A PSYCHOTHERAPY CLINIC IN A TOWNSHIP -

EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

by

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This document is dedicated to my dear parents, Solly and Tuksy Tshesane, and to my loving

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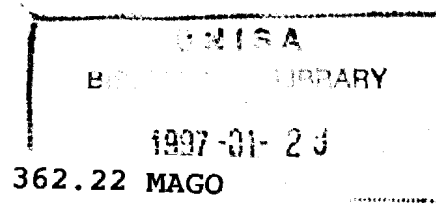I took on the role of student.

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The Lord, for giving me the strength to carry on.

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SUMMARY

This study is about the exploration of the concept of community, using the Mamelodi

Counselling Clinic as the context for the exploration. The members who got involved in different

phases in the running of the clinic, went through the process of defining and redefining the

concept. This process was based on their experiences and their coevolved reality of what the

concept means. These experiences will be discussed and in the end, a punctuated end product

of the coevolved meanings will given. Furthermore, an account will be given as to how the

running of the clinic evolved with the changes in meaning. The author's perception of the

division between clinical and community psychology was altered as a result of the findings in

the study and this will also be discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concept of community has been defined and redefined over the years. This process of redefining is important because it has implications for the way in which psychologists have entered and intervened in communities.

Obviously how the notion of "community", as well as the organisation and attributes of a specific target community, are conceptualised, has far-reaching implications. It affects not only the community worker's way of entering and choice of interventions in the community, but also determines her acceptability and her mobility. In short, her effective role as an agent of change ultimately depends on a negotiated and consensually validated construction of what community entails. (Oosthuizen & Van der Worm, 1991, p.6)

The aim of the study is to provide a description of the evolution of the concept community within the context of the Mamelodi Counselling Centre or Clinic (the two words, centre and clinic, will be used interchangeably throughout this paper).

The evolution of the concept of community is an important one in this context, as it instructed the people involved in the Mamelodi Clinic to think differently about their involvement with people in Mamelodi and further instructed them to think differently about their work and what "community psychology" implies.

In providing the above descriptions, the author will illustrate, through a punctuated end product of the process, that people do not go out to serve a community, but that they create a community for themselves, in which their service (such as that provided at the Mamelodi Counselling Centre) can be utilised. The author uses the idea of a punctuated end product as it is her contention that meaning is something that is always constructed and that is open to negotiation. Meanings are generated through a process. This process is continually open to renegotiation and redefinition and, therefore, to a fluid construction of meaning. Anderson and Goolishan (1988) suggest that meaning is not something that people arrive at, but something that they generate through communication with those who participate in the communication process. It is therefore important that the process be seen in terms of this fluidity of constructed meanings. This is why the author speaks of the definitions that the members give in the final analysis as an arbitrarily punctuated end product, since an end product can never be "reached".

In looking at the punctuated end product, one notices that the meaning of the concept of community varies for different people at different times. This makes the distinction that is created between community and clinical psychology as arbitrary as the concept of community. One of the ways of identifying how clinical and community psychology differ, is to think of clinical psychology as involving working with people within the confines of the consultation office, whereas community psychology would mean going out to serve a community. The implication of "going out to serve a community" is that one

takes on the role of a community psychologist and in the process, is stripped of the roles of a clinical psychologist. The community is then something that exists as a separate entity, something in and out of which one can move. Usually the community is also perceived of as something that is unfamiliar and something out to which one has to reach, in contrast with the familiar office and appointment-based clinical work.

This distinction is challenged in this study and this will therefore have implications for the distinction between clinical and community psychology. The study will attempt to indicate that a community is something that people create for themselves in both clinical and community psychology.

In tracing the evolution of the concept of community, the author will use a constructivist epistemology. In using this epistemology, not only is the end product of the evolution of the concept of community important, but also the process in which the people underwent to reach the different meanings. In exploring the experiences of the people who were involved, the reader will obtain a fuller picture, which will give insight into the attributed meanings of the concept itself. This will also make give the reader a broader understanding of the context within which the process of evolution took place.

The author will use the rest of this chapter to discuss the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 consists of a literature review. The author uses a constructivist epistemology to discuss the literature review. A brief account of constructivist epistemology is given so as to familiarise the reader with its origins and basic assumptions and to show how the epistemology instructs perceptions around the concept of community. Then an overview of societal changes is given around the idea of community. These changes are mostly changes that took place in the United States of America, but they do give a general overview of what has happened all over the world. What is different, is the times at which

these changes occurred in different places. From this point, the author goes on to discuss the societal changes from a theoretical perspective with a view to exploring how the concept of community itself has changed as a result of the societal changes. South African history that relates to the idea of community will be discussed and this will also be linked to South African literature that relates to the changes regarding the concept. The aim of such an approach in the literature review, is to contextualise different definitions of the concept of community; namely the context in which the definitions were formulated. It is also the author's contention that the literature on the concept of community is always in flux and never static. In tracing the literature, it also becomes necessary to punctuate from a time perspective in order to indicate how the concept has been defined over time.

Chapter 3 gives a justification for the research methodology. This will explain why the phenomenological approach is perceived as being the most appropriate for the interviews that are conducted in the study. The rest of the chapter consists of recorded interviews conducted with members and ex-members of the Mamelodi Counselling Centre. These interviews give an account of the process of the evolution of the concept of community and of how the members experienced the process.

Chapter 4 depicts the common ideas that came to the fore in the individual interviews. These common ideas will be discussed in relation to the evolution of the concept of community and the individual experiences surrounding these ideas will be related to each another. The emphasis is also on the validity of each individual definition of the concept. Finally, it is argued that people do not go out to serve a community, but that they create a community in which their services can be used. This kind of thinking challenges the distinction that is created between clinical and community psychology and recommendations are made in this regard.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY

Introduction

According to Gergen (1982), there was a major shift in basic epistemological orientations or models of knowledge after the nineteenth century. Up until then, knowledge was viewed as an objective reality. Logical empiricists traced the source of knowledge to events in scientific orientation which focused on cause and effect. This kind of model, which was based on an "exogenic perspective", further depicted daily events in terms of very stable and predictable ideas.

Plack and Einstein (in Nel, 1992), conducted investigations that challenged the old model of thinking and questioned the old set of rules. They introduced ideas of relativity to physics, and theories of the quantum which were based on a new set of rules. This "new science" emphasised uncertainty rather than predictability, questioned absolute truths and a final reality, and focused more on an "endogenic perspective". The endogenic perspective is one that suggests that humans have inherent tendencies to think, categorise, or process information and it was these tendencies that became of major importance. It was then proposed that humans are critically dependent on the cognitive processing of information rather than on the world as it is (Efran, Lukens & Lukens, 1988; Gergen, 1985; Nel, 1992). The endogenic perspective was taken further in the psychological field by psychologists such as Kelly who applied it on a social level where people's communication with each other leads to an agreed upon meaning about events and objects. Languaging thus becomes an essential feature of the process of acquiring knowledge.

Language creates the illusion that we can look out and "see" a separate outside world. In fact, we never actually leave the domain of our own activity or interaction. In this epistemology, there really is no independent "object" of study. Since there is nothing objective, there is also nothing subjective. There is only "objectivity in parentheses". (Efran et al., 1985, p.25)

In simple terms, this means that knowledge is not something that we possess in our heads, but something that people create together.

This epistemology subscribes to the view that social systems, of which individuals are a subset, are communication networks which are distinguished in and through language (Bateson, 1972, 1979; Gergen 1982; Maturana & Varela, 1987; Scarr, 1985; Von Foerster, 1981). "By language, we refer specifically to the linguistically mediated and contextually relevant meaning that is interactively generated. ... reality is negotiated meaning that does not occur outside the context of human linguistic interaction" (Goolishian & Anderson, 1988, p.131). They further suggested that organisations and systems are a product of communication rather than communication being a product of organisation. Maturana (1978) also states that meaning is dialogically constructed. These ideas of constructing a reality are called constructivism and social constructionism (Hoffman, 1990). Social constructionists place more emphasis on social interpretation and the intersubjective influence of language, family and culture; constructivism places more emphasis on the operations of the nervous system as it makes representations of the world. The two, however, remain interrelated as they both insist that reality is constructed and does not exist objectively. They will be used interchangeably in this document, as they are considered by the author to be very close in meaning.

A Social Construction of the Concept of Community

Relevant to this study is how the concept of community has had to change with changes in epistemology. Given the paradigm that exists in constructivism, that is, that reality is not something that exists independently, the concept of community has had to change to fit in with this kind of thinking. Community, according to this epistemology, is not something that exists on its own as an objective entity. It exists only when people language about it. The meaning of the concept is then something that changes as people language about it. Therefore, according to constructivist thinking, community is not an absolute entity, but an entity that is created by languaging.

"Community is not a received truth, something out there to which individuals simply relate; rather, a community is what people define it to be" (Hunter & Riger, 1986, p.64). This is linked to the symbolic interaction theory of sociology (Luckman & Berger, 1966). According to this definition of community, community does not transcend space and time. It is space/time specific and ceases to exist outside the realms within which it is being defined. This way of perceiving community means that any definition of community has some validity and should be looked at within the context in which the definition is formulated. Community is what people define it to be within that context.

One way in which this thinking is supported practically is when people form communities to cope with a particular situation at one point or another. Bozzoli (1987) describes how the disenfranchised people of South Africa used the process of community formation to cope with dispossession. This will be discussed in detail later.

Oosthuizen and Van der Worm (1991, p.13) perceive community in terms of the ecosystemic view:

Consequently, we have come to believe that the evolution of all relationships (whether personal or professional) can be described as the growth and discovery of a community. In the same vein, psychological knowledge and practice should be seen as a socially constructed "community" of shared knowledge and skill. Hence community psychology is no more a case of "visiting communities" but one of "co-creating communities".

This implies that the concept is a process through which a shared ecology of ideas is evolved. It emphasises the role of the creation of communities in the process of defining them. It further demystifies the idea of finding communities but rather emphasises that when people think they have found a community, they have actually created one. Anderson (1983) supports this in his conceptualisation of communities as something that people create. He says that communities are not solid, timeless givens, but are realities that people create for themselves. In this sense he would be in harmony with what Oosthuizen and Van der Worm (1991) mean when they talk about communities as socially constructed, and of not visiting communities but creating them. This, in essence, would be a constructivist perception of the concept of community.

McMillian and Chavis (1986) emphasise the elements that create a sense of community. They say that it is not a given truth that people living together in an area will be a community. They would first have to define themselves as one or be defined by others as one at a specific point in time. Their definition would then be valid if the context and their conception were taken into consideration.

Literature such as that of Oosthuizen and Van der Worm (1991) appears to indicates that people dealing with the concept now tend to define it differently every time they converse about it. The shift in epistemology also allows for people to take into account the observer defining the concept of community and acknowledges the observer's endeavour in defining it for themselves. In acknowledging the observer's endeavour to define the concept, it becomes significant to acknowledge also the context in which the concept under discussion is being defined. This makes it possible for others to understand how that particular meaning was generated.

The author will now go on to explore the shifts that have occurred in society regarding the concept of community. This will be done by giving a historical background of changes in society and how people have dealt with the changes. From there, a theoretical perspective will be given on how the concept has evolved in the literature to fit with societal changes. In this way, the contexts within which the concept has evolved will be discussed so as to illustrate the suitability of the definitions within those contexts. This is congruent to the constructivist epistemology, which emphasises the importance of understanding contexts within which meanings about concepts are generated.

From Prehistoric Man to Modern Times

The prehistoric human lived in isolation, depending on plantation and hunting as ways of living and as ways of providing for his basic needs. However, to deal with external threats such as wild animals and drought, man had to find other people and to form connectedness to conquer the threats. Loneliness also played an important role in the search for others.

Man is torn from the primary union with nature which characterized animal existence. Having at the same time reason and imagination, he is aware of his aloneness and separation ... He could not face this state of being for a second if he could not find new ties with his fellow man which replace the old ones, regulated by instincts. (Gilmore, 1976, p.11)

People then got together to form a sense of connectedness in villages and to create an organisation which would protect them and ensure their survival. It can therefore be said that people were forced into a community by constraining physical needs and isolation. Enormous physical barriers to survival could only be overcome in a collective fashion (Gilmore, 1976).

This connectedness and living together in close proximity also meant that some form of order had to be found and agreed upon so that people could live in harmony. With this came possibilities of norms and values, and consensus was reached about behaviour that was appropriate for communal living and survival. This was the emergence of communities. They were geographically bound, and people who identified with each other in one way or other, lived together in designated areas. A sense of belonging emerged out of this process and strong networks of support systems were formed. This way of life continued until the industrial revolution, which led to major shifts in societal organisations (Gilmore, 1976). According to Bendix (1993) the Industrial Revolution started in the fourteenth century but displayed its full impact only towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Because it changed the economic order, it had an immense impact on social structures, and on the

perceptions of individuals and society at large. Thus the Industrial Revolution was made up of a number of processes which occurred simultaneously. These were: industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation. These processes will be discussed separately to bring out the essence of each. It must, however, be borne in mind that they existed simultaneously and not as distinct entities as is discussed.

Industrialisation brought about a different emphasis on the economic subsystems of communities. These changes in economic subsystems represent the main focus of change in the Industrial Revolution. "Basic changes are from hand labour to use of machinery in production and from centralizing manufacturing processes in the home to centralizing them in factories" (Edwards & Jones, 1976, p.30). It stands to reason that work lost its initial role of communal survival and communal care in the form of agriculture and hunting and took on a new meaning of economic necessity. Man had to sell his labour, to perform tasks which prescribed limits and to assist in producing goods whose end product he did not see, let alone own. The meaning of work was lost for him, for work now became depersonalised. He had to seek a new identity for himself.

Very significant in these new ways of belonging were membership of the working class and the trade unions. Changes in lifestyle came about through the introduction of income and the differentiation between members of the working class and the owners and managers of industries. People then had to reorganise themselves around these lifestyles and to create new ways of belonging. According to Bendix (1993), the people saw the principle of industrialisation as keeping the poor poor because any wage increase would mean a cut in profit for the managers of the industries (Bendix, 1993; Edwards & Jones, 1976; Heller, 1989).

With urbanisation, that is, the increase in the number of people in urban areas, came different sets of lifestyles and new forms of constellations of people in areas. This also led to a decline in the communal autonomous character of locality, as people moved to different areas. This loss of communality and the sense of autonomy and belonging which depended on communities that were defined in terms of geographical boundaries, led people to seek new ways of belonging. In the urban areas, the populations became larger and consisted of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups, which were characterised by a highly differentiated division of labour.

Modernisation, which also took place with industrialisation and urbanisation, resulted from the increasing geographic and social mobility of residents as well as other factors such as better means of transportation, better communication and ways of networking. Communication channels improved as a result of technological innovation and advancement. This allowed individuals to transcend geographical barriers, as contact could be maintained by telephones, newspapers, television and visiting across distances, unheard of centuries before. This opened up possibilities for people to carry on a shared identity even beyond geography. It also created the potential for relating with people who were not part of the already established communities based on geography (Edwards & Jones, 1976).

According to Bendix (1993), another change that occurred at a societal level as a result of the Industrial Revolution was a shift from a community orientation to a more individualistic orientation among people. With the loss of communal ties that were based on geography, people began to be more concerned about their own individual needs and competed with each other in terms of labour and economic viability. It became an issue of survival of the fittest and thus communal interests became de-emphasised. The role of the

extended family also became de-emphasised, and the focus was on the family unit in its nuclear form.

The implication of these changes was that people could no longer rely on links that had been established in the past. The communal spirit that had been maintained in the geographical sense had to shift with the process of industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation and this meant that other ways of relating had to be established. With this, sociologists and anthropologists had to explain the different ways of connecting that emerged and to change the use of the concept of community at a conceptual level.

What follows is the role of psychology in the definition of the concept of community and how the concept evolved to fit in with the shifts on a societal level. Different clusters of the definitions of the concept of community will be discussed. This discussion will be carried out using the contexts as well as a time frame of definitions, in order to give a fuller picture of how the different meanings were generated. These clusters further acknowledge the changes that took place in society and put these changes into a theoretical perspective. The validity of each definition in its contexts will also be acknowledged, and this will make it possible for the reader to understand the validity of these definitions in their own right at the times that the concept was defined using those specific ideas, and also taking into account the influences of societal changes.

