

**THE COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF  
SOUTH AFRICA (PSYSSA)**

by

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## Declaration

I, Fatima Bhamjee, declare that this thesis, *The Complex Transformation of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA)*, submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



Signature:

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Date:

30<sup>th</sup> January 2023

## **Dedication**

For the profession and discipline of psychology: nationally, continentally and internationally. To PsySSA, who I have had the pleasure of serving for 24 years. I hope this thesis will be a beacon for the society for many, many years to come.

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I hope that my thesis will effectively contribute to psychology as a discipline and archives and that one day it will be expanded on.

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*To a transforming African Society...*

## Abstract

1994 saw the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa, which was replaced by a 'new' democratic society. With the fall of the apartheid regime came the need to transform and (re)construct a South African identity and the psychology profession in the country. However, the Africanisation of psychology is fought for on political grounds of injustice and irrelevance rather than grounds of conceptual and practical transformation. Often arguments for Africanisation seek to distance and exclude psychology from indigenous theory and practice, and vice versa, creating theories and methodologies that are immune to each other. The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) was established in January 1994, preceding democracy by four months. PsySSA is the amalgamation of several disparate psychological societies that existed up to that point. The mandate of PsySSA was to replace the previously racially split societies with an equal and democratic society. As part of this mandate, internal transformation was required while encouraging external transformation. Simultaneously, PsySSA has to represent South African psychology and psychologists, nationally, continentally and internationally. 27 years since the establishment of PsySSA, 18 past presidents of the society were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of their construction of PsySSA's identity and transformation. Foucauldian discourse analysis was used to analyse the data. PsySSA's transformation and identity were constructed in metaphorical terms and as becoming and as endorsed. The findings of this study indicate that PsySSA is an organisation transforming while being an agent of transformation for psychology in South Africa. Despite PsySSA having contributed productively to psychology in the country and having gained international recognition, PsySSA has no clear end-goal of transformation, making it challenging to assess its progress in this regard. A primary fault line in PsySSA is the continuity of the organisation in the face of discontinuity and vice versa. This fault line, often constructed utilising racialised and historical discourses, threatens the very existence of PsySSA, but is also the articulation point that fuels and directs its transformation. It is recommended that future studies consider the views of PsySSA's members regarding transformation in relation to the society.

**Key words:** Transformation, Identity, Psychological Association, PsySSA, Discourse Analysis, Organisational Transformation

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## List of Abbreviations

AJOPA	African Journal of Psychological Assessment
APA	American Psychological Association
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
HPCSA	Health Professionals Council of South Africa
FDA	Foucauldian discourse analysis
ICP	International Congress of Psychology
IPsyNet	International Psychology Network
IUPsyS	International Union of Psychological Science
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
NHI	National Health Insurance
OASSSA	Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa
ORIM	Online Readings in Research Methods
OSD	Occupation Specific Dispensation
PAPU	Pan African Psychology Union
PASA	Psychology Association of South Africa
PIRSA	Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa
PsySSA	Psychological Society of South Africa
SAJP	South African Journal of Psychology
SAPA	South African Psychological Association
SIOPSA	Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa
SOP	Scope of Practice
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNISA	University of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) was officially inaugurated during the Psychology Unity Conference at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on 21 January 1994. PsySSA was established as an amalgamation of the separate psychological societies that existed in South Africa up to that point in time. It was tasked with the transformation and development of the science and practice of psychology in South Africa to position the discipline to meet the post-apartheid needs of South Africa (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004), and so the organisation was left to contend with and compensate for the evils of psychology in apartheid South Africa. Psychology played a major role in the perpetuation of apartheid through various means including, for example, psychology's silence over racism, withholding of services from black people, the use of racist diagnostic systems, conceptualisation of black people as the negative other, maintaining a racist organisational structure, and controlling knowledge production in a discriminatory way. Over and above the transformation of psychology, since the systematic dismantling of apartheid in 1994, one of the biggest challenges facing South African organisations has been to compete globally while also functioning parochially. South African organisations possess an amalgam of complex cultures, however the dominant strategic and leadership practices are, for historical reasons, Anglo-American. Despite the recent changes that have taken place, organisations still lack an Afrocentric identity. This process has been particularly complicated for PsySSA, as the discipline of psychology itself is undergoing transformation while attempting to maintain global stature.

According to Nzimakwe (2014), when implemented properly, systemic Afrocentric values within an organisation (a central concept of this being *ubuntu*) may increase team effectiveness, promote good governance and, ultimately, organisational and institutional effectiveness. However, despite the available literature on organisational transformation in South Africa, there is little consensus on the nature, perceptions and processes involved in organisational transformation. Furthermore, although organisational transformation has become one of the most used change concepts of our time, consensus is seldom reached by researchers and practitioners on the explicit meaning of this concept. Investigating how organisations adapt to major changes has emphasised that implementation strategies are personality oriented (Bovey & Hede, 2001), while hypothesis testing in developing suitable management models show interest in empirical research on the individual perspective of

practitioners and managers towards the corporate image (Abratt & Mofokeng, 2001). Such models do not account for the larger socio-economic and political context underlying organisational change (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2006; Nkomo & Kriek, 2011).

### **Research Problem**

As of January 2021, PsySSA has been in existence for 27 years. During this time PsySSA has been involved in the transformation of psychology, as well as implementing transformation within the society. PsySSA has had to respond to issues within South Africa, while contending with other psychological societies on an international level. Of particular interest to this study were stakeholders' constructions of the PsySSA's transformation and identity. The stakeholders in question are the leadership of PsySSA, specifically those who have served as president of PsySSA between 1994 and 2021. Bovey and Hade (2001) point out in their study that the failure of large-scaled organisations in relation to change programmes is linked to member resistance and their perceptions of change. Organisational transformation as a construct allows discourse to signify transformation within the realm of Afrocentric leadership. This in turn enabled the researcher to construct resistance from member stakeholders to change and to examine the failure of incongruent leadership strategies. Further, few empirical sources have investigated organisational transformation from a South African perspective (Booyesen & Beaty, 1997).

### **Research Question**

The current research study focused on how past presidents of PsySSA construct PsySSA's identity and transformation within the South African, African, and international context, answering: How do stakeholders construct PsySSA's transformation and identity?

### **Research Aims**

The general aim of the study was to explicate what it means to be a transforming society within the South African context within a global climate. More specifically, the study considered how past presidents of PsySSA construct their lived experiences and perceptions of organisational transformation by describing their actions of leadership in an Afrocentric context. In contrast to the participants' constructions of PsySSA, the study aimed to construct how organisational psychology has been governed throughout its journey in South Africa bearing in mind the backdrop of its political and violent history.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The complexity of organisational change is best captured through a framework that can encapsulate the multiplicities of society today. One such approach is postmodernism, which is understood as an ideology that applies to a wide range of disciplines, which include art, architecture, science, philosophy, sociology, politics, and organisational management studies (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). The paradigm also provides a means of describing contemporary society in a pluralistic manner. Pluralism is a term used to refer to “the co-existence of a multiplicity and variety of situation-dependent ways of life” (Burr, 2015, p. 13). Postmodernity is thus achieved by focusing on the language surrounding human or organisational action and its motives, which are understood in terms of embedded contextual experiences, accumulated memories, and cultural traditions (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). As the trends in organisational transformation are indicative of wider societal, environmental, political, and institutional developments, it fits into the concept of postmodernism. Organisational change, as seen by postmodernists, emerges in social, political, and economic constructions that allows for an analysis of the meanings about life and experience (Graetz & Smith, 2010). In addition to postmodernism, constructionism was employed in the study.

Constructionism stems from postmodernism and assumes to know social, cultural, and organisational life through the construction of knowledge. Knowledge is constructed with the understanding of historical roots and culturally specific interpersonal negotiations, including social functions such as socio-economic and political arrangements (Burr, 2015). As a product of social practices, knowledge is sustained through language interactions. Language serves as the cornerstone of social action insofar that it stimulates further action in reaction to phenomena.

As a theoretical orientation, constructionism rejects the status quo, treating what is common or taken for granted to critical examination (Galbin, 2014). Investigators are interested in understanding how the accounts of individuals’ lives are constructed through their stories or narratives about themselves. The realities of social life are “socially constructed; realities are constituted through language; knowledge is sustained by social processes; and reflexivity in human beings is emphasized” (Galbin, 2014, p. 84). Society is viewed as existing both as a subjective and objective reality that is made through language. Thus, constructionism underpins discourse theory. This allows the researcher to construct the story of individuals while rejecting the status quo and unearthing dynamics that cannot be seen.

Discourse theory views discourse as an entity that involves perpetual change and explores the struggle between competing forms of discourses each representing a particular way of understanding the world (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Discourse analysis is not only a method of data analysis, but the composition of philosophy, theory, and methodology. Acknowledging that discourse is a form of social action gives meaning to social, organisational, and psychological realities. Knowledge is concerned with how stakeholders construct their accounts of themselves, others, or, in the case of this research, organisations. Research related to postmodernity postulates that stakeholders would not necessarily describe and discuss organisational transformation or responsible leadership in quite the same way as another person. Discourse analysis allows for a focus on the social construction surrounding leadership and how it has been used at different times to bring about organisational transformation (Durrheim et al., 2011).

The theoretical tenets stem from the philosophical assumptions around the plurality of varied but legitimate relativistic perspectives. For example, discourse theory assumes to know social reality based on the experiences and accounts of others generated by the language, text, symbols, and identity of people or some form of institutional entity. The theory and analysis for research, as seen through the lens of discourse, relate to constructs and the observable intertextuality that refers to multiple relations between texts and meaning (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

### **Research Design**

While bearing postmodernism in mind, both discourse theory and constructionism are interrelated with identifying how discourses about transforming society operate in a societal context. It is through discourses in texts regarding organisational effects that responsible leadership is identified and examined. Discourse analysis concerns explicating the broader historic and cultural context that texts are operated on or are constructing (Terre Blanche et al., 2008). Analysts argue that discourses cannot be understood without situating social constructions within a macrosocietal context (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Accordingly, discourse analysts study texts in order to identify distinguishable clusters of terms, descriptions, common places, and figures of speech that are often clustered around metaphors or vivid images and commonly use distinct grammatical constructions and styles (Durrheim et al., 2011, p. 86).

Language is the primary mode of knowledge collection and analysis. It thus allows stakeholders to interact and coordinate their views, attitudes and experiences of

organisational transformation that make shared assumptions, or a priori knowledge, possible to become known as part of social (institutional) life. Similarly, it is an activity that regards discourse as a social interaction, which is understood with reference to the context of where participants are situated (or their circumstance). A prerequisite of discourse analysis is ensuring that the scope of the particular research topic be understood in terms of the macro societal context (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Due to the aforementioned, language as a means of data collection and discourse analysis were employed for the purposes of the study. Although discourse analysis is well-suited to this study, there are some critiques such as not attending to non-verbal body language. The processes related to data collection and analysis will subsequently be discussed.

Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) is based on a poststructuralist theory influenced by Michel Foucault. Foucault (1980) believed that nothing can exist outside of power dynamics and power is not owned by one individual or group, but rather shifts and transforms along with ideological changes in society. FDA considers discourses as “sets of statements that constitute objects and an array of subject positions” (Parker, 1994, p. 245). Discourses are, therefore, a result of social practices, powers, and processes. More specifically, FDA is concerned with identifying discourses; the subject positions allowed or disavowed by these discourses; as well as the implications of these subject positions. Accordingly, FDA examines how social reality is produced and reproduced within wider systems of social power through an analysis of language (Burman & Parker, 1993).

The power dynamics rooted within PsySSA’s internal organisational system are complex, multifarious, and cannot be divorced from the power dynamics within South African society. A tension exists between the parallel and competing set of power dynamics rooted within external societal ideologies and individual ideologies about the nature of transformative actions. Hence, a FDA facilitated an understanding and unveiling of ubiquitous power dynamics shaping constructions of PsySSA’s identity and transformation.

## **Research Method**

Qualitative research interviews were conducted via Zoom to ensure that the language generated between the speaker (participant) and audience (researcher) enabled participants to construct their understandings of PsySSA in relation to transformation through their talk.

## **Data Collection**

The study employed convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Sourcing through convenience and purposive sampling allows for collection of data specifically related



to the research questions and aims (Cozby, 2009; Creswell, 2014). Past presidents were contacted and invited to participate in semi-structured, online interviews. The sample was comprised of members from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, and occupational categories. Organisational transformation as a construct allows for discourse to signify transformation within the realm of Afrocentric leadership. This in turn enabled the researcher to explore resistance to change from member stakeholders and the failure of incongruent leadership strategies.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

Data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with past PsySSA presidents using Zoom. The interviews were recorded and transcribed as soon as each interview was completed. Interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes.

### ***Research Setting***

Each participant was interviewed in their own offices, while the researcher conducted the interviews from the PsySSA office, creating familiarity and comfortability within the setting.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed the analytical framework of FDA as provided by Willig (2013). This framework involves five broad phases, as outlined below.

**Reading:** The first step in the analysis process involved the researcher reading the transcripts devoid of an attempt at analysis. This step is purported to provide the researcher with an overview of the data and facilitate an understanding of the tone and underlying intention of the discourse.

**Coding:** In the second step, an external coder was employed to ensure the relevance and trustworthiness of the text selected for analysis. The coding frame used in discourse analysis was developed from the data, considering the research question. In this case, all the information relevant to the identity and transformation of PsySSA within local and international contexts was identified and filed for analysis. The identified sections of the data did not have to refer to identity or transformation directly but included all the possible references to both these concepts. For instance, references such as “PsySSA is...” or “the purpose of PsySSA was to...” were all included.

**Analysis:** In this step the researcher first searched for associations between the discursive constructions used by participants and the wider contextual discourses. Next, the

researcher sought to understand the functions of these constructions; the positions taken up by participants; as well as their positioning of PsySSA. In other words, the aim of the analysis was to decipher in what ways participants constructed PsySSA's identity and transformation. Then, the consequences of these subjective positionings were considered. Finally, the impact of the current discourse, positionings, and identity were considered on the possibility of future transformation.

**Writing:** The writing of the results and discussion occurred concurrently as the researcher created a coherent account of the data analysed. During the writing of the results, the researcher continued to look for inconsistencies and tensions both within individual accounts and the larger discourse.

**Reflexivity:** The researcher considered how she had constructed her own identity within PsySSA and as the researcher within this particular discourse and the potential impact thereof.

### **Significance of the Study**

The current study adds to the body of knowledge related to the transformation of organisations within the unique context of post-apartheid South Africa. The findings of this study may inform future policy and/or strategic development within PsySSA. Future transformative strategic drivers may be informed by the findings of this research study.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Table 1**

*Definitions of Key Terms*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Apartheid	Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s.
Constructionism	Knowledge is constructed with the understanding of historical roots and culturally specific interpersonal negotiations, including social functions such as socio-economic and political arrangements (Burr, 2015).
Foucauldian discourse analysis	Foucauldian discourse analysis is concerned with identifying discourses, the subject positions allowed or disavowed by these discourses, as well as the implications of these subject positions (Ussher & Prez, 2019).

Governmentality	Michel Foucault (1980) defined governmentality as the “the conduct of conduct”. This was further elaborated by the definition of “the government of the government”. For the purposes of this study, governmentality has been understood as the persuasive techniques employed by members of its leadership to promote a particular narrative or to serve as a tool to ensure that members are governable.
Postmodernism	Postmodernism is understood as an ideology that applies to a wide range of disciplines, which include art, architecture, science, philosophy, sociology, politics, and organisational management studies (Thorpe & Holt, 2008).
Transformation	A change from one form to another form. In the context of PsySSA, transformation is a process of change management intended to move the organisation from where it currently is to a desired future state. This process must enable the organisation to cater to the needs of the members of the society, the profession, and the South African public and community more broadly (Red Hat, 2019).

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## Chapter Overview

The remainder of this study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 focusses on the history of apartheid and psychology in South Africa. The historical context in which PsySSA came into existence is described. PsySSA’s role cannot be understood without the historical context that led to the development of the society. PsySSA was established to transform psychology in post-apartheid South Africa, as well as to bring South African psychology into the international environment. It is important to note that this chapter presents a traditional historical narrative, and not a Foucauldian perspective of ruptures and discontinuities. This choice is deliberate, although certainly not without politics. The researcher’s wish to pose as an objective and apolitical observer brackets the construction of PsySSA as the work of the research participants (past presidents), and not of the researcher.

Chapter 3 considers current literature on organisational transformation. There is a paucity of literature on organisational transformation within the unique context of a transforming South African society. Several different approaches to organisational transformation are considered, such as the value aligned approach (Branson, 2007), the planned approach to change (Lewin, 1947), employee readiness (Armenakis et al., 1993), and

addressing irrational beliefs (Ellis, 2002). This is followed by a discussion of resistance to organisational transformation, before considering organisational power dynamics.

Chapter 4 explicates the theoretical approach used in this study. The study accepts relational ontology, and a material-social form of constructionism to avoid a narrow social perspective of constructionism. Constructionism assumes that reality is fluid and that this reality is influenced by an individual's social and historical context. Postmodernism assumes that although some experiences may be shared, each participant has had a unique experience within their presidential role at PsySSA. FDA assumes that power dynamics are evidenced in the language used by participants. Language allows participants to create subject positions that place them within power dynamics.

Chapter 5 explains the methodology used in this study. A relational design is described and the sampling process, interview process, and data analysis process are discussed. Past presidents of PsySSA were invited to participate in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. The transcribed data set was analysed using FDA.

Chapter 6 focuses on the findings of the FDA. The interpretive repertoires that participants draw on to construct PsySSA's identity and transformation are explored. The subject positions created by participants are examined, as well as the implications of these positions.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings in chapter 6 in relation to literature and the theoretical approach of a postmodern, constructionist FDA. Further, this chapter provides recommendations and a discussion of the limitations of the research as well as a brief reflection on the researcher's role in the project.

## **Chapter 2: The History of PsySSA and Psychology in South Africa**

This chapter presents a traditional historical narrative of PsySSA and Psychology in South Africa rather than a Foucauldian tale of ruptures and discontinuities. The choice for a traditional historical narrative is deliberate, but certainly not apolitical. Due to her longstanding and central involvement in PsySSA, the researcher deliberately opted for an objective and apolitical stance (in so far as this is possible) in order to bracket the construction of PsySSA as the work of the research participants (past presidents), rather than the work of the researcher.

### **History of Apartheid in South Africa**

Racial discrimination in South Africa can be traced back to 1652 with the arrival of the Dutch colonialists in the Cape of Good Hope (South African History Online, 2018). The arrival of colonialists in South Africa was followed by the development of an economy based on the trade of slaves, mainly from East Africa and Southeast Asia. This slave-based economy continued to flourish until the banning of slave labour in 1830. Although slavery was banned, discrimination continued with the “civilising mission” of British settlers in South Africa (Reddy, 2016). This mission did not distinguish South Africa from any other colonised society as none of the European powers would consider entrusting their colonies with full independence. None of these European powers allowed their colonies to vote, and social and economic discrimination was rampant, favouring white settlers over natives. This form of discrimination ended with World War II, as colonised societies increasingly gained independence (Khapoya, 2015).

The term “apartheid”, meaning apartness or separateness, was used in the 1930s as a way to encourage Afrikaners to maintain a cultural identity separate from the English-speaking settlers in South Africa. The term became a part of public vocabulary in 1947/48 as the United Party and National Party tried to win electoral support. During the struggle for political power, the term was transformed to mean the separation of black people from white people. Apartheid was officially introduced into legislation by the National Party in 1948 and regulated every aspect of life in South Africa based on race, including where an individual was allowed to live, go to school, work, and eventually die (Clark & Worger, 2013). Apartheid South Africa was based on racial segregation and on the control of South Africans, especially black South Africans. Black South Africans were denied full citizenship and did not have the right to vote. Black labour was exploited, often forcing black South Africans to become migrant workers as their legislated areas of residence were separated from job

opportunities. This forced migrant work led to the breakdown of the family unit in black communities throughout South Africa, leaving large sections of the population traumatised. In addition to other restrictions on black lives, they were also provided with inferior social services, incapable of supporting families emotionally with their daily challenges (Hayes, 2000).

1976 brought a turning point in apartheid South Africa. The tension in Soweto (one of South Africa's largest townships) began in 1974, when Afrikaans was implemented as a language of instruction in black schools. Afrikaans was considered to be the language of the oppressors, in particular by the younger black community. Several black schools refused to implement this policy and opposition to the policy continued to grow throughout 1975 and 1976. In June 1976, hundreds of high school learners protested peacefully by marching to a nearby soccer stadium. The police responded with brute force, killing 174 black individuals and two white supporters of the movement (Clark & Worger, 2013). These tragic events, known more commonly as the Soweto uprising, created an awareness of apartheid evils that many South Africans were unaware of. As a result of this uprising, communities were encouraged to form part of several anti-apartheid movements, demonstrating that it was possible to fight the system. This led to more violent protests, economic boycotts, and campaigns to release political prisoners (Hayes, 2000). Unfortunately, the government responded with more aggressive public control measures. These measures included the widespread deployment of army personnel in townships, the arrest of anyone injured by the army, detention without trial, and the torture of political detainees (Hayes, 2000).

During the 1980s, South Africa effectively disintegrated into civil war as anti-apartheid movements continued to challenge the state with increasing levels of success. Simultaneously, international condemnation of the apartheid government increased with, for instance, international boycotts (Clark & Worger, 2013). The continued use of violence to oppress resulted in the widespread traumatisation of township people, especially young people (Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997; Hayes, 2000).

Countless NGOs emerged as a response to the 1976 Soweto uprising to assist disadvantaged South Africans. These NGOs included psychological services that succeeded in providing support to South Africans to varying degrees. However, these attempts were not enough to restore the damaging role that psychology had played during the apartheid era.

## **The Role of Psychology in Apartheid**

“Organised psychology's historical role and evolution has often mimicked and mirrored socio-historical developments within the South African social formation at different historical junctures, thus acting as a microcosm of South African society at different periods” (Suffla et al., 2001, p. 28). One of the goals of psychology is to improve the lives of humans, or, in other words, to reduce human suffering (Passer et al., 2009). Yet, a look back into the history of psychology in South Africa provides a different narrative. Psychology played a major role in the perpetuation of apartheid through various means, for example psychology's silence over racism, withholding of services from black people, the use of racist diagnostic systems, the conceptualisation of black people as the negative other, maintaining a racist organisational structure, and controlling knowledge production in a discriminatory way.

