on the importance of context. These theoretical frameworks thus enable a full exploration of the curriculum in the post-apartheid period, placing it within the context of broader local and global processes at particular points in time.

Method

Research Design: Archival and Contextualist Research

Archival research is a form of historical research and involves the search, extraction, evaluation, and analysis of information drawn from archives. Data is often drawn from texts, documents, records, manuscripts, and objects that provide insight into the history of the phenomenon being researched (Gaillet, 2012). Data in archival research is often gathered to build an archive of all accessible information about a given topic (Gilliland & Mckemmish, 2004). Contextualist research is both descriptive and explanatory about what is being researched (Johanek, 2000). It aims to both describe and explain research taking historical events and changes into account whilst placing it within a broader social, economic, political, and cultural context (Maddrell, 2009). Using this approach, all parts of the research are described, including a description of what has been found as well as a description of the wider macro and micro processes that relate to the research (Maddrell, 2009). Contextual research also enables some ideas to continue whilst allowing new thoughts to surface parallel to the continuation of other ideas (Johanek, 2000). It is therefore not linear and considers all contexts that may overlap at the same point in time. In this design, a specific research question is identified, the context in which the research is being studied is singled out, and

societal processes are explored in relation to the research question. Links are then traced between the research in question and the processes explored where the researcher can arrive at an explanation in answering the research question (Mjøset, 2010).

Contextualist research is concerned with certain events, changes, and influences in specific settings, investigating how knowledge changes in relation to changing settings and time periods (Johanek, 2000). Contextual research views knowledge as contextually specific and thus requires reflexive practice to interrogate the internal and external aspects of the research. Both the context of the research project and the context of the actual research must be reflected on (Maddrell, 2009). This approach does not view knowledge as objective, universal truth, but rather that knowledge is context-specific alluding to more than one reality (Maddrell, 2009). Knowledge is therefore situated within a time and place and the researcher must be aware that the research project itself is also situated within a specific context. This study documented a history of the curriculum of psychology at UCT between 1994 and 2022 by building an archive that was used to describe and explain the contents of the curriculum and how it has changed in relation to wider societal processes.

Data Collection

To obtain information about the curriculum of psychology at UCT in the post-apartheid era, an archive of contents of the curriculum was built. As many faculty handbooks and course outlines were assembled from undergraduate to honours level from 1994 to 2022, with an acknowledgement that there are likely to be gaps in the data set (Gilliland & Mckemmish, 2004). Data was firstly obtained from the postgraduate and undergraduate course secretaries in the Department of Psychology at UCT where these outlines were emailed to the researcher. Course outlines were also obtained from access to VULA sites as well as from the records room in the Psychology department. The course outlines from the records room were hard copies that were scanned on a cell phone and converted into PDF

documents. Faculty handbooks were obtained from the Humanities Faculty Office with the help of administrative staff as well as from the faculty handbooks website on the Internet. The faculty handbooks and course outlines were organised according to each year and level of study and then stored in an archive on a computer.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using a contextual analysis which is a method that studies text and its relation to social, cultural, economic, and political context (Green et al., 2010). A contextual analysis emphasises a rich description and explanation of what is being researched and its relation to broader context focusing on phenomena occurring within its own setting. It focuses on how knowledge is situated in particular settings and how social factors contribute to the creation, transformation, and alternations of knowledge (Johanek, 2000). The data was firstly analysed more broadly by looking at what the curriculum entails, paying particular attention to identifying courses that were fixtures, additions, and removals apropos the curriculum. Secondly, the specific contents of each course were then analysed focusing on how the contents of the courses changed or remained the same over time. The fixtures and changes were noted paying particular attention to the time period in which those changes occurred. Lastly, contextual research was conducted through immersion in the relevant literature to investigate the political, social, cultural, and economic processes in which the trends in the curriculum could be situated (Mjøset, 2010). The analysis included an emphasis on macro levels relating to processes that occur more widely in society (Maddrell, 2009). Conclusions were drawn based on the descriptive and explanatory processes that described the contents of the curriculum and explained how these contents have been related to wider societal processes and trends in psychology both locally and internationally.

Ethical Considerations

There are no ethical considerations to consider in this research project since it does not involve human participants but data that is entirely textual. However, it is important to ensure that the data is read and interpreted as faithfully as possible. This requires the avoidance of Whiggism and presentism which will be discussed in the reflexivity section below.