Community psychology will first be discussed briefly to give an indication of how its development has been affected by the different clusters of meanings of the concept of community. The two models of community psychology, that is, the mental health model and the social action model, will be discussed.

According to Butchart and Seedat (in Nicholas & Cooper, 1990a), these models are the two

models of community psychology most suitable for discussion within the context of the

definitions, because they are viewed as being dialectically opposed and, also, because they

delineate moments in historical transformation about the concept of community.

The Start of Community Psychology with the

Definition of Community as Geographical

Psychology's interest in communities came after the Second World War (Lazarus,

1983). The field of community psychology grew out of clinical psychology and psychiatry.

It was in the 1950's that psychologists started expressing their discontent with the field of

psychology and the approaches used in that field. Dissatisfaction with the medical model

being used at that time in psychology and with the inequality of facilities for mental health,

especially for the poor, and lack of manpower prompted psychologists to find new ways of

carrying out their work. The Joint Commission Report that was given to the government of

the United States of America by the Joint Commission of Mental Health and Illness

suggested a community approach. This approach involved reaching out to people in their

areas of dwelling, so that they would not have to go out to the limited medical facilities to

seek help (Hunter & Riger, 1986; Mann, 1978; Rappaport, 1977; Zax & Specter, 1974).

According to Lazarus (1983) it was also around this time (after the Second World

War and around the events of the Joint Commission of Mental Health and Illness in the

United States) that mental health professionals, with the introduction of the Community

Mental Health Act of 1963, decided that people could no longer be treated in institutions.

This was both an innovative and a reactive step. It was innovative because it was decided that it was better to treat people in their natural environment. It was also a reaction to the large number of war veterans who needed to be institutionalised, which had resulted in a shortage of facilities. The shift then was towards a community-based treatment, where patients could be treated in natural settings. The definition of community by those who were involved in this process of change at that point was based on catchment areas. The emphasis was on natural, ongoing structures of social relationships at a local level. Mental health facilities were designated to these catchment areas to reach out to these "communities".

The intention of this process was not simply to shift the locus of care, but to incorporate into the therapeutic process a new construction of what constitutes mental illness. "Certainly mental disorder is not a private misery of an individual; it often grows out of and also contributes to the breakdown of normal sources of social support and understanding, especially the family" (Hunter & Riger, 1986, p.58). It was around this period that community was defined (as a geographical entity) for the first time in the field of psychology, although there were still difficulties in terms of moving away from the medical model to a model that fits in with community psychology thinking. (The focus here would be on the individual and his environment as opposed to an intrapsychic approach embedded in the mental health model, which stems from a medical approach). The mental health model focused on mind and body matters and was person-blaming, leaving out the effect of the environment.

Butchart and Seedat (in Nicholas & Cooper, 1990a) give a critique of community psychology along the same lines. They state that the approach is one that recognises the

needs of the poor, but that does not confront the environmental problems that lead to the problems. It therefore helps to maintain the status quo and focuses more on getting people to adjust to their conditions.

The mental health model of community psychology is based on the definition of community as geographically defined. The intention of the model is to prevent mental illness in individuals who live in clearly defined catchment areas. It assumes that by alleviating harmful environmental conditions within the catchment area (a geographically defined area), people will become mentally healthy. These environmental conditions are said to be a consequence of the social and environmental processes going on in those areas. However, the irony of the assumptions is that the description of diagnosis and treatment of the people in the catchment areas is based on psychiatric theories. This then means that, to the people using this model, the absence of mental illness is an indication of a mentally healthy community. No cognisance is given to subjective suffering and as a result, undesirable environmental conditions are simply ignored if they do not result in mental illness (Seedat, Cloete & Shochet, 1988).

The model emphasises that mental health resources have to be decentralised from the hospitals to reach people sooner. Murrell's (1973) definition of community which puts the mental health model in perspective with the medical approach is what he calls the doctors' definition of community. He states that they defined community at that time as **the locale from which patients are drawn, and for which agencies are responsible.**

Minar and Greer (1969, p.258) define geographical community as: "a group of people living in close proximity and occupying a given geographical area". According to Hunter and Riger (1986), this kind of community can be defined as an **ecological and sustenance community.** The members of this kind of community relate to each other with a sense of community and have what they perceive to be homogeneity. Heller (1989) describes this as community of locality or a territorial community.

The people of a community of specific geographic space; they do have enough shared concern to see to it that the means exist for meeting their daily needs; and they do engage in enough collaborative endeavour to provide the order and continuity by which their community can endure, even as patterns of living change and as people come and go. (Edwards & Jones, 1976, p.11)

These, in the author's view, constitute the qualities of the geographically defined communities. The changes that came with industrialisation led to a disintegration of this way of living (Gilmore, 1976).

Other authors, such as Groenewald (in Coetzee, 1989), have defined and worked with community as geographically bound. Groenewald argues that this kind of community may or may not have common ethnic or racial or class characteristics. Commonality is based purely on the same geographical space. Controversy exists then about whether the mere sharing of geographical boundaries leads to or is necessarily based on homogeneity,

even though these authors are in agreement about the concept of community being geographically bound.

For Parsons (in Groenewald, 1989), the concept of community means that people use social action as their way of expressing culturally determined patterns of behaviour that ensure their survival in an area in which they find themselves. In his view, this means that people's way of adapting to the environment is predetermined, if not prescribed, by the group in their geographical area, or sometimes the government. Edwards and Jones (1976) also define community as the merging of common habitat, common concerns and common culture that gives societal life a distinguishable form and character at the level of locality. They argue that these people would be sharing commonly defined behaviours, as well as concerns and culture and this is what makes them homogeneous.

Suttles (1972) describes how neighbourhoods can create communities. He says that the residents can form a set of attitudes and categories and act according to them. This keeps outsiders out and attracts newcomers who fit in with the definitions. "Communities do lead to social control, but whatever sentiments are engendered by neighbourhoods are strictly tied to functional realities and can in no sense be treated as gratuitous expressive solidarity" (Suttles 1972, p.48). This point of view suggests that not only is geographical community something that is voluntary and consciously formed and agreed upon, but also an entity that can be found in other contexts where people need to stick together for their survival and their identity. He goes on to call this geographical community a "defended neighbourhood" (p.49). This view is in keeping with the communities that were found during the times of prehistoric man.

This way of looking at the concept of community in the psychological field was actually incongruent with what was happening at a societal level at that time. By the time psychologists were thinking of communities in this way, the Industrial Revolution had already taken place and many shifts had occurred in terms of geographically defined communities. However, after this, psychology started drawing on other fields such as sociology and anthropology and fitting in with what was going on at that time. It was then realised that sociologists had gone on to consider other factors that influenced the definition of the concept of community. They had gone beyond the confines of locality to explain the dynamics at play in society as a result of the Industrial Revolution. At that point sociologists had also realised that advancement in technology due to industrialisation and urbanisation had had an impact on how people reorganised the forms of community from geographical boundaries, to a wide variety of ways of relating with each other. According to Minar and Greer (1969), what finally created a bond for people was a state of mind on the part of those involved, a sense of loyalty and interdependence that was not restricted to geographical boundaries only.

The author will now go on to discuss the different clusters of the definitions of community that were identified in the field of psychology as a result of what was drawn on from sociology. The social action model of community psychology will be discussed later, under the definition of community which is deemed appropriate for that model.

Community as Social Relations

Dunham (1977) says that the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation made it difficult for certain people to find their place in a geographically defined community and this led them to resort to large impersonal organisations in search of a sense of belonging. He maintains that the existence of such communities is the result of people being unable to rely on community as geographically defined because it falls short of their need for affiliation. He describes this community as a process. He argues that community as process is not an indisputable reality but something that people create. It becomes a process because individuals are always in an interactive process of creating communities. This makes it a social phenomenon, as the process is one of social interaction. Chavis and Newbrough (1986) also define community in terms of social relations. According to them, a community can be defined as any set of social relations that are bound together by a sense of community. Because of the above, social structures began to form beyond geographical areas. These constitute what is called relational community (Heller, 1989).

The most important aspect of this perception is that the relationship can exist beyond the confines of locality. Blokland (1991) defines community as a fluctuation of people organised around an attempt to find a solution to a problem or to fulfil a need which affects both the individual in the group and the group as a whole. This definition links with the four elements that McMillian and Chavis (1986) mention as important to a sense of community.

These are:

1.   membership - belonging or personal relatedness;

2.   influence - a sense of mattering;

3.   reinforcement - integration and fulfilment of needs;

4.   shared emotional connectedness - common history, place, time, and

experience.

These, according to McMillian and Chavis (1986), are indicative of a sense of

community, which they define as the existence of opportunities for membership, for

influence, for mutual needs to be met and for shared emotional support. Van der Watt

(1991) also defines community as a group of people sharing similar interests with the above-

mentioned qualities.

Howard (1991) defines community as individuals who share the same culture. He

argues his point by indicating different groups such as parents, adolescents and racial

groups. Here a need to identify with others who share a commonality is identified and

relationships are developed around this need.

Community as a Social Stratification Construct

One of the other influences of industrialisation is the definition of community in terms

of social stratification.

The groups in a community and all persons in the community are ranked on

the basis of such variables as social prestige and power. The social prestige

ranking is linked directly with the community's social class structure, that is a hierarchical arrangement of different social classes, each class containing people who associate as social equals, sharing a distinctive life style and having about the same relationship of subordination or superordination to any higher or lower social class. (Edwards & Jones, 1976, p.43-44)

What had taken place on a societal level is that people started seeking out others with whom they identified, based on the class to which they belonged. A good example was how the joining together of working class people as a community, and the formation of trade unions. Thus, in this way, people of different classes could identify with each other as a community based on class differentiation.

This way of defining community has implications of power. Warren (1963) also uses as one of his definitions of community the idea of community as a distribution of power. This also fits with the political issues that exist around the concept. He states that certain members of the community exercise much more influence over what goes on than others do. This distribution of power goes hand in hand with the distribution of wealth and therefore also with social class differentiation. Social privileges are restricted to the minority or the majority group that is in power, and it becomes difficult for those below to make decisions about their own fate as well as to acquire social mobility. The image created here is an apt description of the South African context, where power and economic distribution were and still are determined by a powerful white minority.

Community psychologists, working mostly with disadvantaged groups, use the concept of community to denote minority and ethnic groups and this gives it a political

element similar to the one discussed above. This political aspect arises as a result of the economic and political disempowerment with which these minority groups are faced. They mention the Puerto Ricans, the black people, and the Red Indians as communities and these ideas suggest a perceived homogeneity among these groups (Tapanya, 1989).

People are therefore brought together by common needs and problems and also a need to belong. Warren (1963) talks about the gay community and emphasises that this close-knit community is formed because of the secrecy flowing from a fear of stigmatisation and also because of the stability offered by the common identity. Community in this author's view implies the process which allows for the interaction of members, the provision of an identity and a sense of belonging. The gay community in this regard becomes a classical example. Ross (1977) perceives the concept in the same way. He, however, discusses the aged as a created community in their old age homes. It is obvious that social relations based on common issues such as disempowerment and discrimination are the gist of the definition of community by these authors. The definitions further fit in with the social action model.

This model focuses on groups that are formed due to disempowerment, disenfranchisement, and discrimination. It is a community psychology model that emphasises the redressing of social inequalities in society. It focuses on those people who are disadvantaged as a result of the structures of society. This would include people who are struggling as a result of oppression, which would include women in most patriarchal societies, black people in South Africa and gays in most societies. This model views community process and intergroup relations in terms of conflicting interests between groups. It is a model that redresses the conflict between structural organisations of society and the

human needs of the poor and the discriminated against. According to Butchart and Seedat:, "[i]t represents an alternative perspective to the Mental Health approach insofar as it proposes that social inequalities, economic exploitation, and political powerlessness are responsible for the genesis of high visibility social and mental health problems" (in Nicholas & Cooper, 1990a, p.82). In this model, problematic societal structures within which communities are embedded are attacked in the form of radical collective action (Seedat et al., 1988; Lazarus, 1983).

In summary, one can say that the effect of social stratification on the societal level led to psychologists being able to conceptualise communities based on the social structures that have implications for power. This way of defining community is valid in the same way as the other definitions mentioned in the above sections are valid, for as long as the context of the definitions is depicted as done above. It is hoped that the reader will be able to perceive the validity of the definitions within the depicted contexts.

What follows now is a brief account of South African history, specifically from the point of view of societal changes and their impact on the definition of the concept of community. The author views this as important as it will portray the context in which the thesis is being written. It will give an indication of the current issues which psychologists in South Africa are facing in their endeavour to practice community psychology. Furthermore, and more specifically, it will put into context the ideas with which the people who became involved in the Mamelodi Clinic started off.

The author will go through the societal changes first, and then go on to explain these from a meta-level of theory in the same way as was done with the literature that was more relevant to the United States.

Societal Changes Around the Concept of

Community within the South African Context

In the South African context, it has become a matter of common sense that the different racial and ethnic groups have an objective existence and that differences in the quality and style of life between these groups are a function of ethnicity and culture (Butchart & Seedat, 1990b). The concept of community has been used to maintain these differences as common perception. This common sense is defined as "uncritical and largely unconscious ways of perceiving and understanding the world that have become common" (Butchart & Seedat, 1990b). Tabata (1980) describes this idea of common sense as a prescribed reality. The concept of community has also been used to perpetuate this common sense. The history of the Afrikaner and the black South African around the concept of community will be discussed to bring out the essence of this argument.

Fick (1994) contends that the sense of community among Afrikaners emerged a long time ago, dating back as far as the 17th century. He proceeds from the fact that the Dutch farmers (from whom the Afrikaners are descended) in South Africa decided to cut their ties with both the Dutch in Holland and the Dutch East Indian Company. This was because the Dutch East Indian Company had dictated to them who they should sell their produce to and at what price. They were disenchanted with the dictatorship and decided to function independently. It was at that time that the Dutch farmers evolved a community, in which they supported and protected each other against the threat of the Dutch East Indian Company. Fick (1994) perceives this as the first indication of the emergence of an Afrikaner community.

The reason for the author's punctuation of the concept of community around the events of the Great Trek, as opposed to the severing of ties with the Dutch, is that the idea of the "volk" evolved at that time. The community, "die volk", was expressed in a more concrete way and was much more emphasised as an identity at that time. It gained impetus with the struggle of the Afrikaner against the British colonisation of South Africa and to some extent against the black African. This struggle led to the formation of collective communities such as the "Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners" and later the Broederbond. These communities ensured the survival of the Afrikaans people and the maintenance of values that were important to them (Le May, 1971).

The Great Trek was an attempt to escape British domination and to preserve the Afrikaner's national identity (Le May, 1971; Tabata, 1980; Walker, 1960). The loss of identity seemed to be a danger, especially since Afrikaners had been mixing with black people as a result of the abolition of slavery by the British. Le May (1971, p.13) accurately summarises this:

It is not so much their freedom that drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on an equal footing with the Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion ... wherefore we rather withdraw in order thus to preserve our doctrine in purity.

From the above, it seems that an account of the events of the Great Trek will, firstly, create a better understanding of the evolution of the concept of community in South Africa and secondly, further highlight the important role of land disputes in this evolution at that time.

The word "trekkie", widely used at this time, is also seen to imply community.

The Great Trek

The Boers (Afrikaners) moved in small groups (trekkies) as this was convenient for the grazing of cattle and for their own safety. This also meant that it would be less likely that they could be exterminated simultaneously. The trekkies continued to move up, some going towards the Transvaal and others towards the East Coast. In this process they met some of the black tribes with whom they came into conflict. In most of these cases, the Afrikaners won the battles because they were better equipped with guns and horses. The black tribes fought them using assegais as their main weapons. One of the tribes which the Afrikaners fought and had victory over were the Matebeles, at that time under the rule of Msilikasi. As was usually the case, this tribe fled, occupying land across the Limpopo, while the trekkies took over their land (Walker, 1960).