According to Hayes (2000, p. 328), “even those psychologists who did not play a direct and explicit role in the ideological justification of apartheid, were through their silence and passivity, deeply implicated in the perpetuation of the apartheid regime.” Durrheim and Mokeki (1997) conducted a content analysis of all of the articles published in the South African Journal of Psychology between 1970 and 1995, totalling 478 full-length papers for analysis. They noted a significant decline of articles published in the early 1980s covering race as a theme while South Africa was facing political turmoil because of racial discrimination. They note that this decline can be as a result of many issues faced by psychological researchers in this time, such as the fear of being identified as an opposer of the government, or that these researchers may have believed that racial tensions would soon be resolved and that race was no longer an issue. However, by not doing anything, psychology was perpetuating racism (Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997). This reiterates Foucault's (1980) definition of governmentality. During the apartheid era, the regime, at the time, ruled by creating fear, dividing the participants by race, and creating an unequal society by perpetuating the “haves” and “haves not”. The broader field of psychology treasured certain themes more than others and by conceptualising itself as scientific and value free, researchers could avoid the topic of racism altogether (Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997). Similarly, Seedat (2001) found that most psychological research during the apartheid era focussed on the experiences and concerns of white people.

Foster (1991) refers to several services that black people were denied access to during the apartheid era. These services included health, education, and social services (Hayes, 2000). Social benefits provided to South Africans were unequal, for instance, a stipend paid to foster families in 1987 amounted to R79 per month for a black child, R123 for a coloured

child, and R152 for a white child (Vogelman, 1990). By September of 1988, the township of Soweto had approximately two million residents and no in-patient mental health facilities. Plans were in place to build a mental health ward with 24 beds at Baragwanath Hospital, however, this would be merely a drop in the bucket as hundreds of mentally ill patients visited the hospital daily (Vogelman, 1990). Access to social services were mainly reserved for the white population (Vogelman, 1990). Furthermore, Foster (1991) refers to several government inquiries into mental disabilities that focussed only on the problems of white people, such as the van Schalkwyk Committee (1928–1930), the de Vos Malan Committee (1942–1945), and the van Wyk Committee (1965–1967). Notable psychologists such as E. G. Malherbe, R. W. Willcocks, and L. van Schalkwyk worked on the upliftment of poor white South Africans (referred to as the poor white problem), while ignoring black poverty. Psychological services were mostly privatised and available only to those who were able to afford it, therefore psychological services were essentially limited to white South Africans (Vogelman, 1990).

The fourth volume of the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) (1998) report demonstrates some of the racist diagnostics systems used by psychologists during apartheid (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998). Diagnosis of mental illness was used to silence those who opposed the state, which resulted in the institutionalisation of these individuals in order to keep them under state control. In addition to this violation of human rights, this led to an increased stigma attached to mental illness, further damaging the reputation of psychology in South Africa. Misdiagnosis and non-diagnosis of patients in detention centres allowed guards to continue mistreating and torturing political prisoners. Likewise, patients were given the wrong medications and reportedly used as experimental participants without consent. Inaccurate perceptions of the mental health of black individuals were held, such as the notion that black people cannot be depressed. Any black individual displaying symptoms of depression was diagnosed with "bantu hysteria" and treated with medication, without any regard for the distressing and traumatising societal context of black South Africans (Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999; TRC, 1998, p. 138). Additionally, diagnostic approaches were (and largely still are) based on Eurocentric and North American research, which is not necessarily appropriate within the South African context (Baldwin-Ragaven et al., 1999). From as early as the 1920s and 1930s, research had been conducted to prove that racial differences existed in terms of intellect and mental health (Dubow, 1989; Foster, 1991; Louw, 1987). Differences in performance and development were considered to be the result of biological differences (Foster, 1991). For example, "In his 1967 presidential address P. M.



Robbertse commented favourably upon research showing race differences in intelligence, called for further such work in South Africa and even cited evidence of blacks' inferior brain size" (Foster, 1991, p. 206). It is important to note that these ideas did not go unchallenged, as psychologists such as MacCrone's 1930 work demonstrates.

Black individuals were more often than not constructed as the negative other in the texts produced during apartheid (Duncan et al., 2014). Other examples of how black individuals were constructed in a negative manner or as a danger to white people include William MacDougal's *Group Mind*, which stated that human happiness could not be found in racial integration, but rather in "obedience to the elementary law of nature that brings together those who belong together on the basis of common inherited characteristics" (Louw, 1987, p. 348). Similarly, in J. C. Carothers' *The African Mind in Health and Disease* it was argued that the closer white people came to black people the more frequent mental illness is reported (Louw, 1987). Contact between white and black people was expected, particularly by Afrikaans people, to lead to increased racial tensions (Foster, 1991).

Psychology had a racist training system and organisational structure evident in the manner in which training programmes and universities were designed. The first black psychologist was trained in 1960 and by 1992, 92% of psychologists were white (TRC, 1998). Pillay (2009) compared the intern training register between 1981 to 1994 and 1995 to 2008 at the largest mental health centre in KwaZulu-Natal. The results of this study showed that only 8,1% of the clinical psychology interns who trained at this centre between 1981 and 1994 were black. At the same time the black population in South Africa increased from 68,6% to 76% from 1946 to 1990 (Chimere-Dan, 2013). This clearly demonstrates the asymmetrical training of clinical psychologists. In addition to the absence of black voices in psychological research, as both the authors and the participants, the apartheid government designed university courses in such a way that critical thinking was discouraged and that students would eventually accept the status quo (Duncan et al., 2014). According to Merrett (1994), censorship played a substantial role in the publication of academic work, especially in the humanities and social sciences. The state controlled which academic works were banned and which could be accessed only with special permissions.

Vogelman (1990) examined the challenges that mental health would face in a post-apartheid South Africa. As mentioned, up until this point psychological services were limited to those who could afford it and were concentrated in white communities. Vogelmann (1990) predicted that mental health would not be a priority in post-apartheid South Africa as the country would be facing many other pressing issues, such as poverty and poor education. If,

however, mental health was considered a priority several challenges would still exist. Mental health services would need to be extended to all communities and this would carry a substantial cost. During apartheid, 14 different departments of health existed focussing on the different sectors of society. Post-apartheid mental health would require the centralisation of the Department of Health, which may result in resistance from those employed by any of the 14 departments for fear of losing their jobs (Vogelman, 1990). Creating more awareness of mental health would inevitably lead to an increased demand for these services, which would be impossible to meet in the short-term (Vogelman, 1990). South Africa faced severe economic challenges and a decision would have to be made whether more funds should go to basic mental health and prevention strategies or to the long-term care of extreme cases (Vogelman, 1990). Those who were privileged by the apartheid system would not passively accept a drop in the standard of care provided to them, which may be unavoidable as demand increases (Vogelman, 1990). Current psychologists may not want to accept reductions in salaries or being forced to work in poverty-stricken areas. New psychology graduates would have no choice but to work in these areas for extended periods, as those will be the only jobs available to them (Vogelman, 1990). Community health care has a lower status among psychologists which may prevent psychologists from entering the field. The expense of training clinical psychologists has been of concern, resulting in the need to broaden the field of psychology to others in the medical field. Psychological skills would need to be transferred to doctors, nurses, and other medical staff to assist in filling the gap between demand and supply. This in turn may create economic competition as more people are able to provide counselling services. Finally, the broadening of psychological services providers will most likely result in contentious regulations as to who may deliver which services (Vogelman, 1990). All of these challenges would await PsySSA as the post-apartheid organisation of psychologists.

### **History of PsySSA**

Psychology in South Africa was part of the Philosophy Department until 1917 when R.W. Wilcocks established the first experimental psychology lab at Stellenbosch University (Foster & Louw, 1991). In 1920 psychology departments were started at the other public universities in South Africa (Cooper, 2014). The South African Psychological Association (SAPA) was established in 1948 as the official organisation to represent South African psychologists in professional and academic matters (Nicholas, 1990). The organisation mainly concerned itself with the professional registration of psychologists as a way to control

the practice in South Africa. SAPA followed strict apartheid prescripts, initially allowing only white psychologists to register as members (Cooper, 2014). In 1956 the organisation faced a challenge that would split its members when J. Naidoo, an Indian psychologist, applied to become a member of SAPA. Initially SAPA was willing to register Naidoo as an associate, but not as a member, while they continued to deliberate on the issue of whether non-white members should be allowed in a country where racial segregation was a legal institution. The issue of racial integration within the organisation remained a contentious topic of discussion at the next several annual meetings (Cooper, 2014). By the annual meeting held in 1962, several developments had taken place in SAPA. Firstly, two non-white individuals had become members of SAPA. Secondly, a small group of Afrikaans speaking psychologists had consulted with then Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, regarding the legal implications of allowing racial integration to occur in SAPA. Soon after this, in June 1962, a separate organisation was established, the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA). The members of SAPA that resigned to join PIRSA cited the following reasons for their decision:

They had joined SAPA under the impression that it was for whites only. They could therefore not associate themselves with a mixed association. They viewed SAPA's present policy as going against their traditions and against government policy. This policy would harm the interests and development of the different racial groups (Louw, 1987, p. 348).

PIRSA was an exclusively white organisation supported by many prominent South Africans, including Verwoerd and a number of other South African ministers. SAPA and PIRSA continued to coexist until 1983 when the two organisations again merged to form the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA). Louw (1987) speculates that this merge may have been the result of the changing political landscape in South Africa, when government rhetoric began shifting to integration. This clearly demonstrated that the organisation of psychology and psychological practise in South Africa was not only influenced by, but based on, political ideologies. Nicholas (1990) points out that none of these organisations challenged racial discrimination or made psychological services more accessible to non-white South Africans. This lack of progress eventually led to the uprising of progressive psychologists with the aim of reforming institutionalised psychology with the formation of the Psychology and Apartheid Committee, and the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) (Duncan et al., 2014).

OASSSA was formed in June 1987 and five branches were established around the country. The organisation was made up of volunteers, all permanently employed at government hospitals and institutions, that spent their free time providing counselling services to non-white South Africans. The members of OASSSA were still mainly white psychologists attempting to provide services to non-white individuals. They succeeded, to some extent, to redistribute psychological services in South Africa, but failed to change the way psychological services were conceptualised (Hayes, 2002). OASSSA and the Psychology and Apartheid Committee remained racially split, failing to address the racial divide that they were created to overcome (Duncan et al., 2012). After the dissolution of PASA in 1992, the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) was established in 1994, uniting the various psychological organisations that had existed until then. PsySSA was established as a transformed organisation to represent psychology and mental health in South Africa. PsySSA is focused on the development and reformation of psychology in post-apartheid South Africa.