Reflexivity

A contextual approach to research requires the researcher to continuously be involved in the research process (Mjøset, 2010). The researchers' biases, assumptions, judgements, and positions are thus present throughout the process and have implications for how data is analysed and interpreted as well as how conclusions are drawn (Johanek, 2000). I am a young South African, Muslim Indian woman currently completing my honours in Psychology at UCT. Having lived in South Africa all my life and having parents who have always been vocal about the country's history and current challenges, I have always had a strong personal, intellectual, and emotional bond with South Africa. My position as a student in the Department of Psychology at UCT and as a South African citizen provides me with insider status where I have first-hand experience of the curriculum, and the South African context provides the backdrop to those experiences. Whilst having an insider status is often regarded as less critical, my primary interest in sociology and critical psychology may influence my biases making me more prone to assert moral judgements on my findings. Being a UCT student may make me likely to view the department and curriculum in a positive light. Taking this into account, I have located myself in the research process by being aware of the biases and assumptions that I may have to ensure that the research is continuously interpreted, contextualised, and presented as faithfully as possible.

The Danger of Whiggism and Presentism

Both Whiggism and presentism are a danger to this research project. Whiggism assumes that history is progressive and as a result, the present is more enlightened (Richards, 1996). Whiggism can be dangerous as it depicts the present as better informed than the past allowing the present to escape interrogation. How the past is represented informs present understandings and thus, context must remain the focal point to avoid assuming historical progression (Long, 2016b). Presentism is a danger that can occur when researching historical accounts. When the researcher is influenced by current contexts, agendas, and processes, it may be likely the data is judged with the present criteria in mind (Long, 2016b). Using current ideas to interpret the past can be dangerous as it may lead to considering a lack of context in which phenomena have occurred. Presentism thus offers a real danger for this research since the focus of the project is on context. Presentism must therefore be avoided throughout the project through thoughtful presentism which requires the researcher to be reflexive throughout the process by being aware of present biases (Smith, 1988). Whilst the dangers of Whiggism and presentism cannot entirely be avoided, it is important to minimise these dangers by engaging in reflexivity throughout the research process and being continuously aware of the context to ensure that the context in which certain phenomena occur remains the focus.

Findings and Discussion

Major Trends

The Rise of Neuropsychology

The first major trend in the curriculum has been the rise of neuropsychology. This has been reflected in both the contents of courses as well as the addition of neuropsychology courses. The development of neuropsychology as reflected in the contents of the curriculum has paralleled the social, political, and economic processes in particular time periods (Watts,

2008). This development has specifically mirrored international trends in psychology where the neuro turn has come to dominate global psychology in recent years (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). There has been a rapid advancement in the field of neuropsychology over the past 30 years with a significant expansion in both research and clinical aspects (Watts, 2008).

Advances in neuroscience and neurobiology with the aid of technological advancements have facilitated this growth providing new techniques and methods of investigating the brain (Estévez, 2020; Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). The addition of neuropsychology courses follows the general trend of the growth of neuropsychology whilst the contents of the neuropsychology courses in particular time periods echo more specific trends in the neuropsychology field.

The contents of the curriculum in the first-year undergraduate courses have generally remained fixed with the inclusion of traditional neuropsychology topics. These topics include the neurological basis of psychology, sensory processes, perception, mind, consciousness, motivation, emotion, learning and conditioning, thought, language, cognition, and memory. Interestingly, similar topics such as thinking, learning, perception, motivation, and memory were covered in the first-year psychology textbook that was introduced at the very founding of the department (Phillips, 2019). These topics are thus embedded in the historical tradition at UCT that formulates psychology as a behavioural science (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000). Furthermore, the fixtures in the first-year curriculum that include the traditional topics of neuropsychology indicate the general notion that psychology in South Africa has initially been taught with an emphasis on physiology (Watts, 2008).

The second-year curriculum reflects the rise of neuropsychology through the increased focus on specific neuropsychology topics in neuropsychology courses over the years. The second-year curriculum consisted of a cognitive psychology course between 1994-1998, that covered traditional topics of perception, memory, language, learning, attention and

thinking. These topics were in line with the conventional topics in cognitive psychology at the time (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). Between 2007 and 2017, a course called cognition and neuroscience was established with a focus on research methods in neuropsychology, planned action, executive function, emotion, adaptive social functioning, the nervous system, brain development and plasticity, object recognition, and the brain bases of psychopathology. The cognitive neuroscience and abnormal psychology course offered from 2018 onwards included the same topics as the cognition and neuroscience course. Popular topics in cognitive neuropsychology globally include sensation, perception, consciousness, learning and memory, motivation and emotion, and research methods in neuroscience (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012). The recent courses included more topics than the first neuropsychology course mirroring the international development of cognitive neuropsychology in recent years (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013).