One group of trekkies which ventured towards the east coast under the leadership of Retief came across a strong African tribe under the rule of Dingaan and this became an important event in the history of South Africa. Dingaan, the ruler of the powerful Zulu monarchy, was Tshaka's successor and assassin. Natal, which is on the east coast of the country, was occupied and ruled by the Zulu monarchy. It was a beautiful and agriculturally rich country. It looked attractive to Retief and he wanted to settle there.

It is necessary at this time to explain the differences between the British and the Boers' conception of land ownership on the one hand, and that of the black Africans' on the other hand. For the British and the Boers, land was property that could be owned by a person, and such ownership gave the owner rights to dictate terms about the land. So land was property that could belong exclusively to a person or a group. Black Africans, on

the other hand, perceived land as communal property that could not be owned by any one person.

> And since Bantu law knew nothing of an out-to-out alienation of the land on
>
> which the life of the tribe depended, but merely the grant of hunting, grazing
>
> and such privileges as might cover the use of whatever had its being on that
>
> land, Chaka had not felt himself precluded from "granting" this area to others
>
> subsequently. (Walker, 1960, p.149)

It was with this understanding that Tshaka had earlier granted part of Natal, the Natal Port, to two British men. He did not see this as giving up that part of land, but more as granting those people the right to use that land. In effect, in terms of his concept of land ownership, the Zulus still had rights to that land.

Dingaan seems to have made a paradigm shift at the time of his rule. He understood what treaties meant to the Boers - hence the events that followed later. When Retief came to meet Dingaan for the first time, Dingaan promised to grant the Boers a treaty that would give them part of Natal - on one condition: Retief was to find Sikongela, who used to be one of Dingaan's men but who had stolen cattle and fled from him. Retief would bring the cattle back and if possible, the thief himself and, in return, Dingaan would grant him land. However, while Retief was away searching for Sikongela, the trekkies started moving in along the Tugela river, just on the other side of Dingaan's kraal (Umgungundlovu). They started occupying the still only half-promised land. When Retief rejoined them, there were close to a thousand wagons along the Tugela (Walker, 1960).

This angered Dingaan, as his part of the agreement had not yet been met. It also created enmity and suspicion in his heart, causing him to punish the Boers. It is evident from his reaction that he understood the paradigm of land ownership from the Boers' perspective. On 3 February 1838, Retief and some of his men went back to Dingaan to return the cattle that had been stolen from him by Sikongela. Dingaan invited them to a big party. He asked them to leave their horses and ammunition outside the kraal and to enjoy the celebrations. He then signed the treaty on 5 February, but killed Retief and all his men and servants present on 6 February 1838.

This led to further battles between the Boers and the Zulus. On 16 December 1838, the Boers defeated the Zulus in the Battle of Blood River. The day of 16 December is still commemorated at the Voortrekker Monument erected 100 years after the battle (Le May, 1971; Rooseboom, 1949; Walker, 1960).

The Process of Industrialisation

At this time, the country was going through a process of industrialisation and this profoundly influenced Afrikaner nationalism greatly. It was in 1870 that diamonds were discovered and in 1872 that gold was discovered. This meant a move from an agricultural lifestyle to a more capitalist way of life, causing a large influx of people to the Witwatersrand. Other industries were established to support the mining community. At that time the Afrikaners and the black South Africans increasingly had to compete for jobs. The maintenance of the infrastructures established by the Afrikaners was being threatened by this process. This led to the establishment of the Broederbond in order to protect the economic needs and identity of the Afrikaners (Bendix, 1993).

The Broederbond was formed in 1879. According to Fick (1994) the continued functioning of the Broederbond happened as a direct result of the impending poverty that was facing the Boers after South Africa's involvement in the First and Second World Wars, as well as their inability to compete successfully in the labour market. It aimed to fight for the socio-economic rights of the Afrikaners, their language rights and their cultural exclusivity. Fick further explains how this community created self-help projects to uplift the Afrikaner, among them large financial organisations such as Sanlam and Volkskas. The Broederbond aimed at "[f]urtherance of the cultural and economic welfare of the Afrikaner, the preservation of their culture and volk" (Le May, 1971, p.63). Le May (1971) further argues that the laws of segregation, the economic domination and the social exclusivity that followed in later years under the Nationalist government were an attempt to maintain Afrikaner nationalism and to protect the Afrikaners' identity as volk at a communal level.

Segregation had taken on a new dimension at this time. The number of poor whites began to be a concern to Afrikaner leaders such as General Hertzog (Le May, 1971). Black people were perceived as a threat and they were seen as competitive to the white Afrikaner. This "swart gevaar" had to be stopped both in the economic and the social field. For the English, segregation was a question of economics. The Afrikaner "poor white", on the other hand, needed positive protection: segregation could be regarded as a necessary condition of survival. Malan is quoted by Le May as having said that the volk now had a new battle of Blood River to win, "this time on the field of economic competition" (p.39). The Job Reservations clause included in the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 became a good supportive policy to ensure that the white Afrikaners won this battle (Bendix, 1993).

At this time, black people were occupying the land that was granted to them by the Afrikaners, who used race as a means of classification. These lands, which were known as villages, were later to be institutionalised as homelands under the apartheid regime. One of the main characteristics of the villages was the communal spirit and the sense of brotherhood that existed amongst the villagers. But with the process of industrialisation, black people started flocking to the urban areas, moving away from the homelands that were designated to them. There they had to adjust to a new way of life.

After the Second World War, Smuts was urged by the United Nations to re-evaluate the section of the Act of Union which weighted parliamentary representation in favour of the rural areas. He then appointed a commission under the leadership of a Mr Justice Fagan to look into this matter. The results of the commission's report showed that "economic integration", but social and political segregation, should be aimed at (Le May, 1971). This did not mean equal opportunities for both black and white in the economic field, but rather the establishment of "middle-class townships, in which the man of superior attainment could differentiate himself from the barbarian mass" (Le May, 1971, p.39). The report led to the inception of the townships.

This exactly describes what the "township" was: a location, "a particular place" where black people lived, with no real "urban" amenities as understood by the white people. Labour reservoirs, places for housing the "temporary sojourners", places which built up their own atmosphere, loyalties and culture. (Walker, Van der Waal, Chiloane, Wentzel & Moraloki, 1991, p.1)

An attempt was made to keep the people who had been relocated in the townships in the tribal clusters that existed in the homelands. These townships, which were geographically bound, were a further attempt to reinforce the idea of "community" as exclusivist in terms of a common identity of race and ethnic grouping. This definition of the townships as geographic communities with common race and ethnic groupings was initially defied by the people, as can be seen by the existence of places such as Sophiatown and Lady Selbourne, where people of all races lived together. Around 1947 and with the inception of the Group Areas Act in 1950, the government succeeded in separating the races, but it failed to realise the idea of tribal segregation. Tribal segregation failed as a result of black people's resistance to staying separated in this way and their realisation that cohesion was a strong defence against external threats such as forced removals. This led to a process of inter-tribal marriages (Walker et al., 1991). In this way, "black urban communities" which were geographically defined came into to existance.

The land disputes between the Afrikaner and the British had not ended yet. While on the one hand the Afrikaner institutionalised land occupation for black people, so the British intended to annex land that was being occupied by the Boers. This led to the Boer War in 1899.

> At the deeper level, the Boers fought because they believed that there was
>
> no middle way between war and the loss of their independence, and the
>
> British because they believed that their supremacy in South Africa could be
>
> maintained only if they destroyed Afrikaner nationalism at its source. (Le May,
>
> 1971, p.39)

The backdrop to this war was the fact that most of the land that was now being occupied by the Boers was rich land, land from which gold and diamonds were being extracted. Although the Afrikaners surrendered in 1902 to the British, Afrikaner nationalisation was not destroyed by the war; it had in fact been reinforced. The war had, further, given the Afrikaners a common victim to mourn, as well as martyrs around whom myths could be woven. The main component of this myth reinforced the maintenance of an own identity and community life. Through voting after the agreement that was reached with the British to end the war, the Afrikaners regained victory over most of "their land" in 1907. Only Natal remained under the British imperialist party.

The Inception of Apartheid

"When the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 by the Act of Union, the colour bar against the Black population, which had always been practised, was embodied in the very constitution of the land" (Tabata, 1980, p.14). This Act of Union came prior to the inception of apartheid, but the two legislations are similar in a variety of ways. In 1948, the government 's official policy, known as "apartheid", was introduced by the then ruling Nationalist Party. It became a euphemism for separate development. One of the main objectives of the apartheid system was to see to it that people of different races were kept in their designated areas, to ensure that mixing among the races did not take place, and to ensure the Afrikaners' survival (Matumba, 1988). It was a further attempt to institutionalise the land issues that go back a long way in South Africa's history.

Groenewald (1989) states that the South African government used racial policies to determine where people should live, who would communicate with whom and who would

be given opportunities for occupational and educational achievement. These policies

therefore influenced how income was generated and who had local government jurisdiction.

This argument is supported by Walker et al. (1991) who suggest that the aim of the

government, in creating all these policies was to create an artificial sense of shared identity

and to protect the identity of the ruling minority. According to Le May (1971, p.73), one of

the election manifestos around this period read as follows:

> We can act in only one of the two directions. Either we must follow the
>
> course of equality, which must eventually mean national suicide for the white
>
> race, or we must take the course of separation (apartheid) through which the
>
> character and the future of every race will be protected.

The Group Area's Act of 1966 helped to ensure that the white minority would get the

majority of the land. Nel (1988) states that in 1988, 80% of the land was allocated to a mere

13% of the population, whereas the remaining 87% of the population was accommodated

on only 20% of the land. The 87% consisted mainly of black people. Another law that

ensured segregation was the Influx Control Act which basically controlled the flow of black

people from the economically impoverished homelands to the urban areas. After the Group

Area's Act of 1966 came other acts of parliament: the Community Council Act of 1977; The

Black Local Authorities Act; and the Black Communities Development Act of 1982. These

gave an insignificant amount of power to black people and helped to reinforce the idea of

community based on race and ethnicity (Franks, 1986).

Black nationalism was a reaction to the laws of segregation that were put into place. It is interesting to observe that the patterns of Afrikaner nationalism were very similar to Black nationalism under the leadership of Steve Biko. In fact, at his trial Biko mentioned how he and Fick, who was then the leader of the Student Broederbond, had had conversations about these similarities. One of the similarities between Afrikaner and Black nationalisation was the emphasis on economic emancipation and self-help. Biko (in Arnold, 1978, p.88) states:

> But not to the betterment of the individuals who have got no relation with the whole development and growth of the Black population in this country. So that what we are encouraging is a setting up of a cooperative that can serve the Black community comprehensively, economically, in terms of in a supermarket, in terms of banks and so on. And that would have the interest of the development of the Black Community at heart, so that out of profits which for instance they do get they can plough back part of that profit into the development of the community.

Biko's deployment of black nationalism, or as he called it, Black Consciousness, was based on "mental emancipation as a precondition to political emancipation" (Arnold, 1978, p.89) and he insisted that to sever relationships between white control and black fear, blacks had to overcome the alienation created by fear - something that they could do by themselves, for themselves. This was a direct reaction to the influence of Afrikaner

nationalism and the oppression that resulted from it. It is interesting to note the parallel between the two, as Afrikaner nationalism was itself a reaction to British imperialism. The concept of community was again used in the context of black nationalism. The South African Student Organisation (SASO) as well as the Black People's Convention (BPC) used the phrase "black community" to address black people in their pamphlets and at rallies (Arnold, 1978). Even in Biko's trial the idea of the "black community" was used time after time. "There is a belief within the black community, you know, when Mr Vorster says, 'I will call my boys'- you know, Blacks understand exactly what he means" (Arnold, 1978, p.86).

Apartheid's Influence on the Concept of

Community as a Geographical Construct

In their description of geographically defined communities, Edwards and Jones (1976) give a good indication of what these kind of communities in the homeland villages are like. They state that these communities occupy a geographic space and they share concerns to meet their daily needs. They have enough collaborative activities in order to maintain the continuity and survival of the community. The collective consciousness of the black villagers in their respective tribes has been well documented to indicate the significant sense of community that exists (Mjoli, 1987). In his paper Mjoli contends that this idea of the connectedness and collective consciousness of the African people in the villages was a major driving force for their survival and an important orientation through which all facets of life were perceived. He further argues that this world view became one of the major

stumbling blocks to the process of industrialisation. According to Bozzoli (1987), forced removals in places such as Sophiatown led to community destruction and people realised in their new townships how vital the role of community formation would be in preventing further removals. In this way they could stand together against the common enemy and see to it that something of that nature would not happen again. This was after people had been relocated from the racially mixed townships. Bozzoli (1987) further says that people of different classes were squashed together, making race their overriding distinguishing characteristic, while external pressure helped create an atmosphere of defensiveness and therefore inner unity. Boundary demarcation facilitated the emergence of a community where one did not exist before.

The issue of perceived external threat is an important one in terms of the cohesive nature of relationships that exists in townships.

That dispossessed groups arriving in the new setting in which they seek to survive tend to cluster in groupings which make sense in terms of the timing and manner of their leaving rural societies, and that in the case of South Africa these groupings tend to have a strong ethnic, racial or non-class character to them. (Bozzoli, 1987, p.21)

The South African townships are known for their strong sense of community. Kotze (1993) has documented this extensively, based on research conducted in Gazankulu. He calls this sense of community "collective consciousness" (p.9). He further argues that this collective consciousness is a result of the vulnerability of black people in the face of the

external threats with which they are constantly faced.

> So people need to experience the intact wholeness (solidarity) of the
>
> community, to feel the maximum strength of the community in its ability to
>
> protect its members. They need to feel themselves strengthened by one
>
> another against the overpowering constraints working against their survival.
>
> (Kotze, 1993, p.18)

This is in line with Bozzoli's (1987) ideas on the impact of the removals on the people as an

external threat.

Apartheid's Influence on the Concept of Community
as a Social Stratification Construct

According to Thornton and Ramphele (1988) as quoted by Butchart and Seedat

(1990b), the term "community" was used in the legacy of apartheid to divide resources into

own and general, thereby disadvantaging the poor and legitimising the inequality between

black and white. This left black people with little resources to cope and kept them in a

disadvantaged position.

Education played an important role in the maintenance of the white people in a

position of supremacy and in keeping black people in a position of inferiority in the

economic field. When Dr Verwoerd took over the Department of Education for black people

he said:

When I have control of Native Education I will reform it so that natives will be

taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them.

People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for the natives.

Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities

in life, according to the sphere in which they live. (Tabata, 1980, p.6)

This is a good indication that the education system that was then pioneered for black people

was one that would maintain their inferior position and keep them from getting beyond that

which was meant only for white people. Verwoerd went on to say: "Until now he has been

subject to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him

by showing him the green pasture of European society in which he is not allowed to graze"

(Tabata, 1980, p.6). Education then became a good vehicle for social mobility, but with

restrictions on people, based on colour.

For those who are not of the wealthier or better education strata, the process

of community-formation takes place mainly as a way of coping with the brutal

fact of dispossession. In the face of hostile outside forces, people ... have

indeed resorted to "community" as a mechanism for self-defence and

reconstruction. (Bozzoli, 1987, p.26)

It has been unfortunate that the process of community formation as a result of dispossession has led to a perception of the concept of community as something relevant to these dispossessed communities. Thus many intellectuals, including psychologists, see the concept as being relevant to those people only.

Perkel (1988) states that most psychologists, when speaking of community, imply the poor community, the working class community, the needing intervention community, or the needing empowerment community. In the South African context, he states, middle class problems are considered to be individual or family unit problems. "Mainstream psychology, treating middle class problems of the individual or the family unit, is nevertheless serving a community - the white middle class community" (Perkel, 1988, p.56-57). The illusion is that the middle class is not a community. A further myth is that mainstream psychology is not applicable to communities. This research further indicates that most people from disadvantaged communities also think that way. As a result of this perception, community psychology is perceived as being relevant to lower classes and black people in South Africa. This is what Perkel argues against.