### ***The Establishment of PsySSA***

The Black Psychologist group called Psychology Against Apartheid Committee, under the leadership of Lionel Nicholas, Saths Cooper, Mohamed Seedat, Sandy Lazarus, Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert, and Thandi Mgoduso had brought into sharp focus the racist underpinnings of South African psychology and the historically complicitous nature of the apartheid psychology associations (PsySSA, 2019). The Psychology Against Apartheid Committee highlighted the need for psychology to redress the underrepresented and underserved black South African society. The ‘Psychology and Apartheid’ and the ‘Psychology and Oppression’ conferences brought international expertise in inspiring psychologists and psychology students to think of psychology not only as a tool for oppression, but one of liberation (PsySSA, 2019). A vote was held at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), three months before the first democratic political elections in South Africa, to decide on the democratic fate of psychology in South Africa. The vote was not without its issues, as contestation existed around the validity of proxy votes.

### ***The Early Years (1994–2004)***

PsySSA was officially inaugurated during the Psychology Unity Conference at UWC on 21 January 1994. The society embarked on a programme of

transformation and development of the science and practice of psychology in South Africa to position the discipline to meet the post-apartheid needs of the country (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Therefore, PsySSA's vision and mission had to revert to the original purpose of psychology, that is, to enhance human well-being, as well as to further psychology locally and internationally (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). All of this is underscored by seven core values, two of which are of particular interest to this discussion, namely, "human rights and social justice orientation" and "nonpartisan and civil society based" (PsySSA, 2010). The value of human rights and social justice orientation aims "to advance human rights and social justice, informed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and aligned to the South African Constitution; and to reconcile historically opposed groups", which is an important value in light of the evils of psychology discussed thus far (PsySSA, 2010). The value of being nonpartisan and civil society based refers to ensuring that the society remains an organ of civil society without any overt or covert loyalty to any political party. Up until the establishment of PsySSA, psychological organisations were formed along the ideological lines of government, deeply influenced by politics in South Africa.

The first strategic plan was formalised in 2001, emphasising supporting the growth of PsySSA and its goals through engagement and advocacy with government, civil society, and private entities regarding key policy imperatives and issues in psychology relevant to the challenges facing the country (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Strong advocacy and intervention by PsySSA leadership resulted in several landmark legislative changes regarding the role and status of psychologists. This included preventing the banning of psychological testing with the enactment of the Employment Equity Act of 1998, following the negative health sector findings by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as amendment of the Criminal Procedure Act (Act 51, 1977) to allow qualified psychologists to make mental status determinations of accused persons. PsySSA was also instrumental in psychology being declared a "scarce and priority" resource in South Africa in the late 1990s in recognition of the need for psychological services in the country (PsySSA, 2019). In addition, salary packages for psychologists in the public sector were improved so that they are now largely on a par with those in the private sector. The transformation process needed to ensure that psychology was able to meet the needs of a democratic South Africa, however this has not found support among all

psychologists, and resulted in periods of divisiveness and conflict within the discipline, which remain evident within psychology during times of change (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Despite numerous challenges, PsySSA achieved several successes during the first ten years of its existence. The first annual PsySSA conference was held in 2005 (PsySSA, 2019); the PsyTalk newsletter and the South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP) were established; PsySSA's Counselling Clinic on Transnet's Phelophepa Healthcare Train, which provides mental health services to communities in rural areas, as well as training for psychology students in community-based work was implemented; and a fellowship programme was established and appointed its first two fellows, Saths Cooper and Cheryl de la Rey (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004).

Additionally, PsySSA was determined to re-establish international relationships after years of isolation due to sanctions against the apartheid regime. The first memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the American Psychological Association in 1996. PsySSA has since established MOUs with 33 international organisations (PsySSA, Mou Partners 2022), and additionally South Africa was readmitted as a member to the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) in 1996 and hosted its regional congress in 1999. In 2001, Saths Cooper became the first South African elected to IUPsyS's executive committee. Furthermore, PsySSA was awarded the bid to host the first IUPsyS congress on African soil in 123 years, which would take place in 2012 (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004).

### ***PsySSA in Transition (2005–2015)***

The planning, spanning six years, and eventual hosting of IUPsyS's International Psychological Congress (ICP), held in 2012, became a turning point for PsySSA. The congress was hosted in collaboration with the National Research Foundation in Cape Town accommodating more than 6,000 delegates. Approximately 110 countries were represented at ICP 2012, bringing together South African, African, and international psychologists in an unparalleled event. During ICP 2012, a workshop that brought together psychology leadership from eleven African countries adopted the Cape Town Declaration to form the Pan-African Psychology Union (PAPU). The declaration recognises psychology's "potential to serve as a key driver in human development in our communities, countries, Africa and the World" and its strength "as an agent for change, development and empowerment of

individuals and communities” (PAPU, 2014). The PAPU Inaugural Assembly was held on 15 September 2014 during the PsySSA Congress in Durban. Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were represented.

Additionally, PsySSA became a member of the International Psychology Network for LGBT Issues (IPsyNET) in 2007 focussing on improved health, well-being, and enjoyment of human rights by people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Membership in IPsyNET, as well as ICP 2012, culminated in the adoption of the PsySSA sexual and gender diversity position statement and an amicus brief, in 2013, on the negative effects of homophobic hate speech in the South African Human Rights Commission v. Jon Qwelane case, which first served before the court in 2014.

PsySSA’s 2009–2013 strategic plan was reviewed in 2011 outlining activities and timelines. Regrettably, a more feasible strategic plan was developed in 2014, after the previous plan remained unaccomplished.

### ***PsySSA’s Growth (2016–2019)***

Following the success of ICP 2012, PsySSA grew rapidly in terms of membership, staff, processes, and recognition on a national, regional, and international level. During this period, PsySSA acquired its own office space in Parktown; the website was revamped; PsyTalk became a digital newsletter; and the African Journal of Psychological Assessment (AJOPA) and the Online Readings in Research Methods (ORIM) were hosted by PsySSA (PsySSA, 2019). PsySSA became the voice of psychology in South Africa, releasing a number of media statements related to social issues in South Africa, such as the Life Esidemeni incident. PsySSA responded to requests for amendments to the Criminal Procedures Act, the Child Justice Act, as well as the National Health Insurance Bill. PsySSA also adopted and assisted the setup of a library at Roseneath School.

While PsySSA experienced growth, the discipline of Psychology was in turmoil regarding the implementation of a revised scope of practice (SOP) for psychologists. PsySSA acted as a mediator between the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and psychology professionals. Additionally, an adaption to the Employment Equity Act brought the use of psychological assessment into disputation. PsySSA along with Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa (SIOPSA) and ATP-SA established a non-profit organisation, Assessment Standards South Africa (ASSA), to evaluate the ethical use of assessments in South Africa.

### *The World in Turmoil (2019–2021)*

A novel coronavirus, COVID-19, was first identified in Wuhan, China on 31 December 2019 (World Health Organisation, 2023). January 2020 saw the COVID-19 outbreak declared an international health emergency, and President Cyril Ramaphosa instituted protocols for a National State of Disaster on 26 March 2020. The state of disaster required the implementation of strict protocols to curb the spread of the virus. Social distancing, strict regulations on business practice, and curfews were implemented. This state of disaster continued with protective measures in place affecting the practice and teaching of psychology, ending largely in 2022 when all remaining restrictions were lifted. PsySSA responded to those restrictions by moving into the online environment. PsySSA has been in existence for 29 years, and transformation and service to the public remains priorities in the Strategic Plan for 2019 to 2022. Since the declaration of the National State of Disaster, PsySSA has been involved in:

- 39 webinars hosted by several different divisions of PsySSA in collaboration with other institutions or prominent individuals, addressing the strategic drivers: public psychology, engaging membership, strategic alliances, and national, continental, and global footprint.
- 12 statements released speaking to COVID-19 and other pressing social issues, addressing the strategic drivers: engaging membership and national, continental, and global footprint.
- 21 podcasts hosted by PsySSA divisions and members, addressing the strategic drivers: African-centred identity, leadership & transformation, public psychology, engaging membership, strategic alliances, and national, continental, and global footprint.
- 189 other notifications and communications sent out, addressing the strategic drivers: African-centred identity, leadership & transformation, public psychology, engaging membership, strategic alliances, and national, continental, and global footprint.

Despite the restrictions South Africa has faced regulating the movement and gathering of persons, PsySSA has continued to progress in the process of addressing the planned strategic drivers.

Although the aim of this research study is not to determine whether PsySSA has met all of the goals it has set out, it is important to have an understanding of the position in which PsySSA places itself with regard to these issues as a background to how the identity and



transformation of PsySSA is constructed by stakeholders. The historical conceptualisation of PsySSA, presented in this chapter, provides a background to PsySSA's journey needed for the analysis of the data. In the next chapter, the current literature on organisational transformation will be highlighted. There is a paucity of literature on organisational transformation within the unique context of a transforming South African society.

## Chapter 3: Literature Review

### Organisational Transformation

Since the systematic dismantling of apartheid in 1994, one of the biggest challenges facing South African organisations has been to compete globally while also functioning parochially. South African organisations possess an amalgam of complex cultures; however, the dominant strategic and leadership practices are, for historical reasons, Anglo-American. Despite the recent changes that have taken place, organisations still lack an Afrocentric identity. Therefore, the country, with a unique socio-political history, faced specific business challenges and underwent a radical social and state restructuring, as well as individual identity transformations (Nkomo & Kriek, 2011).

After years of isolation, South African organisations had to compete within a global market, facing several challenges. Firstly, South African organisations had to compete in a global market for which they had no experience. This was further hampered by a paucity of research and development in the South African market. Labour demands increased substantially, while the cost of labour remained high (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003). South African organisations were encouraged to implement affirmative action (as per the Employment Equity Act – Act 55 of 1998) to correct the wrongdoings of the past. The country had a poor product and service quality record, low levels of productivity, and foreign investments were uncommon (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003). In addition, South African organisations were faced with societal problems, such as high crime rates and increased levels of poverty (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003).

Given the indelible legacy of apartheid on organisational functioning, theoretical models on organisational transformation are valuable within the South African context. One theoretical approach to organisational transformation is the alignment of values. This approach argues that organisations can only operate optimally when the values of the organisation are aligned with the values of its members (Branson, 2007). Therefore, any organisation that is attempting to achieve organisational change will have to begin by setting out clear values for success. Once the values have been identified, they need to be aligned with the values of members, which is accomplished through members' critical engagement and acting in new unified ways (Branson, 2007). A value alignment model has been outlined and applied by Branson (2007). In Branson's (2007) model the core values of the organisation form the centre of change in the form of the core mission. Next, the performance capabilities of members are identified and upskilled where necessary. Then, success

indicators are identified in a collaborative way in line with the organisation's core mission. These indicators are subsequently transformed into operational values that result naturally from the previous steps. Guiding beliefs are created by asking members why each of the values are important to success or transformation. Performance indicators will be the behavioural outcomes of following the abovementioned process, which will be successful change if the process was implemented properly (Branson, 2007).

In turn, the Planned Approach to Change as theorised by Lewin (1947) is arguably one of the most influential approaches to organisational change in terms of addressing discriminatory ideologies that perpetuate systemic racism. At the outset, Lewin (1947) asserted that organisations must contextualise behaviour as change cannot occur devoid of a contextualised understanding. Thus, the process of change begins by mapping out the context of the behaviour that needs to change. Subsequently, the examination of group dynamics within an organisation should occur, given that, in accordance with Lewin (1947), individual behaviour is influenced by the dynamics of the group. Next, action research must be conducted: the collaborative approach that is necessary for change to take place at a group level. All of this led Lewin to develop his three-step model of change. The first step is unfreezing, which refers to challenging the status quo in a way that raises guilt within the group. This should take place in a psychologically safe environment to ensure that the disconcerting information is not outright rejected. The second step is moving, when the group moves to more acceptable behaviour. This behaviour should also be reinforced to ensure long-term change. The third step is refreezing, where the group reaches a new stage of equilibrium and remains there (Bryant, 2003; Burnes, 2004; Burnes et al., 2018; Cinite & Duxbury, 2018).