The third-year curriculum represents the rise of neuropsychology in the addition of more specific neuropsychology courses in recent years. There was a neuropsychology course from 1994-1999 that covered topics about what neuropsychology is, the structure of the nervous system, elements of neuropsychological assessment, the divisions and pathologies of the brain, the mind-body problem, learning disabilities and psychoimmunology. Between 2000 and 2005, neuropsychology content was incorporated into the brain, behaviour and health course including topics on the physiological determinants of behaviour and the impact of injury on brain function. This course introduced students more broadly to cognitive neuropsychology and clinical neuropsychology. From 2007 till the present, more specific courses that tended to these fields of neuropsychology were offered including applied cognitive science and clinical neuropsychology. The applied cognitive science module included sections on evolutionary psychology, neural networks and connectionism, affective neuroscience, cognition, neurotransmitters and drugs, cognition in neuropsychiatric disorders,

clinical applications, perception, attention, and memory. The topics covered in this course focus on the cognitive aspects of neuropsychology including more conventional topics such as perception, memory, cognition, and attention as well as topics that relate to advancements in the field such as evolutionary psychology and affective neuroscience (Babbar, 2017; Harré & Moghaddam, 2012; Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013).

In 2007, another neuropsychology course was introduced in the third-year curriculum called introduction to clinical neuropsychology. This course consisted of the clinical elements of neuropsychology represented by the following topics: An overview of the history of neuropsychology, research methods in neuropsychology, neuropsychological assessment, general considerations practicing neuropsychologists must make before testing patients, the kinds of behavioural tests that can assist in the diagnosis and understanding of brain dysfunction, overview of the nervous system, neuronal functioning and functional neuroanatomy, major neuropsychological disorders, important cognitive and behavioural characteristics associated with major neuropsychological disorders and questions that neuropsychologists consider significant enough to warrant empirical investigation. The contents of this course follow the developments of clinical neuropsychology globally with a focus on brain dysfunction as well as patient assessment, diagnosis, and treatment (Grimes et al., 2021).

At the honours level, a neuropsychology course was established between 1996-1999 with another neuropsychology course introduced from 2003 till the present. Both courses covered conventional topics such as the structure and function of the nervous system, sensory receptors, lateralisation and hemispheric specialisation, the mind-body problem, consciousness and the unconscious, emotion and motivation, memory and fantasy, dreams and hallucinations, genetic and environmental influences on development, and the self. An affective neuroscience course was introduced in 2011 till the present containing topics that

focus on the relationship between the brain and emotion. These topics consist of the neural substrates of emotion, the experience of emotion, fear learning and memory, emotion and executive control, reward and decision making, emotion recognition, the role of emotion in social interaction, emotion regulation, apathy, depression, stress and anxiety, and emotion, cognition and relationships. Genetic and environmental influences were added in 2012 echoing yet again the rise of evolutionary and genetic psychology in neuropsychology at the time (Babbar, 2017). Although emotion has not always been a popular topic in neuroscience and cognitive psychology due to the subjective nature and vagueness of the subject, the development of neuroscience that aims to conceptualise human behaviour in neuroscientific terms has enabled progress in neuroscientific understandings of emotion (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013).

The most recent addition of neuropsychology courses is the neurological rehabilitation course that was established in 2020. This course consists of more clinical aspects of neuropsychology with a focus on neuropsychological rehabilitation after brain injury. The contents of this course entail various case studies that look at brain injuries that affect memory, emotion, executive functions, and emotion. There is also attention given to interventions with children and the youth justice system as well as factors such as Covid-19 and the South African context. The contents of this course cover many features of clinical neuropsychology that aids in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological aspects of brain injuries (Grimes et al., 2021). The consequences of Covid-19 and the South African context that is characterised by high levels of traumatic brain injuries due to high crime and violence rates are both factors that relate to the contents of this course (De Man et al., 2021; Yen, 2016).

The rise of neuropsychology is also evident in the inclusion of neuropsychology topics in other courses. In the first-year curriculum, two sections have been added in from

2015 onwards, namely, mind and brain, and genetics and evolutionary psychology. The mind and brain topic has been a central concern in neuropsychology and continues to be studied and researched (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012; Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). The inclusion of the genetics and evolutionary topic is synonymous with the growing international interest in evolutionary psychology (Babbar, 2017; Harré & Moghaddam, 2012). Furthermore, between 2009-2022, the second-year developmental psychology course included topics of brain development, cognition and language, memory, and information processing. The inclusion of these topics in recent years is aligned with the growing notion that human development can be understood in neurological terms (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). Lastly, the clinical psychology I course at the second-year level included neurocognitive disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders between 2015-2017. This is related to the general trend of the rise of neuropsychology which now includes a focus on neuropsychological disorders (Grimes et al., 2021).