Butchart and Seedat (1990b) indicate in their paper how political leaders use the concept to promote the discourse of domination and even how black leaders use it to promote the discourse of liberation. "Community" can also be constructed in a way that reinforces the ideology of separatism as each political leader uses it to "romanticise" his or her group.

Within the discourse of domination the concept of community serves the interests of the ruling minority in two ways. Historically, it has provided a myth of coherence by

which to bridge division amongst the lower, upper and middle class sectors of the Afrikaner who retain political dominance in South Africa.... [The issue of myth is an important one as it creates a sense of loyalty and cohesion which is considered by these authors to be a romanticisation of the concept.] Secondly "community" is a euphemism for terms such as race and ethnic group, that are being jettisoned from the discourse of domination due to the inflammatory connotations which have become attached to them. Unlike these terms, community sustains its positive connotations, so can still be used to sustain the policies of separate development and invent new divisions when necessary. (Butchart & Seedat, 1990b, p.1094-1095)

Straker (1989) is quoted by these authors as saying that the meaning attached to the concept by the dominators has been assimilated by the dominated and pressed into service in their dealings with the dominators. Butchart and Seedat (1990b) show how Mandela used the concept of community to address black people in his speech after his release in 1989. This is an indication of how the concept had become significant in the struggle of domination and liberation between the oppressor and the oppressed. It has become a catch word that can be used by the oppressor and the oppressed in ways that suit them, while the meaning behind the use of the word is well understood by their followers.

Similarly the concept has been used by the Afrikaner nationalism and Black nationalism movements. Both movements used the concept to appeal to their membership and to stress the idea of a common cause. In their efforts to mobilise the people and to emphasise the feeling of togetherness, they exploited the neutral use of the concept towards a political end. For the Afrikaners, the concept of nationalism enabled them to

maintain the perception of superiority, shared history and a common enemy. For the Black nationalists the concept also served to identify the sense of disempowerment and the move to a point of liberation. The identity of their community was one of a common history as well, and along with that, a common enemy, the white people.

Apartheid's Influence on the Concept of Community as a Cultural Construct

Minar and Greer (1969) discuss how culture can be perceived as an important factor in maintaining exclusivity. It functions to keep certain people in, while keeping others out. They further discuss the role of war in "intensifying sentiments of commonality against the excluded enemy, [which] tends to produce the definition of that enemy as subhuman" (Minar & Greer, 1969, p.27). This presents an important argument in terms of the culture of the Afrikaner, which is built around the Boer War and the Great Trek as well as around certain cultural festivals. The celebrations of the Afrikaner volk on 16 December are linked to the Great Trek, which is celebrated yearly to explain the political implications as well as the cultural uniqueness of the volk. It stands for their victory against the blacks and their emancipation from British domination. A certain culture exists around these celebrations.

Central to this culture was the notion of "imagined community", an idealised view of Voortrekker republics, symbolically rooted in a mystical, heroic and rustic past. The nostalgic interpretations of the past became all the more potent in the thirties when the Afrikaner rural social order was actually rapidly

disintegrating. (Butchart & Seedat, 1990b, p.1095)

This culture influences attitudes towards the Afrikaners' language, religion and way

of dressing and affects their perceptions about their identity. From Butchart and Seedat's

(1990b) discussion, one gains the idea that this culture has been captured and reified, with

feelings and commitment around it renewed yearly. It has been made static. It further helps

to maintain the feeling of community, breaking through the class boundaries amongst these

Afrikaners.

It is also interesting to think in this way about black African culture. Some people,

such as Gobodo (1990) in her paper, present the culture of the black people in a similar

way. They reify it, and capture it as a reality that exists beyond time bounds. They also

speak of the concept of culture as relevant to black people only. Mjoli (1987) reifies the

issue of culture in the same way. He identifies certain elements which he says are inherent

in African culture in such a way that he implies their existence as being static and

independent of people's observations and interpretation. It is the author's contention that

the same epistemological error that is made about community is being made about culture.

Both these concepts are dealt with by Gobodo (1990) as static and relevant to a certain

population only.

On this issue, Gobodo (1990) argues that the black community has a certain world

view that is unique to them and which makes up their culture. Thus they cannot be helped

by the psychologist who does not understand this world view. Gilbert (1989) believes that

on the other hand culture should not be seen as complexes of concrete behaviour but rather

as a set of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions - for the governing of

behaviour. Culture provides the symbols and meanings which are used by man to construct the events of his life and it need not be thought of as something that exists in certain groups only and not in others. For this definition, all people have a culture that is exclusive to them, even though there may be similarities amongst them. If culture is thought about in this way, then every person needs to be understood within the framework of his or her own culture and not in terms of the broad generalisations that Gobodo (1990) insists on. Thus, if psychologists take the time to understand the uniqueness as well as the similarities that exist amongst people, all people can be accommodated in psychological practices.

Swartz and Forster (1984) state that culture is usually viewed as a static, "traditional" state of affairs and that in this way it becomes something that is concretised. If culture can be perceived as something that is dynamic and as belonging to the dynamic characteristics of all groups and not to black people only, then it is possible to perceive it as more than just a stumbling block that can be understood and worked with in therapy.

Isemonger (1990) would take issue with Gobodo (1990), by saying that because psychologists assume that there are communities existing concretely in their own right, transcending space and time, they end up struggling to find these communities and become unable to intervene for fear that the intervention may not be suitable for that community. As a result, psychologists tend to become immobilised by the search for this objectively existing community. Isemonger goes on to say:

> In other words the creation of communities in the minds of target individuals
>
> should be the essential component of community psychology, rather than a
>
> preoccupation with identifying objective communities into which people fit

and then applying therapeutic techniques to them. (Isemonger, 1990, p.39)

This author agrees with the concept of community as a social construction, which has been discussed earlier in the chapter.

The author will go on to give a brief account of the role of psychology in the history of South Africa and of its contributions towards the apartheid regime. This will place in perspective many psychologists' acceptance of the above-mentioned clusters of the definition of the concept of community.

Psychology and Apartheid in South Africa

Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat, and Statman (in Nicholas and Cooper 1990) insist that psychology in South Africa has never been non-political. They state that the discipline almost never opposed but has generally accommodated and contributed to the development of the apartheid system. Their belief is that psychologists have tended to look the other way at the "systematic exploitation" of black people in the country; that they also have a history of having supported governmental issues, for example, on the issue of poor whites. In this regard, psychologist Malherbe is quoted in Cooper et al. (in Nicholas & Cooper, 1990) as having recommended research into the problems of the poor whites in the country to the Carnegie investigation in 1927. Wilcocks, another psychologist of that time, advocated the revision and extension of social legislation to protect the interests of the poor whites. In his report Wilcocks (1932) also recommended the establishment of a job

reservation clause to the advantage of white people (Cooper et al, 1990).

Psychologists have also been used in other ways too as instruments of the apartheid regime, for example, they were used in schools to ensure the unquestioning conformity of white students to the apartheid system; some of them became important pioneers of legislation that reinforced apartheid in South Africa. A good example is Prime Minister H F Verwoerd who was an important figure in South African politics, and who, prior to his advent to politics, was a professor of psychology.

Also interesting is the fact that the first organisation established for psychologists, the South African Psychological Association (SAPA), had a total membership of 34, all of whom were white. The members of this association protested the entry of black psychologist into this body and it was not until 1983 that the register of the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) showed that its membership included a small percentage (10%) of black psychologists. PASA was a body that emerged after the split between the anti-integrationist and the liberal psychologists had been healed (Cooper et al, 1990). Furthermore, psychologists in South Africa appear to have done very little to question the status quo. They appear to have looked for other explanations to describe what was happening and some even justified the importance of discrimination (Van der Spuy, 1978). Those who did question the status quo such as Saths Cooper were detained under the Section 6 of the Terrorism Act, which later became known as the Internal Security Act under the apartheid regime.

Given this background, it becomes possible to understand why psychologists' vision of concepts such as community have been blurred by the politics of the country. As Arnold (1994) puts it :

When psychologists speak of the concept of community, they are to a large extent influenced by the politics of the country. When they speak of community psychology, a lot of them imply the paternalistic view of being the saviours of the disenfranchised people in the country. Very rarely would they refer to communities such as the Sandton community, implying that community problems are only related to disenfranchised people.

Arnold's perception is greatly supported by the literature referred to above on the concept of community as well as by authors such as Butchart and Seedat (1990b). This places the literature that is specific to South Africa in context, in that it explains why the concept of community is viewed in the way that it is in the above cluster of definitions of community (that is, community as geographically defined; community as social stratification; and community as culturally defined).

Psychologists who dared to work with the "black communities" in the townships have also tended to use community psychology models such as the social action model and the mental health model. Although these models have had a certain amount of impact, they have proved ineffective in some instances. A more detailed account of them will be given later in chapter 4.

Conclusion

The author has attempted to present a variety of definitions of community in the above chapter, in order to emphasise that in as much as there are these definitions, each one has a place and carries a certain amount of validity, for those who see them in context.

Ferrinho (1979) describes this concept from a variety of perspectives in order to come up with a holistic definition. He includes: (a) a way of life, defined by a set of common values and interests around which institutions are developed and with which residents identify themselves (cultural approach); (b) a network of social interaction within which people relate to one another (sociological approach); (c) a system of reference for a set of common individual identifications (psychological approach); and (d) a place from which a human population obtains the energy it needs to live and survive (ecological approach). His conclusion is that the best definition is that of ecological approach, which includes all of the above concepts.

This, in essence, also explains why there is nothing like community which exists in its own right. Community exists once people have identified it as such. What becomes important is the definer's ability to perceive that there are other possibilities of defining and that he also has to be open to these possibilities. This is especially important for the community psychologist since a definition can be place severe limitations on community work if it is taken as the ultimate definition.

While conceptual models are obviously useful for guiding one's thinking, planning and action, they all - some more than others - create the risk of

carrying preconceptions into a context, often preventing one from "reading"

the context and effecting the best possible fit between community worker

and community. In our experience, the community worker has to go through

her own process in order to evolve a way of thinking that could create the

best fit for her - one that would make effective connections and

disconnections with the community possible. (Oosthuizen & Van der Worm,

1991, p.7)

In the Mamelodi project the author and others involved engaged in the process of

defining and redefining the community and carrying out activities based on the definition

suitable at that time.

The next chapter will consist of interviews that bring out the essence of this process

of defining and redefining within the Mamelodi Clinic. It will take the reader through this

journey and further explore the issues that were pertinent in the process of evolution of the

concept. Each member will give his or her own personal account.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to allow several people who were involved in the Mamelodi Clinic to give a brief resume of their story of the search for meaning of the concept of community within the Mamelodi Counselling Clinic. When the project started, the people involved in its initiation had a vision of what the task would involve. Others were not involved in the process of initiation, but they also had their own vision on entering the process, which might or might have not been shared with the initiators. These people defined community as they perceived it at that time and later engaged in a process of redefining it. The process of defining may or may have not been a conscious one. What is obvious, is that through languaging about the concept community and through profound personal experiences, different meanings were constructed and this instructed the people involved to approach the work differently. Each member who was involved in this clinic clearly had his or her own theoretical and conceptual map and tried to put this map into practice. These maps were based on seemingly objective knowledge about what goes on in townships. In this process however, it seems that objective knowledge became unimportant and irrelevant. What was more important is how those who were involved experienced the process. Their involvement helped them to formulate meaning out of what they observed. According to constructivist thinking, the process of observation does not exclude the observer and this is why objective knowledge is insufficient. The observer

becomes a part of that which he or she observes. Keeney (1983) refers to this inclusion of the observer and his participation in the system that he observes.

The connections that are made with others come to be of the utmost importance as they influence the way in which people perceive what they are experiencing. This in effect means that the observer's construction becomes part of a process and this process can further be influenced by those with whom the observer languages. Lifschitz (in Oosthuizen & Van der Worm, 1991) says that this implies that a community can be seen as process, that is, as people's evolution of ideas of their interconnectedness.

The Research Methodology: Phenomenological Approach

Research into the natural sciences emphasises objective knowledge. The basic assumption is that reality exists out there and that how one searches for this reality is supposed to reveal the reality without contamination. This nature of thinking is drawn from maps based on assumptions about the nature of reality and the process of human understanding. According to Polkinghorne (in Valle & Halling, 1989), the map developed for Western science over the past three centuries, is based on the notion that reality consists of natural objects and that knowledge is a description of these objects as they exist in themselves. This is incongruent with constructivist thinking, which places more emphasis on meaning and understanding of human beings. Phenomenological psychological research principles are more congruent with constructivist epistemology.

The phenomenological approach explores naturally occurring events in their contexts. The interaction between the participants and the matter being researched is focused on from the perspective of the participant (Moon, Dillon & Sprenkle, 1990). It is

important for constructivist thinkers to focus more on human experience and awareness before moving on to assumptions about independent natural objects and this is the main focus of phenomenological research. Furthermore, according to Polkinghorne (in Valle & Halling, 1989), the description of natural objects is derived from experience and for this reason, experience itself must be clearly understood before a firm foundation can be established for the science of studying the natural world. This is compatible with this study as it follows from this that communities were not defined at a later stage as an absolute reality, but rather as a co-constructed reality. Blokland (1993, p.21) argues the point as follows:

While objectivity is rejected as a criterion for social science research, this does not imply that a world external of the individual's perceptions does not exist, but rather that it interacts with the observer in the construction of his experiences.

The Format of Phenomenological Psychological Research

According to Polkinghorne (in Valle and Halling, 1989, p.44):

The aim of phenomenologically informed research is to produce clear and accurate descriptions of a particular aspect of human experience. Recognising that consciousness is different in essence from the object of nature, it rejects the positivist ideal of a single and unified scientific method that will be able to yield all knowledge.

What becomes important here is experienced meaning and not so much the description of what happened. According to Polkinghorne (in Valle & Halling 1989), this is congruent with this study, because it searches for "how meaning presents itself in experience" of community and how, in turn, experience presents itself to meaning.

The research will take the form, first, of gathering a number of descriptions from the people involved in the experience; secondly, engaging in the process of analysing these descriptions to elicit common elements; and finally, producing a research report that gives a description of the experience and meanings with emphasis on the themes elicited in the process.

The gathering of the data takes the form of unstructured interviews of the members who were involved in the Mamelodi Clinic. This will be used to tease out the meanings and experiences recounted by the members. The author also undertook a self-reflection, as recommended by Polkinghorne (in Valle & Halling, 1989), prior to interviewing the members. This will be used as an interview of the author herself and it will serve the important purpose of locating the presuppositions and biases held by the author. The analysis of the data will be used to find common experiences and meanings that will be highlighted in the interviews. Here each interview will be examined individually and the important ideas will be taken out and related to those of the other interviews. The final step will be to integrate the common ideas in the experiences and meanings and to produce a research report that reflects a clear and accurate description of the processes. The emphasis in this kind of research is not only on the individual experiences as such, but also on a dialogically shared experiential world.

Bearing in mind that the themes which are considered significant will be selected by the author, it is inevitable that the nature of the information elicited in the end will also be

information about the researcher.

The Research Procedure

The research was conducted after the members had undergone the experiences explored here. This is, therefore, an attempt to take them back to what was experienced, and to discuss it in retrospect.

An attempt was made to interview two people in each phase of the Clinic. The phases are arbitrarily punctuated with reference to the entry of new members into the Clinic. Accordingly, the researcher selected six people who were involved in the Mamelodi Clinic and conducted interviews with them. Two of these people were the initiators of the Clinic. Then, in the next phase, which took place approximately a year after the initiation of the project, the author entered into the project together with a fellow student who became involved at the same time as the author. The author's self-interview is included under this phase, accompanied by an interview of her fellow student. Finally, the third punctuated phase commences with the entry of two other students who became involved a year after the author and this will make up the last stage of the interviews. These people are considered appropriate (in line with the requirements of this kind of research) in that they were involved at more or less the same time in the process and at different levels which were determined by their different phases of entry. Furthermore, they were judged by author to have the capacity to provide sensitive descriptions of the experience under examination. They also had the opportunity to language with each other about the meanings co-created during the process of the experience. This helped the researcher not to lose sight of the co-created meanings. The interviews were open-ended and

unstructured. As a result, this process was more like a discourse or conversation on the concept of community.