According to Armenakis et al. (1993), for an organisation to successfully change, a sense of employee readiness needs to be created. Readiness is considered to be the cognitive progenitor to behaviours that either resist or support change (Weiner, 2020). The first step in creating organisational readiness is to release a readiness for change message. This message should include the discrepancy between an organisation's current state and the desired end-stage, as well as a positive perception of individuals' and the collective's ability to change. Accomplishing change will additionally depend on whether members of the group agree on the desired end-stage. For example, if PsySSA members did not feel that a racially integrated and equal psychological society was beneficial to them as individuals, they would be less likely to enthusiastically take part in any change efforts or may actively resist change. All members of the group should have a clear understanding of the necessity of the desired end-

state. Negative information should be avoided in the change message; instead, change, and the ability to change, should be encouraged (Armenakis et al., 1993; Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019). Additionally, it is critical that the message of change is matched to the required behaviours for change (Self & Schraeder, 2008). In contrast to employee readiness, organisations still find resistance to change.

Ellis (1996, as cited in Corey, 1996), argued that resistance to change was based on the irrational beliefs that change would threaten members' way of life. Accordingly, Ellis (1996) developed a seven-step process for addressing irrational beliefs, which reportedly results in successful organisational transformation. Members of an organisation must acknowledge that they are responsible for their own emotions and behaviours, followed by the realisation that they are able to change their emotions and behaviours. They then need to realise that their current emotions and behaviours stem from an irrational belief. Thereafter, they need to become aware of the most common irrational beliefs that they use. This is followed by actively challenging these beliefs and concerted efforts to change these emotions and behaviours. Organisational transformation is considered a long-term process with continuous development (Corey, 1996).

Several other approaches to organisational transformation have emerged each focussing on different aspects of the change process. The perceived justice or fairness of organisational change can influence the success of any efforts. If the members of an organisation feel that the planned transformation is justified and fair, they are less likely to resist change efforts (Katou, 2015; Michel et al., 2013; Will, 2015). Discourse around transformation plays a significant role in how change is approached by members. According to McCalman and Potter (2015), access to relevant language and ideas is the prime challenge faced by leaders of change. Therefore, "change is concerned with changing the symbolic nature of the meaning systems that managers employ to make sense of their environments" (McCalman & Potter, 2015, p. 18). More positive discourse around the benefits of change and transparent communication about the consequences of change is expected to encourage member participation in transformation (Muthusamy, 2019; Whittle et al., 2010). Members are much less opposed to change when they are able to openly communicate their concerns in a supportive environment (Cinite & Duxbury, 2018). Successful organisational transformation depends on the balance between short-term and long-term goals (Millar et al., 2012).

Another prominent theory of organisational change was developed by Burns (1978) on moral leadership. According to Burns (1978), successful change occurs when leaders are

informed by the needs of members. In this approach, change is most effective when “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Several other researchers refer to the role of leadership in successful organisational change (Abbas & Asghar, 2010). Supportive and responsive leadership has been found to improve organisational growth (Katou, 2015). The psychological empowerment of group members, by change leaders, was significantly associated with behaviours that support change. When group members feel partially responsible for change and actively take part in the planning and process of change, they are more likely to support change efforts (Lamm & Gordon, 2010; Prybutok & Kappelman, 1995). Similarly, teamwork is considered a critical component of successful organisational change (Drew & Coulson-Thomas, 1996). Any organisational change that does not consider the role and impact on its members is a futile exercise (Nadim & Singh, 2018). Mainstream organisational change theories are written in such a way that, if followed exactly, they will result in success. However, these theories are over simplified and assume that organisational change is a linear process, which is not the case in most instances (Alvesson, 2002; Beech & MackIntosh, 2012; Buchanan & McCalman, 1989).

The majority of models on organisational change have been formulated in the northern hemisphere, devoid of a South African understanding. Accordingly, research has failed to contextualise the unique challenges faced by South African organisations. However, some South African studies have looked at organisational change within South Africa. According to Nkomo and Kriek (2011), the role of leadership in organisational change is paramount. They found that leaders of organisations that had successfully navigated transformation within the complex South African context shared a number of traits or approaches. The leaders in their studies openly embraced change instead of resisting it. They considered transformation as more than an increase in profits. Leaders included multiple stakeholders in the change process and empowered employees to actively take part in the transformation. These leaders made use of a hopeful outlook by positively reframing the issues that change brought about. They connected change to African values by creating a greater awareness of the African context in which the organisation functioned and even leveraged some of the collectivistic values of African culture. In addition, leaders championed diversity throughout the process and change took place progressively over several years (Nkomo & Kriek, 2011). The approach taken by these leaders links back to various aspects of the theories discussed above, including the use of positive messages and discourse that encourages transformation and diversity. The organisation’s values were

aligned with that of the wider social context, post-apartheid transformation, as well as with the collectivistic values of African culture. Moreover, multiple stakeholders were involved and employees were empowered. Although this study made use of a small sample, it provides evidence for the complex nature of transformation in South Africa, as well as the need for the implementation of multiple aspects of the different organisational change theories. While successful organisational transformation is possible in the South African context, numerous aspects can inhibit the progress made by organisations or heighten resistance to change.

### **Resistance and Challenges to Organisational Transformation**

Resistance to organisational change can take place at different organisational levels. An entire organisation can resist change, for instance the National Party during the apartheid era. Resistance can be based at a group level, such as the split between SAPA and PIRSA in the 1980s, or individuals may resist change. Organisational change and the resistance to change are complex concepts, intertwined with many different issues and aspects (Cunning & Found, 2015). The impact of change efforts is experienced by all of those involved and is not overtly obvious to organisations (Cunning & Found, 2015). In other words, organisations are often unable to predict the impact of change or the level of resistance that change efforts will face on any of the organisational levels.

Bovey and Hede (2001) studied the role of defence mechanisms in resistance to change. Projection as a defence mechanism was found to be the most strongly associated with resistance (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Wade & Travis, 1996). Those who used humour to cope with change were the least likely to resist change efforts (Bond, 1995; Bovey & Hede, 2001). Resistance to organisational change can be divided into four categories namely, (1) overt and active, for instance obstructing, arguing or opposing; (2) overt and passive, for instance refraining from participation; (3) covert and active, for instance undermining progress; and (4) covert and passive, for instance ignoring and avoiding change (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Studies have depicted overt and active resistance as a rarely used defence mechanism in relation to resistance (Cinite & Duxbury, 2018). The more subversive forms of resistance, such as cynicism, gossip or a lack of productivity are as detrimental to organisational change as overt resistance and are often overlooked as compliance (Ybema & Hovers, 2017).

Aslam et al. (2016) found that cynicism among organisational members was the most prominent cause of resistance to change. Group members become cynical when faced with the fear of the unknown and a change in the organisational routines. Cynicism, and the resulting resistance to change, is increased when members are not involved in the planning of

organisational change. The results of Aslam et al.'s (2016) study demonstrated that a lack of trust, exacerbated by uncertainty, may lead to resistance to change and eventually withdrawal from the organisation. Furthermore, the negative perception of change is aggravated by emotional and behavioural resistance to change (Aslam et al., 2016). Therefore, it is not change itself that is feared, but rather the expected negative consequences of change, especially when change appears to be linked to loss (Cunning & Found, 2015).

Similarly, any of the approaches employed to achieve successful organisational transformation may be used to explain resistance to organisational change. If the values of an organisation's change efforts are not aligned with the values of its members, resistance to change will inevitably become an obstacle (Branson, 2007). According to Lewin's (1947) theory, resistance can result from issues in the implementation of any of the stages (unfreeze, move, refreeze) (Bryant, 2003; Burnes, 2004; Burnes et al., 2018; Cinite & Duxbury, 2018). It is important for an organisation to create a sense of readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019), as unprepared, unconsenting members may experience a range of emotions and fears related to the expected impact of change (Armenakis et al., 1993). The message of change, including the discourse around change, should be framed in such a way that change is considered fair, justified, and positive to minimise resistance (Armenakis et al., 1993; Nkomo & Kriek, 2011; Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019). Finally, the role of an organisational leader remains paramount in the process of change. Leaders that guide, include, and empower the members of an organisation are much less likely to face resistance at any level (Burns, 1987; Nkomo & Kriek, 2011). According to Nzimakwe (2014), when implemented properly, systemic Afrocentric values within an organisation (a central concept of this being *ubuntu*) may increase team effectiveness, promote good governance and, ultimately, organisational and institutional effectiveness. Simply accepting that resistance is an inevitable outcome of change that should be reduced and/or removed, undermines the complex nature of resistance. Successful organisational transformation depends on a complicated combination of different factors, including psychological, physical, contextual and societal facets. Many organisations fail to investigate the underlying causes of resistance resulting in failed change efforts (Cunning & Found, 2015).

PsySSA did not only require organisational transformation from the pre-existing PASA but was also established as an organisation aimed at the transformation of South African psychology. Although much research has been done on successful transformation and resistance to change, none of the studies discussed here examined the unique position of an organisation for change. PsySSA was established in a societal context of radical political

transformation. In the case of PsySSA, the values of a majority-white organisation needed to shift to the values of an organisation rich in diversity. Some fear of the consequences of the transformation of psychology in South Africa was predictable. While some organisational change had already begun taking place before the official establishment of PsySSA, a substantial amount of change was still required. PsySSA was tasked to transform the practice of psychology, repair the harms of the past, as well as compete globally. The combination of challenges faced by PsySSA and psychology in South Africa at the time illuminates the uniqueness of this research. This process has been particularly complicated for PsySSA, as the discipline of psychology itself is undergoing transformation while attempting to maintain global stature. Furthermore, the structure of the organisation has perpetuated power imbalances that hinder the process of transformation.

### **Organisational Identity**

Albert and Whetten (1985) defined organisational identity as the way in which members of an organisation self-identify that organisation. The identity of an organisation was required to meet the predetermined criteria of being at the core of the organisation, displaying endurance, and being distinctive to form the organisational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985). This definition has been criticised for being too vague, as it is not clear what makes a characteristic core to an organisation (Corley et al., 2006). Albert and Whetten (1985) argued that organisational identity was enduring over time, however, the possibility and ways in which organisational identity changes has since become central to research on the topic. Initially, two opposing schools of thought existed on the changing organisational identity. On the one side, organisational identity change was considered deterministic based on environmental influences (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Contrary to this approach, organisational identity change was based on individual choices and actions. Since then, several different theories on the nature and development of organisational identity change have emerged (Gioia et al., 2013).