The addition of neuropsychology courses as well as the inclusion of specific content in both neuropsychology and other psychology courses is related to the rise of neuropsychology globally. Psychology in the 21st century has continued to focus on traditional domains such as thought, emotion, behaviour, and perception, with an increased understanding of these domains in neuropsychological terms (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012). Advancements in neurotechnology such as neuroimaging devices and techniques have led to new possibilities for understanding and intervening with the brain. These advancements align with shifts in biomedical and biological science where progress in these fields has contributed to the knowledge produced in neuropsychology (Pitts-Taylor, 2010; Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). Rose and Abi-Rachid (2013) note that human behaviour has been reduced to the human brain at a molecular level which is plastic and open to environmental influences that enable adaption to interaction and sociality. The human brain has been isolated as the

foundational level for which human behaviour and development are understood. This materialist perspective views people's power to act and perform tasks as cognitive capacities that are grounded in structures and processes of the brain (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012). Thus, the capacity to understand the self and social life has become dependent on neuroscientific knowledge (Pitts-Taylor, 2010).

The progress in understanding and intervening with the brain has led to new possibilities for governing human behaviour. The development of psychology as a discipline was closely tied to the development of theory produced through scientific methods giving psychology the expertise and authority to produce objective knowledge about human life and behaviour (Rose, 1988). Notions of the self, autonomy and identity have been moulded by psychological terms. In the same breadth, neuropsychology is doing the same where knowledge about the brain is produced through scientific methods and regarded as objective truths about human beings. The implications of the rise of neuropsychology mean that various aspects of human life such as understanding abnormal behaviour, child-rearing practices, consumer preferences in the market, criminal injustices and social interactions can be conceptualised and understood through the brain. The rise of neuropsychological understandings of human life has enabled the governance of human behaviour in the name of the brain where self-improvement, management of the mind and fulfilment of potential can be achieved when acting on the brain (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013).

The Decolonial Turn

South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid has left higher education with the challenge of being responsive to both local and global needs (Mamdani, 2019). The transition into democracy in 1994 entailed that transformation within the discipline of psychology should occur, placing greater emphasis on meeting local needs that are socially and culturally useful to the majority of South Africans (Kagee, 2014). The curriculum of psychology is no

exception in this regard where the contents of the curriculum increasingly reflected this transformation initiative. The decolonial turn incorporates the cultural, social, critical, and discursive perspectives in psychology that conceptualise personhood through systems of meaning that are related to social, cultural, and contextual processes (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012). This was most evident in the contents of social psychology, critical psychology, community psychology, political psychology, and the psychology of gender courses. The South African context in the post-apartheid era has been characterised by widespread poverty, inequality, HIV/AIDS, high levels of injury and violence, mental health problems and chronic illness (Yen, 2016). The contents of these courses have related to the social, political, and economic processes at particular time points considering various events that have occurred in the South African context in the post-apartheid era.

Social Psychology. Social psychology has historically developed with international trends influenced by Western-centric methods and theories (Bowman et al., 2008). Although many of these theories are still taught, the curriculum of social psychology at UCT in the post-apartheid era has taken a more critically orientated approach. It has been a permanent fixture in the first-year, second-year and honours curriculum from 1994-2022 and has included content about time-specific social, economic, and political events and processes. Traditional topics have been included such as social identity theory, attitudes, prejudice, stereotypes, racism, contact theory, attributions, intergroup relations, authoritarian personality, identity, crowds and violence, contact and change, relative deprivation research, social influence processes, social categorisation theory, majority and minority influence, obedience to authority, crowd theory, discursive psychology, social cognition, social representations and social constructionism. These topics are aligned with topics in social psychology globally, however, the contents of the topics have been directed towards the South African context. For example, topics such as intergroup relations, racism and prejudice

are contextualised within a multicultural society that continues to be characterised by issues of race and racial conflict (Bowman et al., 2008).

Other specific topics are also related to the South African context. These include whiteness, postcolonial community psychology, intersectionality, trauma, xenophobia, the land question, transformation, nation-building, reading Fanon and Steve Biko, class, gender and sexuality, poverty, inequality, and social justice. These topics are related to the various social, economic, and political events that have occurred in South Africa which reflect the many problems that the country faces (Abegunrin, 2009). For example, the topic of xenophobia was included in 2016, which was a year after the spike in xenophobic attacks that occurred across the nation (Umakant, 2016). The land question topic in the 2017 course outline could also be related to the popular discourse at the time around land expropriation without compensation (Akinola, 2017). Lastly, the trauma topic included in the 2015 module could be related to the context of high levels of violence and abuse within South Africa (Yen, 2016). The inclusion of these social events and the critical approach taken aligns with the South African government's transformation initiative as well as trends in South African psychology that place emphasis on transforming the curriculum to ensure that it is socially relevant (Bowman et al., 2008).