The Interviews of the Members in Chronological Order

The Initiators' Interviews: Stan

Stan's Perception of the Concept of "Community" on initiation

On initiating the Mamelodi Clinic, Stan had the idea that he was going to serve a geographically bound community.

"At that stage I accepted a physical definition of community. My motivation for starting was to serve the underprivileged and the disenfranchised and in that sense it embodied the idea of the Mamelodi community as geographical area. It was for the people who were in need."

The idea presented here is one that suggests that the people of Mamelodi were regarded as homogenous in terms of their needs and problems. The perception of homogeneity was based on their being underprivileged and disenfranchised. This is what was used by Stan to identify them as a community.

Embodied in Stan's need to serve the "Mamelodi community" was his perception of himself as a liberal, a caretaker of those in need. He proceeded on the basis of the above perception, and hoped to offer a service to the "Mamelodi community". He says that initially, his motivations were of a liberal political nature, to help the underdog, and this was what took him to Mamelodi.

From these ideas, it seems obvious that there was an "us and them" perception that predominated the initiators' thinking. Stan mentions this by saying that this way of identifying the Mamelodi community created a separateness which, to a large extent, maintained and perpetuated the labels of those in need and those who were giving. The people's identity was based on being disadvantaged and disenfranchised and this criteria set them apart from their "caregivers", being the initiators of the clinic. The motive here has implied connotations of a hidden political agenda. This is also one of the ways in which some of the literature tends to discuss the concept of community (Butchart & Seedat, 1990b).

Factors that Led to a Shift in Ideas

Stan identifies the main reasons for the shifts in his ideas as having been more of an experiential process than an intellectual debate with himself. He expresses this as an experiential process of living.

"There were times when I felt as if I was dying and questioned my relevance for being there. There were a number of crucial experiences which I think shaped or had a bearing on my way of working. Some of them resulted from failing and the realisation of the uselessness of doing things in a particular way.... I realised in retrospect, although at that time I was most disappointed, that it had to do with the ideas around which we were trying to form a community. It was a false community and in some way, in trying to formalise it, I was forcing the issue which led to its demise."

Stan goes on to speak about a remedial service which the members of the clinic attempted to start. The remedial service was to help children who were not coping in schools. The service would have been composed of professionals from the "community of Mamelodi". This was an attempt to offer a total solution to the remedial problems of the community. He soon realised however that these grandiose ideas of being the saviour of the people became a problem. Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974) express the idea of the solution becoming the problem, and this was typically illustrated in this situation.

Stan further discusses the various experiences with healers which he had had prior to becoming involved with the Mamelodi community. These experiences he says, were crucial to his own development and yet he believes that he failed to integrate them at the time into his professional life.

"At that stage I began to look at my world of experience which I had with the healing community, the sangomas and the healers. For some strange reason, I initially never used that experience in my work in Mamelodi as a therapist. But in looking back to that which I had experienced in these contexts, what struck me the most was that these were all communities in their own rights, co-created by all its participants around the idea of healing. The healed at some stage became the healers and in that process received healing themselves."

From the above discussion, one can deduce that Stan's initial entry into the "Mamelodi community" was a cognitive and intellectual exercise which later became more experiential so that he felt forced him to bring himself and his past into the process. This

correlates with his ideas expressed in Blokland (1993) where he says that the Mamelodi

experience took him beyond his training and beyond the safety of his professional position.

The Shift in Stan's Perception of "Community"

Stan's ideas about the concept of community shifted from community as bound by

geography to community as a network of relationships and this kind of community was co-

created around the idea of therapy.

"It is at that time that we began to organise that which became known as the

Agape Healing Community. That was an important shift in my way of

thinking, where the realisation was that we do not serve a community but we

co-create a community, where the network of relationships creates the

context in which therapy is done. It is a shifting community in size and in

intensity and in many other aspects. Its character is derived from the

composition of people around activities at any one point and it is not a fixed

entity but a shifting pattern of connectedness between people."

Stan's view is that people do construct a reality within the network of relationships.

This reality is created in terms of the activities and the ideas of the people in the

relationships. The reality is not a fixed one and may mean different things to different

people.

This shift in ideas also changed his view of community as being something out there,

to being something that included Stan. This means that he moved from being an observer

to being a participant observer.

"Some people would regard me as a Mamelodi person while others would not. Even in the idea of Agape there are those who would come because they identify with me or with somebody in this community or because they think of Agape as a home...."

Stan recognised with great shock and amazement how people responded to each other and connected with each other. He says that he saw people coming in separately and leaving together in between the meetings. They had formed friendships with each other.

"Agape has a wide variety or a rich mix of people. Agape gives it's members permission to express the variety of ways in which they connect. This reflects the spirit of Agape."

The community that was co-created was called Agape (Greek for brotherly love) and the name became synonymous with the people and their activities. The concept and ideas around Agape emphasise the process whereby people connected and together formed what was comfortable for all of them. It also becomes apparent that it served the purpose of fulfilling people's need for a place where they could belong and share the spirit of community.

The people in the group share some kind of commonality ... these people are in search of group, that, for some odd reason, there's an ambivalence about what would appear to be their natural group, family, or cultural group, or religious group.... In Mamelodi (Agape) they find a home which expresses some pain of not belonging, and the joy of belonging. (Blokland, 1993, p.30)

This connects with what Stan expresses in the interview where he views Agape as a home for him and for others who are seeking a home.

"At some stage I thought of Agape as a place for people who are marginal or ambivalent about their biological homes. It is a strange collection of in-between people. Certainly I find it a home for myself, in that I have found a place where I can express my ideas and allow myself to be comfortable and uncomfortable. To live and to die there, to be creative and to be stuck there. Certainly I identify with it. If fighting is a criteria for finding a home, then I most strongly fight for Agape."

How the Shift Changed the Way of Working

This shift in ideas about the concept of community automatically led to a shift in the way Stan worked at the clinic.

"It was profound in that it changed my way from a traditional psychological way of working. The main focus was initially on the meeting, in the therapy

as such. Community as a co-created network, allowed me to work and think

of therapy as a ritual within this context. It is a more encompassing way of

getting people involved, in the ritual of transformation, that is, therapy. The

people who are in the community become a resource, linked to the activity

of psychotherapy.

Stan then links the ideas expressed here with the remedial service project. He says that

after the shift he recognised that he could use the people of Agape as resources to meet

this end.

"Subsequently, I have attended to remedial problems in terms of those

people who constitute our co-created community and I think we have been

successful, or useful to these people.... I began to appreciate far more fully

the network of the people who do come and who do participate in the

process around which we form Agape. We use the resources of people who

are connected and available at that time."

The people of Agape from the Mamelodi area, who are not necessarily professionals,

are now often engaged in the activities of therapy, which is something that was never done

before. Something that has also changed as a result of the shift is the emphasis on therapy -

or more accurately, the de-emphasising of therapy.

"Sometimes we realised that people came to psychotherapy with a problem essentially because that is what is demanded of people who come to psychotherapy. It may be that they are simply lonely or seeking support or a friend. That is what Agape provides. In other words we do not as a matter of routine psychotherapise everybody who comes there...."

With these new ideas Stan could harness a number of possibilities as well as his own creativity.

"I can now work as a therapist, as a consultant, or simply be a group member. With the event of Agape moving from the confines of a building it provided me with alternatives in terms of time and space."

Stan ends off by saying that, for him, the Agape community is not confined to the time and space of Wednesdays, which is the day on which the clinic operates.

"It exists in the minds of people. There are certain members of Agape who live in Sweden and Belgium. These people once came to our clinic at one stage or another, and felt affiliated to the community of Agape. In this sense it has no boundaries."

Initiator's Interview: Betty

Betty's Perception of the Concept of "Community" on the Initiation

When Stan and Suzette came into Mamelodi to start the clinic, they linked up with Betty, a resident in Mamelodi (Suzette was also a lecturer at UNISA at that time). Betty was working as a community worker at the SOS (Save Our Souls) organisation in Mamelodi at that time.

Betty's concept of community at that time was that a community is a group of people who share the same geographical area and who share common interests in that area.

"These people share the same activities and interests, which stretch from burial societies to politics and religion. Although the community is divided into many groups according to their activities and interests, these (activities and interests) are still characteristic of Mamelodi."

At that stage, Betty saw herself as being the only person, among the initiators, who belonged to the Mamelodi community. She perceived her colleagues as outsiders.

"When whites come with a project, you watch them closely even though you work with them. Say you have a negative attitude towards them, and you think that they want to use us and then later dump us."

This has implicit implications for the "us-them" perception. Betty saw the need for the clinic and identified with it as she was already involved in similar activities in her work. She noticed that although other services were available, this one was not, and decided to venture into it with the other initiators, despite the risks she foresaw when she started out.

Factors that Led to a Shift in Ideas

Betty could not identify the precise moment when the shift in her ideas took place. She sees it as an experiential transformation and that in trying to punctuate it, she might lose the richness of the experience. Stan played a significant role in this process.

"But in working with Stan I learned a lot from him. He taught me to accept a human being for what he is. I won't say that he pretends, I would say that he has a love for the people of Mamelodi and he does it from the bottom of his heart."

The process through which Betty went seems to be one in which she felt touched by the "outsiders" and which allowed her to explore relationships with them. On entering the relationship, much of the "us-them" perception fell away, and what became more important was the experience. They evolved a common sense of purpose, a willingness to make something work that was important to them. The issues around colour became minimised and Betty was given the chance to experience her co-initiators on a very human level. She also began to trust their motives and to be less judgmental of them. It also became possible for her to be more inclusive of them in her definition of community.

The Shift in Betty's Perception of "Community"

At this point in time, Betty defines community as a group of people sharing common interests irrespective of whether they share a common geographical area.

"Although in the beginning I saw geography as an important element in the formation and maintenance of community, I now see it as any group of people who share the same interests and geography is not essential. We, the people of Agape, are a community because we have common needs and interests."

In the process of making this shift, Betty went on to discard the idea of homogeneity, which implied the "whites against the blacks", or the us and them idea.

"The students who come here every Wednesday are a part of our Agape community."

How the Shift Changed the Way of Working

The shift for Betty made it possible for her to experience the other people in a more holistic way, as people who connect and who are connected in relationships. She says that she now is able to work with more people in her therapeutic work. This, she says, has also allowed her to see the therapeutic system as sometimes including more than just the people who live with the person undergoing therapy. Her work now goes on to include all the other people who are connected to the patient.

Betty also believes that the shift has freed her because she can now work openly with all people and not feel that she is betraying her loyalty to the Mamelodi community. She does not have to feel that she is selling out her people. She also mentioned that a lot of the Mamelodi people have a sense of ownership about this clinic and that they identify with it very strongly.

The second phase of Entry: Linda and Tabea

Linda's Interview

Linda's Perception of the Concept of "Community" on Entering the Clinic

On entering the project, which had at that time been in existence for about a year, Linda defined community as geographical; as situated in a place.

So, the community of Mamelodi was found in Mamelodi. People either came into Mamelodi and stayed there to be a part of the community or left the community.

This perception of community as geographically bound emphasises the idea of people in a space who share some common identity by virtue of being in the same location. She therefore saw herself as an outsider, coming in and out of the community without belonging to it.

Factors that Led to a Shift in Ideas

For Linda, the shift in ideas came about as a result of personal experiences as well as readings and conversations that she participated in.

"I think for the first time I became introspective about the concept. I did not think of it as objectively as I used to. In the beginning, I thought about myself as an outsider acting upon the people of Mamelodi. With the kind of conversations that we used to have and the kind of readings that we had, I became very introspective about it. To a large extent, my ideas were influenced by what I heard and what I read.

I am now able to have that feeling of being able to move in and out if communities, and being a part of them as I do so. It seems that through the process of languaging, Linda reached a point where she could view the concept of community differently. The readings appear to have been a conversation between her and the authors. Watzlawick et al. (1974) suggest that the process of reading is a conversation between the writer and the person reading the material. Through this process, Linda evolved, with others, a different meaning of the concept of community.

It seems that the initiation of the Agape group also led to Linda thinking differently about communities. She expresses how she has seen Agape spill beyond the confines of Mamelodi to other areas.

"It is a network that started in Mamelodi and spread beyond Mamelodi. It also carries on doing so."

The Shift in Linda's Perception of "Community"

Linda now thinks of the concept more as the network of people in an interaction. She also has the idea that one can be a part of different communities, of different aspects that characterise the nature of the community.

"I think that in each different area, one has a common or a shared world of ideas and activities, in the community of the school, the parents could share common grounds with each other, of having children in that school. In other communities we might have common ground on social levels; while at the same time I might belong to a community of therapists."

This way of thinking has made it possible for Linda to see herself as belonging to the community of Mamelodi and of Agape, in that she can get involved in the network of relationships there.

"I think I still feel a part of that community. Having left and having come back to the clinic, I still feel very much a part of it. And for the period that I left it, there was a sense of loss and mourning. Coming back, there was a sense of belonging anyway because I had belonged before. The doors were opened and I had credibility there."

Linda goes on to say that now she does not see communities only as networks of relationships, but that she has integrated her initial ideas on joining the clinic with those that she co-created with others there. When asked if "communities" mean networks exclusively,

she replies:

"Yes and no. Yes because I still belong to different communities. Those feelings are still very strong in my sense of belonging to different communities. No, in the sense that in selling myself totally to that idea I ignore the fact that Mamelodi does happen to be in geographical area, and that I do have that sense if travelling down that road into the community and at the end of the day travelling out of it again. That is also because my interaction with those people is entirely confined to the place. Ninety-nine percent of the time it all happens in Mamelodi, I am talking about the township and if I don't travel down that road I have nothing to do with those people. So I have a double sense of what it is. It exists both as geographic entity, and also a network of relationships and maybe even as a co-constructed reality."

This double sense is further emphasised when Linda says:

"The kind of things that happen there happen because they are there in that location. The kind of street life that happens in Mamelodi does not happen here (Silverton). Even if I belong to that community and I live in Silverton it does not happen here."

Linda further suggests that Agape is synonymous with the particular part of a community that she works with in Mamelodi. Agape for her has become that part of the community that she links with in Mamelodi and it varies from one time to another in size and in the people available at a specific point in time.

How the Shift Changed the Way of Working

"I think that what it has done is to make people more accessible than they have been before. I am not confined to the therapy room. Even with other work, I have a sense of lives extending beyond the confines of the therapy room. When I am working with people of a particular community, I have a sense of that community."

Linda suggests that the shift in thinking has also made it possible for her to feel that she is a part of the community of Agape. This allows her freedom of movement.

"To start off with the community in Mamelodi, I feel free to have a conversation with somebody at home or, when it comes to a child, to have a conversation with the teacher. In the past, this was like treading on sacred ground. I did not discuss anything with anyone outside the therapy room and I did not involve myself with people outside. Even in my private work,

I now have a sense of the community to which the people in therapy belong, and I use that in a useful way."

Tabea's Interview

Tabea's Perception of the Concept of "Community" on Entering the Clinic

When I found that I could do my practical work at Mamelodi, I was very relieved. I felt that I was going to a place with which I was familiar, namely the black community. As a black student, I felt that I could identify with and be accepted by the people of Mamelodi. Having grown up in a black township, I thought this would just be more of the same. In the interview that I conducted on myself, my responses at that time were:

"My entry into the clinic was not an issue at all. It was like more or less going to my home, Diepkloof. So in a lot of ways I was never aware of any process of entering a different community. Instead, it was like entering my community, the black community. I shared a common identity with these people, the identity of being black."

So, it seems from the above that I defined the community for myself based on a common identity. The definition also seem to include a geographical aspect in the sense that I saw the Mamelodi community as people with a common identity. One can also deduce from what I said that I would only encounter this black community if I went to a place like Mamelodi rather than a white residential area. I also said in the interview that the

concept of community in my mind was applicable to black people only. White people could in no way be a community.

"I think that the reason I thought that way was that black people relate on the whole in ways that I believe may be perceived as alien by white people. For example, it is okay for us to borrow salt from our neighbours and to share many resources together. We always share and talk to each other in intimate ways that would be considered as prying by many white people. We do not have the 'mind your own business attitude' that they appear to have. My business is everybody's business, but in a caring way."

