

CALL

Special Issue of the South African Journal of Psychology

Guest Editors: Brett Bowman, Nick Malherbe and Shahnaaz Suffla

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Three Decades of Psychology in South Africa: Legacies of Hope and Fault Lines of the Future

Thirty years after he was sentenced to life imprisonment, the world watched as Nelson Rolihlala Mandela was inaugurated as the first president of a democratic South Africa. In contrast to the crises of the Cold War, struggles for political independence in Africa, US-backed authoritarian rule throughout Asia and Latin America, US imperial intervention, and the growing condemnation of apartheid that defined the world of his 1964 sentencing, Mandela's installation to the seat of state power was heralded as a victory for planetary democracy; a triumph of hope over despair. As a reflection of this reconciliatory zeitgeist, the dogged divisions and complicities that had so characterised the study, practice, and organisation of psychology in South Africa's deeply racist past were disassembled in the birthing of the expressly nonracial, anti-racist, and emphatically democratic Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) in January 1994. The Society's constitution, perhaps echoing the hopes of a nation, committed South African psychology to social justice, inclusive science, liberatory praxis, and the well-being of all, pledging to mobilise its resources to breaking from oppressive disciplinary legacies and realising the horizon of collective hope that its formation promised.

Three decades have passed – South African psychology has arrived at the horizon of hope it envisaged at its birth. While our contemporary world has seen a number of seismic cultural and technological shifts, the stark structural inequalities both within and across nations continue to privilege some lives over others. Coloniality as a world historical system remains intact. In the context of ongoing wars, genocides, persisting racial and gender injustice, enduring poverty, and planetary malaise, the human condition that South African psychology had so hoped to improve remains socially, politically, and environmentally precarious. Psychologists have begun calling into question the psycho-political undercurrents of hope that once characterised the discipline's future in South Africa. Even during the hopeful moment of Mandela's release from prison, South Africa suffered enormous rates of racialised inequality, tremendous violence backed by the racist National Party, and the beginnings of a neoliberal restructuring of the economy. Globally, 1994 also saw the Rwandan Genocide, continued occupation in Palestine, and a civil war in Yemen.



In 2024, we will commemorate thirty years since PsySSA's watershed birth, representing a timely and important opportunity to interrogate the gains, yields and victories but also losses, deficits and disappointments that have defined the three decades of the South African psychology that PsySSA had so hopefully promised in 1994. As co-editors of this special issue, we invite theoretical, empirical, and creative contributions¹ focussed not only on reviewing, documenting and critiquing this period in the life of South African psychology, but also contextualising the discipline, practice, and organisation of psychology in the service of charting possible courses for its futures.

Possible contributions could include but are not limited to the following topics:

- Critical appraisals of the state of South African psychology and its sub-disciplines in the context of the 1994 moment with a focus on trajectories of the future
- Analyses of the promises and shortcomings of South African psychology's knowledge project since democracy
- Theorising psychology in South Africa
- Assessments of mental health delivery against the ideals of democracy
- Reviews of the promises and pitfalls of post-democratic organised psychology in South Africa in the global context
- Interrogating the form, function and future of a psychology of hope for South Africa today

Important Dates

- Manuscripts must be submitted online at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sap> by no later than the 15 April 2024
- Manuscripts selected for publication will be submitted to the publisher by 30 July 2024
- Publication of the special issue October 2024

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¹ Creative contributions could include but are not limited to poetry, prose, static artwork, videographic (dynamic) artwork, photographs, music and other audio recordings. All creative submissions must be accompanied by a written artistic rationale of 1000-1500 words that conforms to all the style guidelines of the SAJP. The rationale should explicitly articulate the relationship between the creative submission and the theme(s) of the special issue. Creative submissions are not peer reviewed but are selected by the editors in consultation with creative experts as required. The technical specifications for submissions must conform with Sage's guidelines available [here](#).