Community Psychology. Community psychology was introduced in the post-apartheid era as a way for psychology to be more socially relevant. In response to critics of mainstream psychology, community psychology aimed to move away from elitist and individualistic therapeutic interventions towards community engagement that is socially responsive to the majority of South Africans mental health needs (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). In the third-year curriculum, a community psychology course existed between 1994-1996 consisting of the following topics: community mental health, primary health care, prevention, community psychological theory and practice, policy, and future development. A community

psychology course was also offered between 1994-1997 at the honours level including topics such as mental health priorities and resources, ecological approaches, psychodynamic approaches, development and social action, intervention- training, support groups, organisational development, trauma work, needs assessment, evaluation, and consultation.

Between 2000-2008, clinical and community psychology was offered in the third-year curriculum, however, the community aspects were marginalised in favour of the clinical ones. At the honours level, community psychology was re-introduced from 2010-2020 with particular emphasis on the South African context consisting of topics such as mental health and poverty, community and power, commitment, accountability and inclusion, community research methods, ethics in community psychology, social support, and community development and social action. The community psychology courses have been discontinued and the content of community psychology was added as a section in the third-year clinical psychology course. A new course called prevention science has been introduced in 2019 till present incorporating features of community psychology, however, with a specific focus on prevention. The marginal feature that community psychology currently holds, and the discontinuation of courses could be related to the 'ghettoisation' of community psychology as a sub-field of psychology that has been criticised for stereotyping disadvantaged communities and people living in them (Carolissen et al., 2010).

The contents in the curriculum of community psychology are related to the social, economic, and political processes in the South African context with a particular emphasis on issues that socioeconomically disadvantaged communities face. These communities are generally characterised by high rates of poverty, unemployment, violence, crime, gangs, and substance abuse (Havenaar et al., 2007). These circumstances have been present since the end of apartheid and continue to persist in the present. Community psychology aims to address these issues within communities focusing on ways to intervene and prevent the harmful

effects on the mental health of people living in them. The need for socially relevant psychological services that can meet the needs of the majority is thus depicted by the contents of the community psychology curriculum which supports social transformation by aligning with the constitution through the inclusion of critical theories and alternate models of therapeutic intervention as well as the attention given to community contexts in South Africa are part of the curricula reform that has taken place in post-apartheid South Africa (Carolissen et al., 2017). Community psychology promotes inclusivity, social justice and equity and has contributed to the decolonial turn in South African psychology (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011).

Critical Psychology. Critical psychology is the most significant course that has contributed to the decolonial turn. As part of the third-year curriculum, critical psychology was offered for the most part from 2000 till now, covering various topics that critique mainstream psychology and those that relate to events occurring in the South African context. These topics consist of conceptions of critical psychology, “race”, racism and prejudice, modernity and post-modernism, critical theory, post-structuralism, social constructionism, discourse and rhetoric, feminism, self and identity, gender, sex, and power, intersubjectivity, and HIV/AIDS. The topics covered included both international conceptions of critical psychology and theories as well as local issues such as AIDS and racism (Foster, 2008).

From 2015 onwards, the contents of critical psychology in the third-year curriculum placed a greater emphasis on decoloniality. The following sections were included: postcolonial psychology, psychology and oppression, liberation psychology, relevance and indigenisation, psychology and sexuality, community social psychology, African feminism, masculinities, decolonial research methods, intersectionality, white epistemologies, Marxism, decolonial psychologies, race studies, critical perspectives on current psychologies, homelessness, and childhood and youth. The inclusion of the relevance and indigenisation

topic can be related to the relevance debates and calls for the indigenisation of the discipline that centres African knowledge systems, which continue to be articulated in South African psychology (Ratele et al., 2018). The increased emphasis on decoloniality can be related to the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall protests that began in 2015. These protests accompanied anger and discontent about institutional racism and the Western-centric curriculum (Lange, 2019). This sparked a renewed interest in the decolonisation of the university curriculum in South Africa eliciting new debates about decolonisation. It has also facilitated the growth of the decolonial turn which has become mainstream in the last five years or so (Mbembe, 2019). This echoed current debates in South African psychology about relevance (Macleod & Howell, 2013).

At the honours level, a postcolonial course was offered in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. The contents of this course have a critical psychology orientation with the inclusion of the following sections: Frantz Fanon and the psychoanalysis of racism, Steve Biko, Paulo Freire, critical consciousness, stereotyping and ambivalence, xenophobia, transformation in higher education, community mobilisation in postcolonial contexts, community empowerment, whiteness, race and transformation, multiculturalism, diversity and non-racialism, postcolonial feminisms and psychology, and liberation psychology. The sections in this course show similar resemblance to some topics in the social psychology, community psychology and critical psychology courses with a critical focus on specific themes present in South Africa such as xenophobia, transformation in higher education, race, and multiculturalism. Overall, the contents of the critical psychology courses include international and local critical theories (Painter & Blanche, 2004). Most of the content relates to social problems in South Africa advocating for social action and transformation. A greater emphasis is placed on decoloniality in 2015 which relates to the social protests at the time.