I went one step further to say that a great deal of this was due to the negative experiences that black people have had in South Africa which has resulted in people forming closer relationships with each other, to protect each other. On the other hand, the ideas I talked about brought out an element of some kind of common history and common identity if one thinks about the history of the black people in South Africa. So, my definition of community, the Mamelodi community, brought in aspects of race and a common history and these created a common identity. My perception of community seems to be similar to that of Betty's. There seems to be a political element to it, although it is not explicitly stated.

Factors that Led to a Shift in Ideas

There are many experiential and academic reasons that led to the shifts in my thinking. Due to the diversity and number of reasons, I find it very difficult to punctuate a specific time when my ideas shifted. I think that it was more of a process. One of my experiences that I shared in my interview is this one:

"One of my most profound experiences was when we got together with students from the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) and the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa). At that stage, I had already read literature that defined the concept differently. We were then given the task of defining the concept of community, and then of applying the definition in a practical way, which would make it easier for us to work in Mamelodi. I then went along with the group that defined it as 'any group of people that come together with a common purpose'. On having to apply this definition practically, I fell back to a geographical definition. I then started thinking: 'How can I work in a project with people from RAU and Medunsa when we can't see each other regularly? How do I hope to maintain this commitment if they live far away?' Geography became a stumbling block."

Another experience that had an impact on me was a period when there were literally no patients coming to make use of the clinic. This is what I said about it in the interview:

"It got so empty. For the first time, I felt that the whole thing had no purpose

for me. I got angry at the people of Mamelodi for not making use of this

lovely service that we had put up for them. I thought to myself: 'How

ungrateful can they be!' At that point, it dawned on us that we could not sit

there and wait. We had to do something. That was when we started

advertising the service and making it visible to people. We started seeking

the community. I realised that people had to feel that they belonged, to be

able to come there. They had to find their place there, and those who did

not, left."

It was the first time that I felt that community was beginning to emerge. When Agape

came into being, I started feeling that strong sense of cohesion that I had always imagined

belonged to black people only. But this time, it involved people of all colours, religions and

classes.

The Shift in Tabea's Perception of "Community"

To me now the concept of community is a construct that exists when people

language about it. My perception of it at the time of the interview was as follows:

"I think that the concept is one that is brought about by languaging. When

people define a particular group of people as a community, then to them it

is a community for as long as they attribute that meaning to it. On looking

back, it becomes obvious to me that shifting meanings were attributed to the

concept and that consensus was reached every now and again about how the concept was being defined. This definition that is given, is one that suits those who are giving it at that point. So, it can include geography, sometimes race and other times, attributes such as professions and belief systems."

The epistemology on which I base this argument is that of constructivism, where it is believed that meaning exists only when people language about that which they would like to give meaning to. So, outside the realms of languaging, meaning does not hold true for everybody. The process of languaging is one that gives meaning.

How the Shift Changed the Way of Working

The different way of perceiving the concept of community has been liberating for me. This kind of perception has opened up alternatives for me. In the interview I realised that this definition might not have tangibility and I reacted in this way to that thought:

"I do believe that a lot of people might find my way of thinking about community rather vague. I sometimes think of it in that way too. However, in thinking about it this way, I am now open to any other way that others may wish to define community. Hence, my view is all encompassing. I can think of community and work with the community in whatever way I wish to define it at that point in time."

After this shift I can work with community as geographically defined, politically defined, defined as a social network, as an international concept (for example, the community of singers in the world), and even with community as a family. This has freed me from thinking only in terms of colour and common history. A common identity is something that people develop amongst themselves.

I accept that Agape may be a kind of community that would usually not be defined by most people as such.

"Not only is Agape a community of healers, but also of those who need healing, not only is it a group of friends at that point in time, but it extends to people outside the country and so in a lot of ways it is like my definition, everything and yet almost nothing.... This has allowed me to work with all people who have at one point or another felt connected. I have been able to see families, patients with their neighbours, patients with their boyfriends, patients with their friends and have gone on to include any other system that seems relevant at that time."

The Third Phase of Entry: Renei and Stella

<u>Renei's Interview</u>

<u>Renei's Perception of the Concept of "Community" on Entering the Clinic</u>

Originally, the concept of community for Renei meant "the black townships".

"This was for me where community happened and I sort of believed that in

black townships, there was always a sense of community. I expected people

there to be one big happy family, lots of sharing, dancing in the streets."

These initial ideas were ideas that Renei says were motivated by a kind of liberalism.

She says that at the point when she entered the project, she belonged to a group of white

liberal university students.

"The word 'community' was loaded with political implications; we never

thought that it could apply to white Afrikaans farmers for instance. For some

reason, it became a political word and I think that partly it is because the

concept is used like that. You listen to the speeches made by black political

leaders, they often call on a sense of community. I think that is probably

how I came to conceptualise it like that."

This way of thinking again defines the concept based on geography and on a

commonality such as colour. She went out in the spirit of saving the blacks and taking care

of their needs. She somehow saw herself as a saviour of those people. To her, at that

point, it was not important whether the people connected or perceived themselves as having

commonalities. She saw herself standing at the edge and identifying them, identifying their

needs and also identifying how she, their saviour, would meet these people and their needs.

From the outside she also saw a perfect picture of what communities were all about. She saw dancing and sharing. Bozzoli (1987) discusses this as one of the connotations of community and says that it is an imagined place of kinship ties and of rest and joy, but then goes on to say that this can be a myth. These two elements define a world which is full of jubilation and free of problems, and yet Renei still wanted to save the members of that community.

Factors that Led to a Shift in Ideas

Renei thinks that the real life experience led to a shift in her thinking. She says that the academic explorations that they as a group undertook of the concept of community, had very little impact on her. They did not touch her as a person and this made it difficult for her to be instructed by them.

"But the reason why it became an emotive experience for me was probably because Agape and Mamelodi for me was just that. It touched me on a very profound emotional level. I think that is why I was moved to see it that way instead of trying to think of it in terms of boundaries."

Renei goes on to discuss how personal the experience was for her and how she had to find a place for herself in all of this. She views the process of forming or belonging to a community as important because, as she expresses it, it gives one a psychological sense of causality. She identifies it as the structural coupling that Maturana and Varela (1987) discuss.

"Initially, when I went into the group it was just me and Alex and the sense I initially had was that it was a bunch of people put together by accident. We were so different and so removed from each other. I then went out to consciously find another member, to find Stella. I felt that I had to be creative and active in this thing that I called community. I had to go out and find someone who shared that sentiment with me. It started like that but I think that we definitely co-evolved what I call a community."

This is how the spirit of Agape started for Renei. She says that Agape is one of the most profound experiences of community for her. She also emphasised that the process that she went through in Agape is also one that created the shift towards realising that "trials and tribulations" were also things that could not be avoided in communities. These (trials and tribulations) also did not kill the spirit of community, but in a way nourished it.

The Shift in Renei's Perception of "Community"

"After a while it became a word that almost expressed an emotion to me. I stopped defining community in terms of boundaries and in terms of colour. It has become an emotive expression for me. What stayed the same was that it was a place in time where people are well connected in a special way. For me, Mamelodi became more of a pursuit for community, to find that in people.... So I moved from an academic, abstract way of thinking about it, to an emotional way of thinking about it."

From her experience in Agape, Renei also started thinking that the connectedness that she views as essential to community does not necessarily have to be a positive thing. There will be happiness and sadness, conflict and turmoil, and anything else that is a by-product of being connected. This discards the initial idea that "communities are found in black townships and the people will be dancing all the time". Pain becomes a relevant issue to the concept of community and does not necessarily break up the community. Families, groups and organisations that she sees could be a community for her if there is that emotive expression of community.

This perception would be in line with the one suggested by Bozzoli (1987, p.6) when she says: "Communities, in this conception, are entities with strong emotional connotations which pull ordinary people into alliances they might not otherwise be in."

How the Shift Changed the way of Working

The shift for Renei made it possible for her to include in the therapies as many people who form a part of the person's life at that time, as is necessary. The new perception of the concept also made it possible for her to think in an open way about it and this opened up alternatives.

"I think that the way I think about the concept is ultimately the most open way one can think about it. I define it as an emotional thing, so no way can that stifle me. It calls upon for more intuition and a definite awareness to include people and their interconnectedness with each other. Never to see a person

as away from a context. So it actually kind of liberates me to stop thinking about it as something positive and with boundaries. Communities can also share conflict and pain."

Renei says this kind of thinking also made it possible for her to have family conferences or family festivals or even to include more than just the family whenever necessary. This allowed her to see her patients in a more holistic way and to be more open to including the significant other of the patient. This shift from seeing the patient in isolation to seeing him or her in an ecosystemic way constitutes a major paradigm shift.

The fact that Renei could also see communities as not necessarily happy and joyful is another important shift because it allows her to see beyond the romanticised elements of communities. She says that it also enables her to now see white Afrikaans farmers as a community.

Stella's Interview

Stella's Perception of the Concept of "Community" on Entering the Clinic

Stella thinks that, in the beginning, the definition of the concept of community was very loose. In her mind it was a structural concept, very rigid, topographical and geographical.

"Very structural, this was a geographical location called Mamelodi and it was inhabited by Mamelodians. We had a clinic and they came to us and this was community based: it was in and around the bowels of the structure. I

defined it as: 'Oh yes, so this is yet another black townshp' because I had

worked in other townships before and hadn't really embraced the experience

at all.... Within this I saw us as the centre of the activity."

Stella admits that this definition was very static. It was out there, and she could not

relate to the place at all.

"Originally, it was out there and it symbolised how I entered the community;

pretty much removed and keeping a sceptical eye on what my involvement

was going to be like."

Stella seems to have perceived herself as an outsider in this context. She saw

herself as someone who was coming in with a purpose and that purpose was to deliver a

service, to offer an activity in which she was "central". This suggests that she saw herself

and the other people in the project as the main structure of the project, without whom the

people of Mamelodi would not be able to obtain this service. She, like the other people

interviewed above, suggests the "us and them" idea. This promoted and fostered a

separatism which was not initially an explicit aim.

Factors that Led to a Shift in Ideas

A number of personal experiences seem to have been responsible for the shift in

Stella's ideas. She maintains that it would be difficult to identify one main event that was

responsible for the shift. The experiences were to a large extent threatening to Stella's way

of thinking and to her way of being. They also, for her, had a personal dimension attached to them. She summarises it in this way:

"It is difficult to say what the impact has been but I think that it was primarily riveting. It hasn't been comfortable at all. I think that having come from a very sheltered background, I had rigid structure to work from and community for me meant primarily family and kinship in terms of one cultural dimension. And being thrown into a context where you had to incorporate multiple realities: The reality of the context, the reality of others and having that alongside your reality. I hid a lot. For me it was about a bright face and acting brave and in the mean time being 'shit scared' about the underlying dynamics; especially at Mamelodi where things are quite archetypal and primitive to a certain degree. So it was disturbing in a way."

The profound impact of the experience that she shared shows how Stella moved from being an outsider to becoming a part of the community with which she worked by becoming more involved on a personal level with them.

"I think that the school for the retarded, which was not far from where we worked, was a true joy in the sense that it was not pretentious. Renei and I would use it as an escapist experience, we would remove ourselves from the therapy context and go there. We would just spend time in their classroom and maybe it was selfish indulgence, but the children were so

embracing. These were retarded and deformed children, really not well in many ways. I remember sitting there with Renei at one of the Christmas Carol days with the children on our laps and they were so expressive! We looked at each other and there were tears in our eyes; the sadness was for us, and not for the children we were leaving behind. This was towards the end of our training. It was the experience that touched us so much and we knew that we weren't going to be able to come in again and fool around in the way that had been possible for us."

Stella talks about other experiences as well. These include going to Mandela's village, going to see Prince (he is a faith healer who used to work hand in hand with therapists at the clinic), visiting Junior to talk about theatricals, and driving in the township with Sam. Another profound experience for her was this one:

"I remember once when everybody had left to see Prince and I was left alone on the property. I had one little boy whom I was teaching Afrikaans. This was not really my job, but I thought to myself this was an amazing opportunity. I was actually teaching a little African boy Afrikaans, because he was struggling with it at school. As we came out of the Zozo hut, he got himself a cold drink and went on his merry way. I don't know why that struck me as pretty profound, maybe because otherwise I would not have had that opportunity. It was also a reflection of my own history, having struggled as well through school, coming from a foreign background, it was almost undoing what was never done for me. I would have liked to have someone

who could have taught me English but I was pretty much self-taught. So that for me was pretty meaningful, it filled a space for me. I hope it links up with the idea of the healer being healed through healing. Only now, when I think about it in retrospect do I see it that way."

Stella's thinking about the concept shifted mainly because of her experiences during her training and her involvement in the Mamelodi clinic.

The Shift in Stella's Perception of "Community"

The concept for Stella is now an amalgam of culture. It is something that incorporates many of interrelationships on an abstract level. She sees it as starting with the individual and moving on to the family and the group as well as the culture of these groups. The superstructure of this is what is known as community.

These interrelationships and interlinking are brought about, for Stella, by her admission of dependency, which was not easy as she had always perceived herself as self-sufficient. On the other hand, she admits that if this process were to take place it could be quite "magical". It took her by surprise.

"... and realising that your limited vocabulary, if it has been vocabulary, or even a different way of expressing oneself, makes you reach out to a co-therapist. This for me would have been quite inconceivable because I prefer

working individually, I think most of us do. I suddenly had to tune into someone else's way of thinking and at the same time into my own. This included my co-therapist and even the people with whom I discussed this. This meant having to reach out to others and to need others which is something that I don't often do, as I am quite self-sufficient.... When it does work it gives way to something new and something quite magical."

This shift in her ideas about community meant for Stella that she had become a part of that which she was describing. She now has difficulty in separating herself from what went on at the clinic.

Stella sees the idea of Agape not only as a community. She sees it more as a rubric for a lot of things. She says the group used the concept to define fellowship, community-based work, and also the process by which people reach out to others, among other things. She says that in the end the concept had moved far beyond its initial meaning and could be manipulated in any way that people wanted to manipulate it.

"I think that in discussions about this thing called Agape, or the community of healing, or call it what you like the meaning dissolved for me. In conversations with others, it got lost. I don't think that anybody made it what it is now.... So I don't know, I feel a little betrayed by it, it is still a very foreign concept when in actual fact it should lie close to my heart."

How the Shift Changed the Way of Working

The first thing that occurred to Stella about her way of working is her involving of a co-therapist in her work. This is something that she would never have done before. With her realisation of the interdependence involved in a community, she also realised that she could only survive by including others and going through the process with them. She could no longer remain removed and be sceptical about her involvement.

"And then suddenly, being in the context was no longer that threatening. I had jumped in and now it became a matter of what I was going to do with that experience and that is why I say that it was quite riveting and disturbing, and sometimes joyful. I think that sometimes I sound very negative but there were some good things. But what remains in me is the turmoil, the struggling with others against others. So it has moved for me."

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the interviews summarised in the previous

chapter with a view to indicating how the concept of community evolved in the Mamelodi

clinic for the members interviewed. The constructivist epistemology will be used as a

paradigm in order to put the process into perspective, as well as to indicate its suitability for

thinking about concepts such as community. The interviews will also be discussed to

illustrate how the concept, if viewed from the perspective of a constructivist epistemology,

is not a concrete, timeless given, but rather a concept that evolves with time and experience,

as well as in conversation. Thus the experiences and conversations that took place during

the involvement of the members interviewed will be discussed to illustrate their significance

in the evolution of the concept of community.

Commonalities between the interviews will also be highlighted to show the

synchronicity of ideas, as well as the common meanings that emerged in the end. It is the

author's contention that such a process of evolution does not take place in isolation, but

rather that it is also influenced by the processes that others in the context are experiencing.

It is more a co-created reality, in a context where people are open to such processes. The

literature, which was previously discussed in the light of constructivist epistemology, will also

be linked to and compared with those meanings that emerged in the interviews, in an effort

to indicate the similarities between the processes of evolution in the literature and in the Mamelodi Clinic.