### ***The Enduring Organisational Identity***

Several researchers argue that organisational identity is something that is stable over time. In other words, organisational identity is permanent and durable (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Although organisational identity is considered stable, it does change over time, mostly at critical transition points, in a linear motion (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Organisational identity change happens over long periods of time and may lead to loss within that identity, essentially losing a part of the original identity (Romanelli &



Tushman, 1994). This process is slow and follows a predetermined trajectory (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). This form of enduring organisational identity is supported by the resistant members of an organisation may have to transformation and ultimately identity reformation (Nag et al., 2007). In contrast to the enduring organisational identity is the dynamic organisational identity.

### ***The Dynamic Organisational Identity***

Unlike the enduring organisational identity, the dynamic organisational identity suggests a planned reaction to external forces or internal turmoil leading to an active change effort followed by monitoring of this change (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). An unfavourable image of an organisation can encourage organisations to actively pursue a more favourable identity (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Organisational identity is not stuck in the perceptions that people hold, but rather undergoes continuous social reconstruction through organisational stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). A gap between an organisation's current identity and the ideal identity it aims to hold acts as a motivator for identity reformation (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Reger et al., 1994). According to Corley (1996), organisational members holding higher positions consider identity more fluid, while lower-level members consider it more constant. This often leads to lower-level members requiring more time to implement identity change efforts. However, Biggart (1977) found that lower-level membership was less committed to older ideologies allowing them to respond to ideological changes more rapidly. Organisational identity change is often driven by the need for external legitimisation (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Organisations are more inclined to shift their identity when the outcome will allow them legitimisation within their context.

### **Power Dynamics**

The British philosopher Bertrand Russell considered power to be a fundamental concept in the social sciences. Weber (1968) defined power as an ability to impose one's own inclination on others behaviour. In other words, it is the ability to get someone to behave in a manner they would not have if left to their own devices. Power dynamics extend beyond the influence of a single individual on others; it includes structural power. This structural power includes the power dynamics that exist within the broader society in the way that labour is divided and legislation is implemented, as well as other structural aspects of society (Eriksen, 1995). The unspoken or implicit rules of society continue to influence behaviour to the extent that the concept of free will may be challenged. Power is a resource, and like all other resources it is unequally divided among people. An individual is free to control their own

actions, however, only within the set of circumstances created by the structural power dynamics in which the individual is located (Eriksen, 1995). One way in which power is unequally distributed is between gender groups.

### **Gender and Power**

The South African constitution is globally renowned. Yet, 29 years into democracy and the promise of equal rights for all, power continues to be unequally distributed between men and women. This inequality has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing to light extreme rates of gender-based violence, as well as the insecurity of jobs held by women (UN Women, 2022). These trends are global:

Across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, are more likely to be employed in the informal sector. They have less access to social protections and are most single-parent households. Their capacity to absorb economic shocks is therefore less than that of men (United Nations, 2020).

Although this impact may be felt on a greater magnitude by women who are not contributing to the formal labour market, the power struggles are not limited to them. Inequality is experienced by women working in professional positions, such as institutions of higher education. Women were found to demonstrate the same commitment to their profession as men (Ramnund-Mansingh & Khan, 2020); however, they face several other restrictions, such as obstacles in academia and the stress of home-work balance (Ramnund-Mansingh & Khan, 2020). Women were less likely to be interested in tenure due to these home-work constraints and the higher teaching loads assigned to them. Furthermore, women have less access to the resources necessary for research (Ramnund-Mansingh & Khan, 2020). Gender stereotypes and expectations of men and women continue to hamper women in their career advancement (Budworth & Mann, 2010; Doubell & Struwig, 2014). Even after a full day of work, the home-related duties are often assigned to women (Chetty & Naidoo, 2017, Doubell & Struwig, 2014). Additionally, a stereotypical assumption continues to exist that women express a high degree of emotionality, deeming them ineffective at holding managerial positions, such as leadership (Franze, 2011). Due to a lack of self-confidence in their own abilities, enabled by a patriarchal society, women tend to be less likely to pursue leadership positions (Akpınar-Sposito, 2013; Koenig et al., 2011). Those who are hired to fulfil leadership positions often face further challenges such as a lack of respect from employees, or a demand to adhere to masculine leadership styles (Golele & Rachidi, 2017). The intersectionality of race and gender deem black females particularly vulnerable to

discrimination within the South African context. Crenshaw (1989, p. 140) defined intersectionality as “a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking”.

### **Race and Power**

Jaga et al. (2018) found that within post-apartheid South Africa, black women confront deeply entrenched systemic gender and racial prejudices. It seems that the way in which racial identities have been woven into existence has been ignored by legal scholars, practitioners, and judges. These racial identities influence all social systems such as politics and labour (Modiri, 2012). “Racism is a normalised and ingrained feature of the social order which appears often in nuanced and covert ways” (Modiri, 2012, p. 406). This is apparent in the field of psychology in South Africa. Although some progress has been made, much of what has been studied in African universities has been based on Western psychology (Nwoye, 2015). The problem with Western psychology is its inability to address uniquely African experiences, for instance interconnectedness, kinship, or relationships with ancestral spirits (Nwoye, 2015). Even the use of the term “race” in this discussion is problematic, as it reinforces the idea that race is related to difference (Hendricks et al., 2019).

In this chapter, the current literature in reference to organisational transformation and identity, power dynamics, gender and power, and race and power was highlighted. Following this, the theoretical framework implored will be explained.

## Chapter 4: Philosophical and Theoretical Orientation

This chapter explicates the philosophical and theoretical orientation for using FDA, starting with relational ontology, constructionism, postmodernism, and the link between these paradigms and discursive research. The use of constructionism allowed the researcher to take a more critical approach to the analysis. Furthermore, as constructionism uses language to reveal hidden structures and other realities, it was suitable for the nature of this study. This was complemented by a postmodernist perspective as it allowed participants to construct their individual perspectives without influence.

### Relational Ontology

Van Deventer (2021) distinguished three ontologies associated with accelerated changes in how we view the world. Object ontology enabled the scientific era, and relational ontology can be associated with the rapid transformations of current times. Still, mostly on the horizon is trace ontology, but aspects of this ontology are already emerging in current worldviews. Foucault's work spans the shift from object to relational ontology. His earlier work focussed on discursive formations grounded in a world of material objects and systems, and wore the traces of anti-humanist structuralism, which offered a comfortable fit with critical realism (Al-Amoudi, 2007; Joseph, et al. 2010). But this was not the case when later on Foucault became concerned with practice and power, which was more than discourse (Joseph, 2010). Moving away from structure, Foucault left a social ontology that was fragmented, pluralistic, and dispersed (Joseph, et al. 2010), as well as being fundamentally politicised to the extent that "all ontology is always already political ontology" (Oksala, 2010, p. 464), an ontology in which power relations become constitutive of domains of objects and knowledge (Oksala, 2010, p. 447). Political ontology is a relational ontology.

In a world based on relationality, relations, and not objects, are primary. It is not about something relating to something else; it is about a something and a something else emerging from and being differentiated in the relation. This means a division must be inserted in the relation, for example an "agential cut", as suggested by Barad (2007), must be made. What appears as the something and the something else depends on where in the relation the division or cut is made. Because the location of the division is arbitrary (Rovelli, 1996; Rovelli 2022) the something and the something else are not objectively real things that exist before the relation. Nothing stops us from considering the something and the something else as the observer and the observed (or more accurately, an observer system and an observed system). Because the division between the observer and the observed is arbitrary,

we are free to decide what belongs to the observer system and what belongs to the observed system.

However, relationality prohibits a representational understanding. In other words, this is not about the observer system representing the observed system. It is about the observed system making an impression on the observer system, with the nature of this impression being a function of the division between observer and observed. This should be understood as an intra-action whereby the observer and observed systems are co-constituted, rather than an interaction between observer and observed systems (Barad, 2022). These systems share the same existence in being entangled. They appear as the constituent components of the entangled state (the relation) through the measurement process (Barad, 2022, p. 1048). An intra-action is a material-discursive practice through which the boundaries between, and properties of, an observer system and an observed system are articulated (Barad, 2022, p. 1041).

FDA is a material-discursive practice that co-constitutes the observer system (analyst and analytic context) and the observed system (object of analysis). For Foucault, discursive practices are the material conditions that define what counts as meaningful statements, but Foucault fails to theorise the relationship between material and discursive practices (Barad, 2007, p. 63), instead lumping them together as “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). This leaves us with epistemic-discursive rather than a material-discursive practices, “... the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge [...] manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility” (Foucault, 1994, p. xxii). Foucault’s (1980, p. 194) *heterogeneous ensemble* is an apparatus, a term that Barad appropriates in considering the enactment of intra-action. Apparatuses are boundary-drawing practices and are not merely instruments for observation (Barad, 2007, p. 140). Thus

an apparatus is the condition of possibility for determinate meaning for the concept in question, as well as the condition of possibility for the existence of determinately bounded and propertied systems, one of which marks the other in the measurement of the property in question (Barad, 2007, p. 127).

In other words, the apparatus (Foucault’s *heterogeneous ensemble*) is the condition for the observation and the meaningfulness of the observation. It is a practice in which observation and interpretation are entangled and indistinguishable. However, the apparatus is not a

random assembly, and not ungoverned. It is regulated by Foucault's epistemes. It is a notion clarified by its use rather than conceptual definition. Pirozelli (2021) summarises it as a general system of thought that establishes the boundaries for discursive practices of an epoch, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possible formalised systems. It is in contrast to Kuhn's notion of paradigm that Foucault's episteme stands out most clearly as a condition for knowledge rather than an explanation of the development of knowledge. Foucault seeks to reinterpret the history of science and knowledge in terms of epistemes, but he does not describe practices of observing epistemes (Pirozelli, 2021, p. 301). Foucault does not provide an apparatus for delineating and observing epistemes, which means he offers no condition for the possibility of (he does not guarantee) the existence of epistemes as *determinately bounded and propertied systems*. Foucault's epistemes are contained in and sustained by a practice of historical interpretation rather than a practice of conditioning science and knowledge. Foucault's apparatuses are governed by their place in history, by historically determined interpretative repertoires of practice rather than practice itself.

### **Constructionism**

Examining the philosophical underpinnings of social constructionism is somewhat ironic, as constructionism is known for its refusal to philosophically privilege any type of knowledge (Weinberg, 2014). The main point of conducting constructionist research is to explore how thinking has changed over time, instigating participants to think about the progress of transformation, inadvertently changing the way people think, and as a result how they live. This is in an attempt to raise awareness of how objectivity and universal truths may lead to harmful and fatalistic beliefs, reinforcing the status quo. Social constructionists antagonise others into action by their critical analysis of other academic streams of knowledge production. This critical approach is also taken toward their own knowledge production, practising reflexivity throughout the research process (Weinberg, 2014). In the same way, the current study was underpinned by the appraising of the transformation of PsySSA, as well as its transformative mission since its inception in 1994. Participants were required to consider the transformation of the society to appraise progress (or lack thereof) up to the point of the interviews in the context of the transformative role PsySSA has played in the field of psychology and broader South African society. As PsySSA was developed as a reaction to the status quo of society, with the mandate of disrupting the previous detrimental

political structures within psychology, any approach to research that reinforces the status quo would be an injustice.