Political psychology. Political psychology courses have only been offered at the honours level and share similar content with social psychology and critical psychology courses. Offered between 2009-2011, topics included nation-building, attitudes towards immigrants, social justice, restitution and transformation, discursive approaches to identity construction and politics, whiteness studies, political narratives, analysing political discourse, postcolonial identities, gender, citizenship, social policy and global governance, collective identities, social movements, liberation, reconciliation and reparations in post-conflict settings, the psychology of radicalisation, terrorism, and political violence. The contents covered in the political psychology course include topics that relate to social and political events of the time and take a critical approach reflecting the decolonial aspect. The decolonial aspect is also evident in the way political psychology shows how psychology is related to political processes countering the traditional appearance of psychology as apolitical (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012).

The Psychology of Gender. Although the topic of gender has been incorporated into social psychology and critical psychology courses, gender courses have been offered at the honours level since 1994. The contents of the gender courses in the first post-apartheid decade consisted of topics that related to gender issues, feminism, gender identity and debates about gender in South Africa. The contents in the later decade added other topics that focused on difference and representation, the politics of men & masculinities, gender-based violence, reproduction of sexuality, bodies/beauty, intersectionality, feminist methodology, media, and gender, photovoice, sex work and empowerment. Topics on masculinities and gender-based violence can be related to the high rates of sexual violence and abuse towards women in South Africa (Graaff & Heineken, 2017). The contents in the protest years from 2015 included decolonial aspects such as gender, race and colonialism, African feminism, postcolonial feminism, non-normative identities & desires, unsettling knowledge production

on gendered violence and sexual harassment and everyday sexism. The contents of the gender courses relate to international and local debates around gender and identity where the increased emphasis on decoloniality can be related to the social protests of the time (Lange, 2019).

The decolonial turn is represented in the sub-disciplines of social, community, critical, political and gender psychology. These sub-fields have aligned with international and local trends about decolonisation and relevance as well as social and political processes in South Africa (Jansen, 2019; Maldonado-Torres & Cavouris, 2017). The decolonial turn within the field of psychology conceptualises human behaviour in relation to social, political, economic, and cultural processes. This stands in contrast to the neuropsychological perspective that tends to view human behaviour through causal mechanisms in the brain. The cultural/social/discursive perspective views people as active agents in how they interact with the world (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). This perspective emphasises the context governed by certain rules and conventions marked by social, economic, cultural, and political processes in which the active agent exists. The decolonial turn thus represents the side of psychology that problematises the idea of scientific neutrality and considers the subjective nature of human existence that emphasises complexity and context (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012).

General Trends

Research Methods

Research methods, statistics and psychological measurement are all fixtures in the curriculum from first-year to honours level. The contents of the curriculum have also generally remained static over time. The contents of quantitative research have included the scientific method, causality, validity, control problems, single factor designs, factorial designs, correlational studies, quasi-experimental studies small n designs, surveys, observational research, ethics in research, and power and sample size. Qualitative research

topics have consisted of philosophical and theoretical assumptions, politics of research, qualitative research approaches, collecting data, data analysis and evaluation. The contents of qualitative research have focused on different approaches in certain time periods where topics such as participatory action research, decolonial methodologies and Photovoice have been included in recent years. The inclusion of these topics can be related to the decolonial turn. The psychometrics syllabus has contained the BEM inventory, test construction, item analysis, development of norms, reliability 1, validity 1, multifruit-multimethod scaling, and factorial analysis. Contents on psychological measurement have included intelligence and personality testing. The contents of the statistics courses have focused on the same topics consisting of scientific theory and practice, describing relationships, correlation and regression, validity, causation, experimental design, confidence intervals, tests of significance, inference for one mean, comparing two means, inference for two-way tables, power, and analysis of variance.

The contents of research methods that have generally remained constant throughout the curriculum reflect the overall development of psychology as a discipline (van Ommen, 2008). The dominance of scientific methods of research reflected by quantitative research methods, statistics, and psychological measurement represents the notion that psychology is a science that can quantify human behaviour. The dependency that psychology has on natural scientific methods is central to its identity as a 'hard science' where processes of quantification are required for psychological phenomena to be regarded as scientific (Hornstein, 1988). Knowledge derived from scientific methodology is therefore considered credible and becomes the content of authority and expertise on human behaviour. Psychological measurement also contributes to the development of theories around normality and abnormality as well as assessing task suitability (Rose, 1988). This authoritative knowledge lends itself to forms of social management that produce knowledge about human

beings that is seen as objective and universal. The fixture of research methods across all years of study is also embedded in the historical tradition at UCT that has focused on basic psychology (Bohmke & Tlali, 2000).