➤ Finally, community psychology as well as the clinical psychology approaches will be discussed. Using the discussions mentioned above, the author will illustrate the arbitrary nature of the differences created between the two approaches. It will also be argued that once the concept of community is thought of as a construct that is not static and definite, then working with people in what is called clinical psychology work can be basically about working with a community.

The Initial Definition of

the Concept of Community

For all the participants, the initial definition of the concept of community was based on a geographic entity. There existed in their minds "a community of Mamelodi". This community was characterised in one of two ways by the different members: as the underprivileged and disenfranchised community or as the black community.

If one focuses on the geographical community, one realises that initially, and according to the literature, community was defined in a geographical way. Literature based on what took place in the U.S.A. indicated that the initial definition of community was based on the notion of catchment areas, when psychologists moved away from one-to-one office consultations to working within catchment areas. This appers to have been useful at that time. They then had well-established boundaries which they could use as bases in the beginning (Hunter & Riger, 1986; Lazarus, 1983). Here in South Africa, the use of the concept of community can be seen as a way of institutionalising racial differences, coupled with a need to maintain separate development which was then done by grouping people geographically (Bozzoli, 1987; Butchart & Seedat, 1990b).

What was co-created by the minority in power became a reality and it started being spoken about as common sense. Townships became a place for black communities. Thus, when psychologists, who were predominantly white, started doing community work in South Africa, they started working with the black communities. The white members who were involved with the Mamelodi Clinic mostly expressed the same idea in working with the Mamelodi community, which in their minds was a black community. It was also apparent that even the black members defined this community in terms of geography and race, but never stopped to question this. All of those interviewed in effect indicated that they started off with the idea of the Mamelodi community. The community was thus "a group of people living in close proximity and occupying a given geographical area" (Minar & Greer, 1969, p.258).

The characterisation of this community as underprivileged and disenfranchised is one that was mentioned by Stan. He indicates that for him, the people of Mamelodi were people who shared a common identity, that of being disenfranchised. This is in accord with the ideas of Bozzoli (1987) who mentions that black people were stripped of their rights to land and put in areas designated by the government to ensure separate development. Stan says that he accepted this definition and it is an acceptance of the political definition of the concept as such. He saw himself as a liberal and a caretaker who was going to take care of these people's needs. This is also a political definition of himself in that context. The issues of unequal distribution of power, as well as social and political inequality, are explicitly expressed in Stan's definition. Renei is another member who mentions that she accepted the political definition of the concept and she says that her perception was influenced by political leaders' use of the word. Butchart and Seedat (1990b), also supports the motion that political leaders play an important role in shaping people's perception on the definition

of the concept of community. Renei goes on to say that she came to believe that: "The word community is loaded with political implications; we never thought that it could apply to white Afrikaans farmers...."

On the other hand, if one looks at Bozzoli's (1987) analysis of the concept in terms of community formation, one also gets a better understanding of Stan's perception. The people themselves, according to Bozzoli (1987), formed communities as a way of protecting themselves against external threats. This process of community formation could have further perpetuated the general perception that communities exist only in the townships.

The perception of the Mamelodi community as punctuated by the racial characteristic was also reinforced by the political status quo in the country. The policies of the government, together with the introduction of Acts such as the Group Areas Act (1966), reinforced the perception of a geographically defined area, with people of a black identity living together there. So here again the politics of the country made that perception of community a reality. Race then became a criteria for defining community. This perception links well with the South African history. The Afrikaner's striving to maintain his identity and to keep it "pure" is to a large extent based on the initial use of the concept in this way. It helped to keep people apart. It also made it an issue of common sense that people of different races did not belong together and should be kept apart. This argument can also be used to understand the initial perception of the members on entering the Mamelodi Clinic. Linda, for example, talks about having to travel down the road to get to the community of Mamelodi, as well as the fact that certain things would happen in a township and not in a "white suburb" such as Silverton. The geographical racial issues are explicitly stated here as related to the political segregation by means of land occupation.

In keeping people apart the concept of community had an influence in the perceptions about their roles which members brought to the project. It is interesting to observe that the white members defined themselves as outsiders in Mamelodi. They saw themselves as liberals, caregivers and intellectuals and this placed them in a superior position. It also placed them in a position where they could come in and deliver services and interventions without being touched by those they were coming to help. Somehow in the process of defining their role, they stated implicitly that they were coming to make changes to the Mamelodi community. This is an idea with which most psychologists enter communities. They see themselves as removed from the situation and as making interventions that are objective and that do not involve their subjective role in the process. They try, as Stella said in Blokland (1993), not to "get their hands dirty"(p. 42). (Note: Stella is known as Sammy in this document). While the two black members, Betty and Tabea, defined themselves as insiders, their perceptions about their "merits" were different. For Betty, she was an insider because she belonged to this community of Mamelodi. She also expressed how she saw the initiators and others who joined the clinic later as not belonging. Betty said: "When Whites come in with a project, you watch them closely...." Tabea's ideas were slightly different. This community was one to which she belonged as she was black. "I shared a common identity with these people, the identity of being black.... It was like more or less going to my home, Diepkloof."

Thus, in summary, "Community" in the minds of the interviewees was a political and racial issue. This supports in with Butchart and Seedat's (1990b) perception of the concept of community being used as an idea to keep people apart in terms of their political power and race. These authors also suggest that the concept is one that expresses racial separatism in a way that makes it acceptable to all and minimises the discriminatory function

of the concept. Unlike all other terms of social organisations and political power and affiliation, it sounds "socially good, constructive, to be supported and sustained" (Bozzoli, 1987; Butchart & Seedat, 1990b).

Another common factor about the initial definition of the concept of community is that all the members perceived community as something that is "out there". It was a community that existed in its own right, independent of the observers. It therefore existed objectively. This way of defining community distanced them from the community and made it easy for them to function as "professional people" who could maintain their distance. They could then enter the "community" both cognitively and intellectually without acknowledging their feelings. Stella was very apprehensive when she entered the project, but would not acknowledge this. Instead, she put on a brave front, which is more compatible with being a professional. This meta-perspective of uninvolved professionalism is well suited to the definition, as it depicts a scientific, objective way of dealing with this objectively existing community.

It should be noted that although the people defined the concept within a similar framework, there is an element of uniqueness in the way in which each individual discussed his or her definition. This tells a story of where each member comes from and what issues were of importance at that stage in his or her life. Each story therefore forms an independent reality for that individual and also gives an indication of how the interviewees attached meaning to concepts related to their world. This is congruent with the constructivist way of thinking, which places importance on the individual's reality as he or she makes meaning of it at that time.

A Common Process of Perturbation

Amongst the Members

The ideas held by the people initially were not the ideas that lasted throughout their involvement in the project. Most of the individuals experienced change through a process that was personally instructive. They had to give up their way of thinking about the concept of community, as a result of personal perturbations that varied in content and in intensity.

Perturbation is defined by The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (Dreyer, 1978, p.209) as: "A disturbed and unpleasant emotional state, usually with some mental confusion". This explains literally what happened to the members in the clinic. They had experiences which they describe as unpleasant and these experiences threw them into mental and emotional confusion about the concept of community. It is as a result of the experiences that they began to think and re-evaluate the meaning of the concept for themselves.

Stan, for example, talks of experiencing himself as dying within the project. He reached a point where he questioned his own relevance there. He did not experience part of the shift as having to do with an intellectual debate but as an experiential process of living. He says, further, that to go beyond this perturbation, he had to draw from resources within himself, resources that were based on very personal experiences (his involvement with traditional healers). These ideas coincide with Stan's issues of leaving the safety of his clinical training and reaching out into himself in working at Mamelodi (Blokland, 1993). This has implications for the change in perception from community as being out there, to community as including Stan, as he now had to use himself in the process. He reached a

point where he started questioning his way of defining the community with which he was involved and in so doing realised that he had tried to formalise his geographic and political definition of the community. This, he says, led to it's own demise. These personal perturbations made him realise that he was a part of that with which he was dealing . His initial distance was bridged at this point.

Betty experienced her shift as a result of influences from interaction with others. She had to go through a process where she could reconcile her preconceived ideas about white people with the way in which she was experiencing Stan. This kind of shift is not easy as one has to deal with many entrenched stereotypes of which one does not easily rid oneself. It becomes a profoundly personal experience.

For Linda and Tabea the process involved both experiential and academic components. Tabea shared ideas about an academic exercise, which she says led to an experiential quest for herself in the community. She also spoke of a similar experience to that of Stan's, where they both felt unsuited to and under-utilised by the community. She further spoke about how she had to find a community for herself. Again the idea of belonging to this black community as she had thought in the beginning was altered. The artificial sense of belonging with which she entered, was challenged and she had to explore other alternatives that required her to identify with people in a different way. She now had to find a community that could fit with her in the process of change.

Linda spoke about how she had to do much introspection and searching around the idea of community, as a result of the reading and conversations that were going on at that time. As Valle and King (1978) put it, reading can cause people to see certain topics differently.

The reading experience would probably be highly emotionally toned. These emotional responses could trigger off areas of self-insight as well as insight into the book's topic. Probably I'd also come out of the reading different in certain respects (p.58).

These authors call this kind of experience "the existential change occasioned by reading, or reading-change structures." Through this process and through conversation, Linda's notion of being an outsider was challenged and she had to look into herself to create the change in meaning. In looking into herself (introspection), she arrived at a definition that included her, a similar process to that of Stan's.

For Renei, the academic aspect of the clinic did little to change her ideas. She says she watched the group go through the academic explorations and it did not touch her at all. It was as if she watched it go past her. However, she later saw Mamelodi and Agape as emotional experiences in themselves. She says that the experiences of the place touched her at a very profound level. She says that in her search for community and her involvement in a community, she underwent many trials and tribulations, but she now sees this as a part of working with communities. This level of thinking, due to experiences, is parallel to her own inner turmoil, her own trials and tribulations within herself about the concept (she refers to it as an emotional experience). She also reached a point where she had to include herself in the definition of the concept.

Stella talks about this perturbation as personally riveting for her. She goes on to say that although she put up a brave front, she was feeling "shit scared" most of the time. She also admits that on entering the project she felt very threatened and experienced a lot of inner turmoil. Again, the same sort of pattern seems to emerge here, that is of looking into oneself and arriving at a definition of community that includes oneself.

Table 4.1

A Summary Depicting the Nature of Perturbation Amongst the Members, and of Synchronicity.

NAMES OF MEMBERS	NATURE OF PERTURBATION
STAN	Experiential Process (Questioning his relevance within the clinic and in the Mamelodi community)
BETTY	Experiential Process (Stereotypes about white people challenged)
LINDA	Academic and Experiential (Existential change occasioned by reading, and conversations which led to introspection; the experiences of Agape also played an important role)
TABEA	Academic and Experimential (Community's lack of willingness to use the service as well as the academic challenges to her notion of belonging to the Mamelodi community)
RENEI	Experiential (Emotional experiances and inner turmoil)
STELLA	Experiential (Personal experiences based on percieved threat by the context, as well as the realisation that she had to depend on others)

These individual experiences are of importance to constructivist thinking as they confirm the notion of subjective reality and of how different realities can be constructed within similar processes. They also indicate the importance of how people may be affected on an emotional level by that with which they are struggling. For shifts to occur and change to take place, people had to be affected in the ways described above.

<div align="center">

The Definition of the Concept of

Community after the Perturbation

</div>

The perturbation that took place for each member created major shifts in their perceptions of the concept of community and in the way in which they perceived themselves in that community. A rich diversity of definitions emerged from this process. The members were further instructed by the process to function differently in the community, to aling their activities with definitions that suited them.

An analysis of the process of the shifts in the definition of community in the literature can be linked with the shifts that occurred within the Mamelodi Clinic. In the literature, what appears to have triggered a diversification in the definitions of community, was the process of urbanisation and industrialisation. What took place was that a large variety of people came together and had to find ways of fitting in with each other in a context in which they had been forced, by these processes, to live alongside each other. They therefore began to generate new ways of connecting and fitting into different groups. In doing so, a wide variety of definitions of the concept of community emerged. Similarly, in the Mamelodi Clinic, a wide variety of people came together. Although their initial the concept appears to have been basically geographic, this definition did not fit in with the diverse nature of the

connectedness and relationships they experienced. Accordingly, perturbation took place and appears to have led to a wide variety of definitions. Their experiences appears to have led the members to identify themselves with certain groups in the Clinic and the criteria of geography seems not always to have suited the way they identified with those groups. The interesting aspect of this redefinition is that everyone who was involved in the process seems to have arrived at a definition that best suited his or her experience of the process of integration. From this, a large variety of definitions emerged; definitions that also emerged in a similar process recorded in the literature study.

It appears that it then became possible for the members to start defining themselves as a part of that which they were defining. They appears to have moved from defining themselves as being distanced from the community, to being a part of that which they were defining. It seems that the community became something to which they felt close. With this closeness, most of them appear to have experienced themselves more as people in a process and not so much as mechanistically professional. They appear to have experienced their vulnerability and began to view themselves as people who could be touched by the process. This acknowledgement of being touched by the community seems to have made it possible for the members to define the community as something to which they belonged and with which they could affiliate themselves. For example, for Stella, it brought to her a realisation that she was dependent on others. She also appears to have realised that she had to reach out to others and that self-sufficiency was not the only way of making therapy work for her. This for her seem to was the point at which she found a community. Minar and Greer (1969, p.60) express a similar idea when they say: "What finally binds a community together is a state of mind on the part of its members, a sense of interdependence and a loyalty." The members had to look at their experiences and

acknowledge the intensity of the connections they were making, and in so doing, they saw themselves as belonging to the process in one way or another. This is in line with constructivist thinking, which places emphasis on including the observer in what he or she is observing, and is then also in the process of defining.

The category of community as social relation which the author created in the literature study emerged in the interviews and links with the above discussion. After the shift in her perception, Linda defined the concept of community as a "network of people in relationships". Although she still maintains that community can be geographically defined, she acknowledges that it can be defined in terms of social relations. Renei and Betty's ideas would also fall within the category of community as social relations. Both of them bring out the importance of connectedness within the concept of community, and this implies social relations. Renei further goes on to qualify the connectedness as an emotional component that links people in a special way and creates alliances between them. Stella, whose definition also fits into this category, talks about interrelationships that exist on an abstract level. She also mentions the dependence that exists among the people who belong to a community, and that this is an indication of relationships.

Stella added another dimension to her redefinition of the concept. She initially said that part of community for her was the cultural dimension shared by people who feel a sense of kinship. Later, in redefining, she says that community for her was an amalgamation of cultures. This links to the category of "community as a cultural construct" in the literature study. Although her way of defining culture is different to that of Gobodo (1990), who defines a common culture in terms of race and colour, Stella's definition of culture is more encompassing, and is, as she says, "an amalgamation". This way of defining the concept would be more in agreement with Gilbert's (1989) thinking, which argues that

culture is not a static concept that belongs only to some people and not to others. It is to a large extent more inclusive and more diverse.

Stan's ideas, after the shift in the way he defined the concept of community, fit with the constructivist perception of the concept. To him, now, a community is something that is co-created and not something that exists outside the domain of language. It is not a fixed entity, but rather refers to shifting patterns of connectedness between people. The people then construct a reality about community within the network of relationships. Tabea also perceives it as a construct that has meaning only when people language about it and create that meaning. Linda's ideas can also be fitted in here because she does at some point mention that community is a co-constructed reality. This way of defining the concept is more on a meta-level, and validates the other definitions of community as a reality within their specific contexts. Thus it is not fixed and static. "Community is not a perceived truth, something out there to which people relate; rather, a community is what people define it to be" (Hunter & Riger, 1986,p.58). It is a product of communication and its meaning is generated through language.

It is evident that the members moved from viewing community as a construct that is basically geographical and political to one that is diverse and that changes meaning time and again. It is also obvious that the way in which it was perceived by members after the perturbations is influenced by what happened to them in their interaction with the community of Mamelodi and their connectedness with each other. From then on, Mamelodi became their Mamelodi, and not a place defined in terms of race and political power. It became a home, and an essential part of their existence at that time. Stan even goes on to mention that he would fight for his existence at Mamelodi as it had become an important part of him.