Clinical psychology: Psychopathology, psychotherapy, and psychological assessment

The courses relating to clinical psychology have maintained the coverage of traditional topics in the curriculum. (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). Psychopathology topics in the second-year, third-year and honours curriculum have included mood, personality, childhood, anxiety, eating, conduct, cognitive, sexual, and intellectual disorders. Schizophrenia, substance abuse and trauma have also featured. The inclusion of topics such as trauma and substance abuse can be related to the social problems in South Africa such as violence, abuse, poverty, and discrimination that contribute to trauma and substance abuse (Havenaar et al., 2007). The clinical courses in the second-year curriculum have focused on theories of abnormality, the diagnostic manual, and issues with classification and treatment. The clinical courses in the third-year curriculum have generally taken a critical approach focusing on critical perspectives on psychopathology, social and cultural contexts of psychopathology and cultural assumptions. Clinical psychology courses in the third-year curriculum have also included psychological interventions such as individual psychotherapy with adults, and children, community-based interventions, psychodynamic therapy, narrative therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, and evidence-based interventions.

Similarly, at the honours level, the psychodiagnostics course offered between 1994-2012 included the conventional topics mentioned above from a critical perspective including contextual factors and culture. The clinical assessment course offered between 1994-2002, 2003-2007 and 2010-2015 consisted of more specific clinical assessment contents such as the clinical interview, mental status examination, assessing family dynamics, assessing children's drawings, intelligence assessment and diagnostic formulation.

Psychotherapy courses at the honours level were offered from 1994 till the present. The focus between 1994 and 2003 was on psychoanalysis theory, hypnotherapy, cognitive therapy, family/group therapy, termination of therapy, production of psychotherapy knowledge, therapy modalities, forecasting and intervention for specific disorders. The courses offered from 2003-2018 focused on self-reflection, containment, observing and understanding, transference, dealing with change, human service work in organisational context, , mental health, education, disability, psychodynamic principles, listening skills, gender, race, and sexuality issues, and managing diversity and power. In 2010, the contents of the course included critical perspectives focusing on counselling as colonialism, race' and language, class issues in counselling, African psychology: culture and diversity, multicultural counselling, working with refugees, motivational interviewing and mentalising and trauma. The additional topics added in 2010 offer more critical and decolonial content in the counselling course.

Overall, the topics in the contents related to clinical psychology align with traditional topics in the field. However, the critical approach taken along with the emphasis on context is not a typical feature in clinical psychology elsewhere, both internationally and locally. The critical approach can be related to the history of UCT and the Department of Psychology which generally took a liberal stance advocating for critical thinking and academic freedom (Mbembe, 2019; Phillips, 2019). The critical approach along with topics such as African psychology, multicultural counselling, race, class, and cultural assumptions can be related to the relevance debates calling for applied psychology to be more appropriate to the South African context (Kagee, 2014).

Health Psychology

Health psychology courses have been offered in the third-year curriculum between 1994-1999 and 2006-2018 as well as the honours curriculum between 1994 and 2020. The

sections in both the courses consist of the following: identification of risk factors in health maintenance, adherence to health recommendations, avoidance of environmental contributions to illness, coping with threats to health, health promotion, stress and health, pain, alcohol and health, eating, sex and health, HIV & AIDS, grief and loss, trauma, foetal alcohol syndrome, diabetes, substance abuse, information and communication, therapeutic techniques for enhancing motivation for health behavioural change and mindfulness. Health psychology aligns with the global trend of positive psychology that promotes wellness and well-being (Hagger, 2010). Some of the topics covered in the courses related to local social issues in South Africa such as HIV/AIDS, foetal alcohol syndrome and trauma (Yen, 2016).

Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychology is a permanent fixture in the first-year, second-year and honours curriculum. These sections include sources of development, genetic and environmental influences, social, emotional, cognitive and personality development, context: cultural, family, peers, positivist orientations, contextualism, Marxism and critical movements, constructivist orientations, cultural relativism, regulation of subjectivity, resilience and risk, adversity, coping, trauma and effects, attachments, separation and loss, violence and neglect, political violence, poverty, intergroup relations and social understanding, racism, gender roles, sexuality, self, ecological, transactional and systems models and children affected by HIV/AIDS. There is also an emphasis on intervening in children's lives which incorporates topics on development in context, policy, measurement issues, community-based interventions, and child rights. The contents of developmental psychology have included traditional topics, critical perspectives as well as social and political events in South Africa that affect human development (Richter & Dawes, 2008). The developmental psychology course offers a hybridised account of human development that

incorporates neuropsychological and social/cultural/discursive perspectives (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012).

The Relevance Framework

The trends in the contents of the curriculum between 1994 and 2022, can be located within the relevance framework. The rise of neuropsychology that closely ties to trends in international psychology can be placed within a market relevance framework. Globally, there has been increased growth in the investment of funds and human resources in neurobiological and neuroscientific research (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). This growth of investment globally has implications for the knowledge produced locally. UCT as an institution does not exist alone but is part of a larger system of networks that provides funding and investment for research initiatives (Jansen, 2019). Furthermore, UCT standing as the best university in Africa that is internationally recognised asserts that the institution must maintain a standard of global excellence that meets the criteria of international bodies. The university functions in alignment with the neo-liberal discourse adopted by the state in the post-apartheid era. Both globalisation and the neo-liberal discourse require the production of knowledge that is reputable and productive and passes the tests of scientific authority based on international criteria (Auerbach & Dlamini, 2019). The knowledge that is empirically validated through scientific methods has always been privileged in the academic space and the rise of neuropsychology in the psychology curriculum is evidence of that. The rise of neuropsychology can therefore be placed within a market relevance framework as it feeds the demands of the global market (Long, 2013).

The decolonial turn on the other hand can be located within a social relevance framework. Many of the topics included in the curriculum have related to social, economic, and political processes in South Africa and focus on social problems. The inclusion of these processes with many approached from a critical perspective has contributed to theoretical

developments that aid the transformation initiative of the state. The inclusion of topics that tend to many of the social problems in South Africa demonstrates how psychology in the post-apartheid years has become increasingly interested in addressing these problems (Long, 2016a). The decolonial turn that has been mainstreamed in recent years also showcases the relation between social unrest events and the response of the discipline to calls for social relevance as a result of these events (Long, 2013). Although the contents of the curriculum of the decolonial turn can be located comfortably in a social relevance framework and do speak to issues of culture to some extent, it cannot be placed within a cultural framework. The curriculum does not incorporate an Afrocentric psychology and there is also no inclusion of indigenous languages (Long, 2016a). This could be related to the caution around culture to avoid cultural essentialism that is characteristic of English-liberal universities (W.Long, personal communication, 21 October 2022).

The research methods, clinical psychology, health psychology and developmental psychology courses include contents that incorporate traditional topics that align with international trends and topics that relate to local events in South Africa. The contents of these courses are therefore internationally benchmarked and socially relevant, containing a mix of market and social relevance and can be placed within both frameworks. This showcases that although the two major trends seem to indicate a split in the discipline, the hybridised nature of some of the courses reflects that the split between market and social relevance may not be as sharp as it seems (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012).

Conclusion

With the decline of historical research in post-apartheid psychology, the lack of research on the curriculum of psychology at UCT in the post-apartheid era, and the absence of a contextual analysis on curriculum studies in South Africa, this study has sought to address this gap. In employing a contextual analysis, new information has been provided for

the Department of Psychology at UCT along with unique insights into the ways in which psychology and society have been related in the post-apartheid era by shedding light on how the discipline of psychology relates to broader historical, social, economic, and political processes. The development of psychology in South Africa has been intertwined with the context in which it has developed and the contents of the curriculum in the post-apartheid era are evidence of that. Two major trends have surfaced, namely, the rise of neuropsychology and the decolonial turn. Both trends offer different perspectives on human behaviour with neuropsychology reflecting the material approach and the decolonial turn representing the cultural/social/discursive approach. These findings highlight the international split in the discipline and the divide between culture and materiality. This split also showcases the tension between local and international demands where the rise of neuropsychology has tended to the demands of the global market, and the decolonial turn has responded to local needs. Although these trends are placed within their respective frameworks of market and social relevance, the courses that incorporate both material and social aspects show promise for the integration of both aspects and speaks to the richness and variation of the discipline of psychology.

The implications of these findings raise questions about how the discipline of psychology should continue to develop and whether there are possibilities for merging these approaches to achieve a hybridised discipline. South African psychology is also presented with unique opportunities to do socially responsive work. Furthermore, this study was limited as not all the records of the course outlines were kept leading to gaps in the dataset. The study did not include the curriculum at the masters level and did not consider how micro processes within UCT could be related to the curriculum. Future research could be conducted at UCT and other South African universities, which include the contents of the curriculum at the masters level and take both macro and micro-processes into account.

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