The similarities that exist between the process of evolution of the concept described

in the interviews and that described in the literature, have been categorised as a way of

creating clarity in terms of the gist of the definitions, and also to indicate similarities. The

author acknowledges that some of the definitions do not fall squarely into only one category,

but this has been done for purely illustrative purposes.

Table 4.2

An Illustration of the Changes and of Synchronicity

NAMES OF MEMBERS	DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY ON ENTRY	CHARACTER-ISTICS OF COMMUNITY	RELATION TO DEFINITION ON ENTRY	PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AFTER THE PERTURBATION	DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY AFTER THE PERTURBATION
STAN	Geographical	Based on political power.	Outsider	Member of the community (Agape)	A co-created network of relationships
BETTY	Geographical	Race	Insider	Member of the community	A group of people sharing common interests
LINDA	Geographical	Not specified	Outsider	Member of the community of Mamelodi and Agape	A geographical entity, a network of social relations as well as a co-constructed reality
TABEA	Geographical	Race/ Common history	Partly an insider	Member of the community	A co-created construct (created through language)
RENEI	Geographical	Race	Outsider	Member of the community	A place in time where people are connected in an emotional way
STELLA	Geographical	Race	Outsider	Member of the community	An amalgamation of cultures, people who are connected and dependent on each other

A Different Approach to Community

Psychology after the Shift

After the shifts, members started working differently to suit their new perceptions of the concept of community. Each one of them started to reach out to the people with whom they identified and to create change in a different way. The political emphasis became diminished in the process of change, thereby freeing the members to be more creative, more open and to expose themselves more within the confines of Mamelodi.

For Stan, the change meant changing the traditional role of a psychologist and moving from seeing therapy as the main focus of his work, to seeing psychotherapy as one of the rituals within the larger context. He also realised that what brought people to the clinic was not always a need for psychotherapy but at times a need to affiliate. Thus he started working more with the community that he had defined in a particular way. His approach then became more holistic.

Linda was also instructed by her experience in much the same way. She moved out of the confines of the therapy room and started involving more people in the process of therapy. She started to appreciate the diversity of communities that existed and acknowledged this by involving them in her work. She indicated that from then on she started to do the same with other patients of other races as she began to realise that communities are not confined to black people only.

Betty was also instructed by the process in a similar way. She also used the new ideas that she had about community and integrated this in her work. She says she would involve people who seemed connected with the person who comes into therapy, and allow them to help in the process of healing. This connects with the concept of community as being based on the connectedness of people in a relationship. Renei maintains that the change in definitions also made it possible to get more involved with activities such as family festivals or family conferences where she would get all the people connected to the patient to come into the process of healing. This way of working is also in line with her definition of community, which emphasises connectedness in an emotional way. In this way the family became a community that was connected in an emotional way.

The shift in Stella's perception of the concept is also related to the shift in her work. In realising that being a part of a community also involved interdependence, she started allowing herself to use her community, to be dependent on it. She moved from seeing therapy as something that she should do alone, to something that can involve another therapist more actively.

From the above discussion it seems evident that the members stopped doing "community psychology" in the way in which it is customarily defined. The alternatives which were opened up by the different definitions of community made it possible to target different groups as communities, and to work with their needs. So they shifted from doing community psychology with black disadvantaged groups, which is usually the main focus of community psychology in South Africa, to doing community psychology using different skills to fit with the needs of a particular target group.

The process of evolution of the concept seems to have opened up alternatives for the people involved. It made it possible for them to free themselves of preoccupations such as searching for a community they could serve. Now they started making interventions that were not restricted by traditional ideas about the role of psychologists and in this way freed themselves from the stifling boundaries they had created. As Tabea says, the new ways of defining community allowed them to work with whoever they identified as a community at that point in time and to move away from religiously working with what they had initially identified as "the Mamelodi community".

A Constructivist Critique

of Community Psychology

One of the main criticisms of community psychology raised by Butchart and Seedat (1990b) is that it plays the contradictory roles of serving as a custodian of the poor and the disenfranchised, and as a protector of the status quo. It maintains the state of affairs and in a way "helps the poor to adjust to those conditions". Community psychology also view individuals and society as changeable co-creations of the dialogue between joint action on a social level, and personal agency at the individual level. Thus it presupposes that what is a "community" issue is an individual issue. Thus the idea of individuals and society as an immutable given is created and perpetuated. The community psychologist then views him or herself as the expert who is able,

through "professional knowledge", to identify the cause and effect of problems objectively, and to determine the necessary solutions to the problems. The individual and the community become interwoven in the process as one. Furthermore, cause and effect are identified in what seems to be a scientific, positivist manner which is embedded in linear thinking (Butchart & Seedat, 1990a).

These ideas will be explored mainly through the use of the two models of community psychology discussed in chapter 2, and a critique on them will be given from the constructivist perspective.

The mental health model is a model that is founded on the positivist paradigm. The knowledge that is applied derives from the interpretation of epidemiological studies and data, from the frame of objective scientific knowledge. "Mental health professionals thus define themselves as passive recording devices who map the objective characteristics of a catchment area" (Butchart & Seedat, 1990a, p.89). The public is then placed in a position where they accept the professionals as a sub-group of the collective, who are able to obtain and possess knowledge about their suffering and its alleviation. The public are then in a position where they cannot easily challenge the opinions of the professionals.

The approach used in this model also assumes that certain psychic dynamics and environmental variables will result in psychopathology. The approach is then internalised by the public who have respect for this kind of professional knowledge, and this leads to a situation where they cannot emancipate themselves without the professionals, who have all the know-how. The language used, which is one of disease, creates differences between the professionals (who are

in this situation the observers) and the lay people (who are then the sufferers) and this prevents competition between the two groups. Terms such as "high risk group" also make it possible for the professionals to deal with the group and not remove the causes of high risk, further maintaining the status quo.

The social action model also communicates the image that professionals are discovering "objective" conditions of poverty, alienation and oppression. This reveals a positivist approach. Knowledge is again seen as given and immutable and it reduces the necessity for dialogue with the community. The model also asserts empowerment rather than prevention. Furthermore, legitimacy is given to the experts as opposed to the lay people. The experts define themselves or are defined as having the skills for empowerment, and thus cannot be challenged. New meanings can therefore not be co-evolved around their roles and skills.

The social action model also gives the individuals and the community a pseudo-democratic role of self-definition and self-determination, but the context is one of social inequality. As a result, the individuals and the community do not have a real choice, and thus only the potential for synthetic self-determination. In this way the professionals have the monopoly over the construct of reality, and this is usually presented under the guise of academic knowledge and experience.

In conclusion, it can be said that both these models are mediated by the assumption that professionals and academics have final power and authority over knowledge. They both reproduce the positivist image of human beings as driven by objective inner or outer forces beyond their control, to which experts have privileged access.

Many of the ideas around the initiation of the clinic at Mamelodi were based on the social action model. Stan, in initiating the clinic, wanted to help the disenfranchised people to cope with their circumstances. He had identified their problem for them and was going to save them from their distress. So their problems were identified in an almost objective and scientific way, with cause and effect a central feature. He was coming in as the professional who had this privileged knowledge of the situation of the 'disenfranchised' people, and who had identified it at a distance. The members of the Mamelodi Clinic also came in with similar ideas. They had identified the people in Mamelodi as people in need and as people with problems. On the whole their frame of reference was a positivist view of the problems, and of how these came about and could be alleviated. In this way necessity for dialogue was also reduced. Furthermore, Stan's perception, which was shared by the other members, was of the members as care-givers helping the people to cope better with the circumstances in which they found themselves. Here, too, in their ideas about empowerment, is a similarity to the social action model. These are ideas that have been criticised by Butchart and Seedat (1990a) in discussing the models. It was only after the interviewees had started redefining the concept of community that they started working differently. They began to look beyond what they had to offer the community to what the community had to offer them. They also started realising that the issue of community psychology was not such a clear-cut issue, but has to do with connecting, fitting in and gaining credibility with the people one works with. It also meant that they started realising that their status in the "community" was not ascribed but something they had to earn in their relationships with the people. This may explain why the service was not used initially, because the members had not yet gained credibility. The

challenge to these ideas arose from the perturbations, from which new meanings emerged. These new meanings also instructed the members to move away from a 'scientific' stance and to adapt their work to the evolving definitions.

From the information obtained in the study, it is apparent that a wide variety of definitions of the concept of community exist, and this has further implications for community work. The concept of community is an arbitrary one, and its arbitrary nature makes the idea of community psychology questionable. If community can be defined as a construct that exists through languaging, and as a co-created construct, what then is the difference between community and clinical psychology? Clinical psychology is about working with people who come in for therapy, but from a constructivist perspective these people can be perceived as a community of people connected by their need for therapy. Thus the differences between the two become inconsistent. The study also reveals that the different definitions of community led to different ways of working, which again makes the distinction between the two fields arbitrary. This cannot be ignored.

If one looks at these critiques of community psychology, which are clearly spelled out by Butchart and Seedat (1990a), one realises that there are inconsistencies in community psychology. These must be taken into consideration, and attempts must be made to consider their influences in working with communities.

Implications of the Study

In the author's view the most important implication of the study is the necessary realisation

for all those who become involved in the process of defining the concept of community, that

community is not something "out there", it is not something objective and static. It is something

that exists for as long as people choose to define it, and a particular definition may or may not fit

into every context. It is therefore proper to consider all definitions of community as valid in their

own right.

This also means that definers are free to define the concept differently for as long as those

who share the definition are in agreement about this meaning. A co-created reality makes it

possible for people to move beyond the impasse. It allows for new meanings to emerge and for

new ideas to be evolved. Shared meanings can thus create new meanings and move people

beyond that which keeps them restricted and restrained. In this way people can find new ways

of working, ways that are more compatible with the contexts.

This has further implications in terms of the division that exists between community

psychology and clinical psychology. If a community is not a concrete, objectively definable

construct, then any psychological work with people can be perceived as community work for as

long as those defining it choose to call the people they are working with a community.

Professionals then need not "go out into a community" that is geographically bound or that exists

objectively, but can realise that in the process of defining a community, they are actually creating one. Community then is not an objective truth that exists outside the world of those defining it; instead it exists for as long as people choose to define it as such. It does not transcend time and space, but exists within the realms of communication. It is a creation of the observer and ceases to exist when people stop communicating about it as such. Therefore, it is possible for psychologists to think about people whom they serve in their practices as communities, communities of patients or clients. Clinical psychology then becomes synonymous with community psychology and the division between the two becomes arbitrary and diffuse. Defining them as different and, even further, searching for a community, are thus subjective matters. As Linda says in her interview, she has come to the realisation that even when she works with people in her private practice, she is doing community psychology. She sees the individual client who comes for consultation as someone who belongs to a community and who usually brings his or her community with him or her into the therapy through conversation. She further says that her awareness of this makes it possible for her to call this community into the therapy session if need be. This is an indication of how the mere recognition of other definitions of the concept of community makes it possible to define communities in all their possible and valid existences and, further, makes the division between the approaches debatable.

Recommendations

The main finding of the study is that there is no objective community that exists outside, and that can be observed objectively. Community exists for as long as those who defining it continue to language about it in that particular way. It is therefore recommended that community psychology and clinical psychology not be seen as two different approaches, and that in doing clinical work, psychologists are working with a community, which they can define in one way or another. This community may be a community of people in need of a psychologist or a community of schizophrenics if one is working with people suffering from schizophrenia.

It is the author's view that it would also be important to explore how people feel and think about being defined as communities, and their experiences of how the definitions affected what was done with them.

It is further recommended that a study be done to explore psychologists' experiences of being the "in-between people". As this study has indicated, psychologists often become personally involved with the communities with which they work, often without being prepared for this involvement in their training. They usually struggle with issues that are real for the people with whom they work, and in the process have to utilise themselves to connect with these people. However, when moving back to their own worlds, they realise that their connectedness with those communities has affected those worlds. They cannot walk out untouched. This makes them "in-betweeners" because they do not belong fully to the communities they work with, and yet their

involvement penetrates their personal worlds. Their role as "in-betweeners" would be seen based on the fact that initially they are distanced from the communities they define, but that later on, they become affiliated and connected.

Limitations of the Study

One of the major limitations of working form a constructivist perspective is that it advocates a multiplicity of realities which may make its arguments diffuse and circular. It advocates the kind of thinking that maintains that everything goes and also that nothing goes at the same time. This is the case in this paper, as the author argues that an objective "community" does not exist, at the same time saying that anything which can be languaged about as a community, is a community which objectively exists for those languaging about it. This can be contradictory and can make the writings seem somewhat like armchair philosophy. However, it helps to open up alternatives and also makes psychologists question their assumptions about communities and community psychology.

The other limitation of research that is based on phenomenological and constructivist thinking, is that since meaning is seen as generated in conversations and experiences, meaning can never be "ultimately" achieved, as is the case with scientific research. This explains why the author used the idea of a "punctuated end product", because in this way it had to be established how far the research would go. This decision of the "punctuated end product" may not always be

agreed upon by the other members who were involved in the Mamelodi Clinic. For most, the quest into the meaning of community may have continued beyond the scope of the study. "Then the point can never be reached where all of the co-researchers' [or members'] presuppositions, which colour the research at every phase, can be uncovered and dealt with, or where the full assessment of the existential significance is achieved" (Valle & King, 1978, p.70). This means that the research was limited as to both time and practical issues, and if left to follow its own path might have lasted forever. It is also the author's contention that no person can be exhaustively studied in any context, which results in a limited account of the richness of experiences that people have.

The Role of the Author in the Study

The author selected material that would be useful by merely asking certain questions and not others. This makes the study subjective and directive as the responses had to correspond with the way in which the questions were asked. Furthermore, the selection of the verbatim material to be published was also subjective, in determining which material would be best suited. Accordingly, the author may have overlooked certain information that was important to the members interviewed, but that did not seem to fit in with the main thrust of the study. This is an argument that has also been used to indicate a limitation of the study.

The main issue behind the above argument is the fact that the author approached the study with certain ideas and presuppositions and this cannot be ignored. According to Valle and King (1978), the literature on phenomenological research emphasises actualisation of approach, that is, it advocates the researcher's uncovering of his presuppositions. It therefore becomes important that the author gives some information about her presuppositions prior and during the process of the research. This is why she thought it important to include her own interview in order to indicate to the reader where she was coming from.

The idea of "community" has always been important to the author. Being a black person in South Africa has made the author curious about the dynamics that exist in black townships in terms of connectedness. The author was always fascinated by the way in which the townships were based on a sense of a shared identity, as well as a shared cause and enemy. The 1976 riots were the climax of these experiences for her. She was exposed to strong links amongst the people, which made her idealise the idea of community. But what was actually happening at that time and what she came to appreciate during the course of the study, is that the external threat that was based on issues of life and death led to the strong sense of community. Community formation occurred as a result of the external threats.

The presuppositions with which she went into the Mamelodi Clinic were based on the factors described factors above. However, with her involvement in the clinic, these ideas were challenged. The author did not experience the "Mamelodi community" as particularly receptive to her. It was in that process that her beliefs were challenged, something which she tried to indicate in her interview. On conducting the interview on herself first, before anybody else, she realised

what she had gone through and this cautioned her not to expect the same from the other members. It made her aware that their worlds might have been different to hers and that the issues that instructed them to think differently about the concept might be different to her issues. And indeed, it made it possible for her to understand more fully the diverse nature of their experiences and the meanings that went with them. As stated before, however, she cannot make the claim that her research is not subjective insofar as she selected her material and questions which she asked the other members of the clinic.

The research was also important to her as regards its impact on her own existential issues. It became obvious while she was conducting the study and reading up on material related, that she was not dealing only with the research context, but that this had spilled over to the context of the totality of her way of being. She started challenging her artificial sense of belonging, her way of connecting with people, and even the issues that led to her need to belong in certain groups and not others. She also questioned her way of being in her family and her role in her extended family. She questioned her circle of friends and what they meant to her. In short she was thrown into another existential crisis, and this made her realise the importance of this study for her. However, looking back, she realises that this is what phenomenological research is all about: the experience.

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