Power positions shifted dramatically with the end of apartheid, and so did the language used. It is within this discursive shift that PsySSA was established and began its transformative mission in a post-apartheid South Africa. The construction of PsySSA's transformation and identity cannot be studied outside of the social and political context in which it exists. The political nature of the study offered itself to the constructionist paradigm as the only appropriate paradigm through which the issue could be investigated. As a theoretical orientation, constructionism rejects accepting the status quo, treating what is common or taken for granted critically (Galbin, 2014). According to du Plooy-Cilliers (2014, p. 31), constructionist researchers are tasked with the responsibility of creating social change by "exposing, critiquing and changing any unjust practices in society". Consequently, the main objective of research is to expose injustices, in terms of oppression, as well as to liberate and empower individuals to build a better reality (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). It is important to acknowledge that research is within itself a political activity. The types of research conducted, how funding for research is awarded, what research is published, and the participants, organisations, or structures under investigation are all examples of research aspects determined by the dominant ideologies within the field of psychology, as well as by the greater ideological position of society. What is considered worthwhile research is determined by those in positions of power (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

With power being inherently relational, and given the relational ontology stance of the present study, it is necessary to consider the study's constructionist approach as relational constructionism.

### ***The Complexity of (Relational) Constructionism***

Essentially constructionism, a descendent of constructivism, concerns learning (observing, interpreting, understanding) by *making* (Alanazi, 2016), which fits with the relational ontology discussed above, and it blends the material and social domains, implicated in Michael Foucault's work (V. van Deventer, personal communication, June-July, 2023). Embedded in relational ontology, constructionism transcends the Cartesian subject-object distinction traditionally associated with scientific observation, undermining the idea that what is given in observation is a representation of reality. Constructionism emerged out of frustration with the non-humanistic approach employed by positivism, as well as the passive approach of interpretivism. As a result, constructionism emerged as critical realism,

combining the assumption that an external reality exists, from positivism, and that reality is constructed between people, from interpretivism, in a unique way (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). However, this *combination* of positivist and interpretivist assumptions cannot be taken at face value. From a relational ontology perspective, external reality and interpretivism do not constitute a combination, but an entanglement.

The realist-interpretative combination of constructionism encourages representationalism based on an absolute difference between external reality and the content of constructions. In relational ontology, constructionism begins with the intra-action that delineates the observer and the observed, a process in which the observer obtains an impression that identifies the observer as separable from the observed (Barad, 2007, p. 176). But this separability is not a universal. It is a function of the particular intra-action (the apparatus) that co-constructs the observer and the observed. The observer impression identifies the observer in relation to the observed, and constitutes an observation of the observed, or specific features thereof. The intra-action determines which impressions can and which cannot be obtained. These impressions manifest in concrete, tangible form. For example, in the current study past presidents and PsySSA are co-constructed through the enactment of semi-structured interviews (an intra-action), resulting in past presidents' impressions, manifested as verbal accounts. What can be accounted for, and what cannot, is a function of the semi-structured interview.

An observer impression embodies the difference and relatedness of the observer and the observed, but it does not select the kind of relationship, because it is about separability within the relationship and not about the relationship. The observer impression is inherently relationally neutral. For example, that the relationship is causal is a selection made for and not by the observer impression. Thus, in the present study, a past president's impression (manifested as a verbal account) concerns the separability of the past president and PsySSA, but does not select the kind of past president–PsySSA relationship, such as whether the past president or PsySSA regulates the account. The verbal account does not distinguish between the past president's preference for particular 'words' and PsySSA's necessitating the use of particular 'words'.

Considering the nature of the relationship between the observer and observed requires a second observer intra-acting with the first observer-observed intra-action, or more precisely the manifested impression of the first observer-observed intra-action as a function of the apparatus that contains the intra-action. Thus, the second observer's impression is not merely about the nature of the initial observer-observed relationship (such as being causative) but



also concerns the context in which the initial intra-action occurs, involving matters like subject positions, historical rootedness, socio-economic/cultural and political differentials, as well as the implications of these positions. Furthermore, knowledge is constructed with the understanding of historical roots and culturally specific interpersonal negotiations, including social functions such as socio-economic and political arrangements (Burr, 2015). From a relational ontology perspective, constructionism is much more complex than what a *combination* of positivist and interpretivist assumptions would suggest.

### ***Objectivity in (Relational) Constructionism***

That knowing begins with an observer impression that embodies observer-observed separability within the observer-observed relationship raises the question of the possibility of objective knowledge. The referent of objectivity, what we aim to be objective about, is not the observed, but rather the entire observer-observed phenomenon. Following Niels Bohr, objectivity refers to the determinacy and reproducibility of an observer impression obtained in the process of intra-action (Barad, 2007, pp. 173-174). *Reading* a determinate and reproducible sign (the observer impression as a sign of the observer-observed separability within their relation) results in an unambiguous reader impression. For example, in the current study the researcher impression is objective to the extent that the past presidents offer determined and reproducible impressions of PsySSA. However, this objectivity is not absolute, but always in relation to the researcher.

### ***Language in (Relational) Constructionism***

For Barad (2022, p. 1042) making sense is not about *signification*, but rather a matter of articulation, of *how things differentially articulate with one another* (p. 1042). However, in stating this, Barad misses a correspondence between articulation and signification, namely that signification is a matter of how signifier and signified differentially articulate with one another. Therefore, one needs to look more closely at how language figures in constructionism. Doing so begins with a matter that Barad (2007) deals with in terms of secondary intra-actions and that Rovelli (1996) addresses in some detail as the matter of a second observer's observation of an initial observer's observing.

The secondary intra-action co-constructs the second observer and the initial observer impression, creating a second observer impression identifying the second observer in relation to the initial observer impression, and constituting an observation of the initial observer impression, or specific features thereof. The initial observer impression identifies the initial observer as separable from the observed. It identifies the initial observer as observer of a

particular observed. But in the secondary intra-action the identification of the initial observer and hence the identified initial observer is the observed in the identification of the second observer as observer. The initial observer is constituted as observer and observed. Whether this is considered an observation or part of the universe making itself intelligible to another part is a matter of preference (Barad, 2007, p. 176).

Barad's choice for articulation, rather than signification, is not merely a matter of preference but a matter of her defence against a classical realist understanding of signification (Barad, 2007, p. 205), namely that a pre-existing entity (an observer) receives a mark from a separate determinate entity (an observed) (p. 175). However, this prohibits her from considering the observer and observed as signifier and signified and signification as the signifier becoming the signified (Derrida, 1982, p. 13) – the observer becoming the observed, in which the observer is neither simply material, nor simply concept, and captures an irreducible difference, the difference between observing and being observed, within itself. This observer is not merely the conjoined material-discursive condition or practice that Barad (2007, p. 152) desires and no material-discursive intra-action can resolve its inherent indeterminacy. The signifier-signified, the observing-observed observer, neither material nor concept and inherently indeterminate, is the condition for a knowing that precedes material-discursive intra-action. Barad's (2022, p. 1042) choice against signification leads to her foreclosing on the material: discursive practices are *material* processes of intra-activity, and discourse is not language but the *material* condition of the possibility of meaning-making.

In the present study, a semi-structured interview (apparatus) delineates the past president in relation to PsySSA, resulting in a verbal account of the observing past president. In a second intra-action, an analytic apparatus delineates the researcher in relation to the verbal account of the observing past president and establishes a causal relation between the past president and PsySSA, constituting PsySSA as the source of the past president's verbal account, and the past president as a discursive practitioner. The observing past president is a verbaliser and the observed past president a discursive practitioner, a verbalising discursive practitioner, and materialises (is embodied) in the indeterminable space between verbalising and being a discursive practitioner. This interplay of the material and the discursive is an example of the trace of signification that Derrida describes (1982, p. 13), and not merely the material and discursive conjoined as Barad suggests (2007, p. 152). The relational constructionist approach differs markedly from a realist perspective in which the past-president is a *material* body that verbalises and engages in discursive practice.

## **The Analytic Apparatus**

The analytic apparatus that enacts the intra-action that constitutes the researcher as separable from the researched is a methodological tool embedded in the socio-political context of the research. As such it has socio-political and methodological dimensions. Three of these dimensions are described below, namely postmodernism, the relationship between constructionism and discourse theory, and FDA.

### **Postmodernism**

The term “postmodernism” encompasses a wide range of approaches that stand in opposition to the coherence and rationality of the modern world (Sey, 1999). This research assumed that although participants may have had shared experiences with regards to the society, each individual had their own independent experiences and resulting perceptions of PsySSA. Similarly, the organisational change studied through the transformation of PsySSA had taken place within a larger social and political context from which the society and its actions cannot be divorced. This constant flux with the broader South African and international societies do not fit the neatly ordered categories required by modernism. Postmodernism attempts to address the shortcomings of modernism, which is reductionistic in its ordering and categorising of human experience and understanding. The focus is on the perpetual change or flux in being as opposed to the stability and order of modernism (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). The varied experiences and challenges faced by the past presidents of PsySSA implied that the reality of leadership in a complex ideologically driven society cannot be objectively measured. Postmodernism assumes that knowledge needs to be set within the circumstances of our society today within the numerous perspectives of race, class, gender, and any other categories. Postmodernism also provides a means of describing contemporary society in a pluralistic manner. Pluralism is a term used to refer to “the co-existence of a multiplicity and variety of situation-dependent ways of life” (Burr, 2015, p. 13). Postmodernity is thus achieved by focusing on the language surrounding human, or organisational action and its motives, which are understood in terms of embedded contextual experiences, accumulated memories, and cultural traditions (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). Organisational change as seen by postmodernists emerges in social, political, and economic constructions that analyse meaning about real-world life and experience (Graetz & Smith, 2010). Postmodernism is especially well-suited to discourse analysis as it views the orderliness of the world as a direct result of the naming and symbolic representation

associated with language. Without the rules and representations of language, reality would be a “shapeless and indistinct mass” (Thorpe & Holt, 2008, p. 163).

### **Relationship Between Constructionism and Discourse Theory**

While bearing postmodernism in mind, both discourse theory and constructionism are interrelated with identifying how discourses about transforming societies operate in a societal and political context. It is through discourses in texts regarding organisational effects that responsible leadership is identified and examined. Discourse analysis concerns explicating the broader historic and cultural context that texts are operated on, or are constructing in (Terre Blanche et al., 2008). Discourses cannot be understood without situating social constructions within a macrosocietal context (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Accordingly, “discourse analysts study texts in order to identify distinguishable cluster of terms, descriptions, common places and figures of speech often clustered around metaphors or vivid images and often using distinct grammatical constructions and styles” (Durrheim et al., 2011, p. 86).

Discourse analysis allows the researcher to analyse the language used (signifiers), the meaning created by this particular language (signified), and the relationship between these. The way language was used to describe perceptions of PsySSA was of paramount importance. The use of language within psychology inadvertently creates positions of power (Doblytė, 2022), for example by labelling an individual as a “patient”, a great deal of agency is lost to the “therapist” in terms of mental health (Doblytė, 2021). The therapist becomes the expert, while the patient becomes incapable of regulating their own mental health (Doblytė, 2022).

### **Foucauldian Discourse Analysis**

This critical approach to discourse analysis began as critical linguistics, which sought to demonstrate the role that linguistics played within ideological movements. Although there are several different versions of critical discourse analysis, they have one thing in common: the importance of language as a phenomenon that is both formed by and forms the social world, and, in this vein, language is thought to implicitly carry the power dynamics tacitly operating within the contemporary society (Willig, 2013).

Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) maintain that all critical discourse analyses have five guidelines in common. These are: (1) discursive practise allows change to take place in everyday life; (2) discourse both forms and is formed by discursive practices; (3) language cannot be studied separately from its social context; (4) discourse or language can function in ideological ways; and (5) discourse analysis is not neutral as it is critical in a way that

inspires social change. Discourse influences the construction of identity, relationships, as well as knowledge and meaning systems (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

FDA is based on a poststructuralist theory influenced by Michel Foucault (Ussher & Prez, 2019). Foucault (1980) believed that nothing can exist outside of power dynamics and power is not owned by one individual or group, but rather shifts and transforms along with ideological changes in society. FDA considers discourses as “sets of statements that constitute objects and an array of subject positions” (Parker, 1994, p. 245). Discourses are, therefore, a result of social practices, powers, and processes. More specifically, FDA is concerned with identifying discourses, the subject positions allowed or disavowed by these discourses, as well as the implications of these subject positions (Ussher & Prez, 2019). Willig (2013) developed the guidelines for the use of FDA. Accordingly, FDA examines how social reality is produced and reproduced within wider systems of social power through an analysis of language (Burman & Parker, 1993).

FDA as explained by Hook (2001), denotes that there is no structured Foucauldian method when conducting analysis. However, as it considers history, materiality, and underlying conditions of knowledge, it allows the researcher to construct a narrative based on the data collected. Furthermore, as FDA is based on how close the sample is to the knowledge, materiality, and power, FDA requires the researcher to have historical conceptualisation, to regard the discourse as knowledge (supporting structures of power), and to move away from materiality to focus on the “the markings of textuality”. This allows the researcher to engage with the data collected (Hook, 2001). Based on the above, FDA is well positioned to analyse the data collected for this study.

The power dynamics rooted within PsySSA’s internal organisational system are complex, multifarious, and cannot be divorced from the power dynamics within South African society. A tension exists between the parallel and competing set of power dynamics rooted within societal external ideologies and individual ideologies about the nature of transformative actions. Hence, FDA facilitated an understanding and unveiling of ubiquitous power dynamics shaping constructions of PsySSA’s identity and transformation.

## **In Conclusion**

This chapter described the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the current research project. It situated the project as ontologically relational, following a constructionist approach and embedded in a contemporary socio-political research context.

## **Chapter 5: Methodology**

Despite the abundance of international literature on organisational transformation, a paucity of studies contextualise organisational transformation within South Africa's unique socio-political milieu. Furthermore, although organisational transformation has become one of the most used change concepts of our time, there is limited understanding of how stakeholders make sense of this concept. Considering that the discipline of psychology has itself been undergoing transformation post-apartheid, it was important that the researcher applied a methodology that allowed for an exploratory study that complemented the theoretical framework. Given the shortcomings of literature and the unique positioning of PsySSA, a contextualised understanding of how stakeholders make sense of the society's identity and transformative efforts is required. Therefore, in order to construct a story that was unknown, and with limited studies conducted on it, the research utilised FDA when analysing the data.

### **Research Aims**

The study aimed to investigate the transformation of PsySSA in a local and global context. Of particular interest were the research participants' constructions of the society's transformation and identity. Through a discourse analysis, the participants' discursive constructions were examined as a mechanism to understand their perceptions of the society's transformation and identity.

### **Research Question**

In this vein, the overarching research question guiding the study was: How do past presidents of PsySSA construct PsySSA's identity and transformation?

### **Research Approach**

The present study followed a relational-constructionist approach (See Chapter 4). Qualitative data were used, enabling comprehensive and contextualised understandings (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014). The approach was considered well-placed, given the dearth of previous research on organisational transformation in South African society necessitating an exploratory study.

### **Research Design**

In this research project, the primary concern is the identity and transformation of PsySSA. Thus, PsySSA is the entity to be observed, with the focus on identity and

transformation. Following a relational-constructionist approach, this involves a past president offering an impression of PsySSA, in a semi-structured interview with the researcher. The researcher's role was to ensure that the interview was implemented correctly and to keep the participant focussed on PsySSA. The role was not to partake in the participant's engagement with PsySSA. It was only at some time after the interview that the researcher engaged in an analysis of the participant's engagement with PsySSA. This design required a detailed consideration of the nature of observation in a relational-constructionist approach.

Drawing on Rovelli's (2022) fundamental description of observation, relational observation can be unpacked as follows (V. van Deventer, personal communication, June-July, 2023): An observation is prompted by an observer system (O) that is configured in terms of components such as person, instrument, and method. The observer system interacts (or, intra-acts according to Barad (2022)) with what is taken to be an observed system (S), characterised by one or more state variables (q). This means the observer system is constructed to obtain an impression of S in terms of q. In the present case the observed system is PsySSA and its state variables are identity and transformation (q1, q2). We want to know the state of PsySSA as determined by its identity and transformation, which means these state variables must be observable by O.

The matter of observability raises ontological and epistemological concerns, such as the ontological status of PsySSA and its state variables and how to obtain knowledge about these variables. Given a realist-positivist position, PsySSA can be objectified as an observer-independent entity with intrinsic states of identity and transformation in which case the observer system must be configured for objective observations of identity and transformation, offering information that is universally true. Consecutive observations will show how PsySSA evolves in terms of identity and transformation, revealing a state history independent from observer systems. However, given a post-structuralist approach, as the current project requires, the observer and observed systems must be considered relational. In this case the observed system's states are not actual intrinsic states but rather dispositions in relation to the observer. Thus, PsySSA cannot be viewed as an entity that evolves in terms of identity and transformation in the absence of observations. It has no intrinsic states, only the disposition to manifest a particular state of identity and state of transformation in relation to a particular observer system (a particular configuration of observation).

This brings us to the nature of observation. An observation is an interaction between an observer system and an observed system in which a disposition of the observed system manifests (realises, actualises) as an observable (a particular value, an impression) in the

observer system. The manifestation (an observable) is the by-product of the interaction. However, the interaction itself “should not be analysed in terms of causal notions, as if a certain type of causal processes had occurred between S and O” (Durato, 2016, p. 247). Thus, although the interaction between the observation configuration (O) and PsySSA (S) produces (that is, ‘causes’) an observable, the interaction itself is noncausal. The ‘noncausality’ of the interaction is not surprising because the differentiation between O and S is arbitrary (Durato, 2016), and O and S are internal to the interaction and therefore not able to reflect on the nature of the interaction (Durato, 2016). (Also see Chapter 4, Barad (2022), and Rovelli (2022) in this regard).

However, there are more than one observation to consider. The observer system (O) interacting with the observed system, PsySSA (S), includes a participant, a researcher, and the interaction between them. The participant subsystem ( $O_P$ ) of the observer system (O) interacts with the observed system (S) but also interacts with the researcher subsystem ( $O_R$ ), hence the two observations,  $O_R-O_P$  and  $O_P-S$ . In the  $O_R-O_P$  observation,  $O_R$  is configured as the observer system and  $O_P$  as the observed system.

The  $O_R-O_P$  and  $O_P-S$  interactions produce observables in the  $O_R$  and the  $O_P$  observer systems reflecting the states of the observed systems  $O_P$  and S. The state of interest of  $O_P$  is the degree to which the participant is focussed on PsySSA, and the states of S are PsySSA’s identity and transformation.

The  $O_R-O_P$  interaction comprises more than one interaction, such as selecting the participant and interviewing the participant. It continues from the time the interaction is initiated ( $t_{init}$ ) till when it terminates ( $t_{term}$ ) – an interval in which the value (the  $O_R$  impression) of the participant’s disposition of being PsySSA focussed evolves and  $O_P$  manifests as the PsySSA focussed research participant, in relation to the researcher ( $O_R$ ). However, it is important to keep in mind that there is no universal state of being PsySSA focussed and that the participant does not possess an inherent state of being PsySSA focussed. Therefore, a participant’s suitability as PsySSA observer cannot be judged objectively. This information is carried by the researcher ( $O_R$ ) and is made observable as the researcher’s written comments on the selection, interviewing, and guiding of the research participant (See ‘Reflections’ below).

The  $O_P-S$  interaction shows the identity and transformation states ( $q_1, q_2$ ) of PsySSA (S) in relation to the participant. This interaction is initiated at the beginning of the interview ( $t_{init}$ ) and terminated when the interview ends ( $t_{term}$ ). During this time, the values ( $O_P$  impressions) of PsySSA’s identity and transformation states ( $q_1, q_2$ ) are realised. This



information is carried by the participant and made observable as verbal comment. As earlier noted, PsySSA's states of identity and transformation cannot be judged objectively as PsySSA does not have inherent states of identity and transformation and because there are no universal states of identity and transformation that PsySSA could conform to.

The interaction intervals of  $O_P-S$  and  $O_R-O_P$  overlap. Although these interactions terminate at the same time  $t_{\text{term}}$ , at the end of the interview, they initiate at different times. For  $O_P-S$ ,  $t_{\text{init}}$  is the beginning of the interview whereas  $O_R-O_P$  begins at an earlier time, when the selection of the participant is initiated. However,  $O_P-S$  and  $O_R-O_P$  are distinct interactions.  $O_P-S$  offers descriptions of PsySSA's states of identity and transformation ( $q_1, q_2$ ), and  $O_R-O_P$  a description of the participant's state of being PsySSA focussed. Overlooking the fact that these interactions are fundamentally distinct leads in the false assumption that the researcher necessarily contaminates the information provided by a participant in a research interview. However, for such contamination to occur, the interaction interval must include an  $O_R-S$  interaction, but this interaction is excluded in principle. The researcher's interaction with  $O_P$  is not an interaction with  $O_P-S$ . It is not an interaction with the interaction between  $O_P$  and  $S$ . In relation to  $O_R$  the  $O_P-S$  interaction is unobserved, and as such in a state best described as the superposition of all possible states of PsySSA's identity and transformation in relation to the participant ( $O_P+S$ ). Thus, at time  $t_{\text{term}}$ , the participant 'knows' the identity and transformation states of PsySSA, and the researcher 'knows' that the participant knows these state values, but the researcher does not know what these values are.

Of course, the researcher may at any time,  $t_{\text{post-term}}$ , after  $t_{\text{term}}$  engage in observing PsySSA, which would be an  $O_R-S$  interaction, and observe the interaction between the participant and PsySSA, an  $O_R-(O_P+S)$  interaction. Thus, at  $t_{\text{post-term}}$  the researcher will have information about the identity and transformation of PsySSA as well as the participant's knowledge about these states. A comparison of the participant's and the researcher's observations reveals that the participant and the researcher may agree or disagree about PsySSA's state. However, disagreement between the researcher's and the participant's observations about PsySSA's state of identity and transformation does not mean that one observation is correct and the other not. Both are correct (Rovelli, 1996). Both are legitimate because the reality of an observed system (in this case PsySSA) only exists in relation to an observer system (in this case a participant and a researcher). There is no ultimate observer-independent reality in terms of which one observation can be judged truer than another. However, this does not mean unbridled relativity because the interaction between an observer system and an observed system establishes a correlation between the interacting systems,

which means there is coherence between the state variables of the observed system and the properties of the observer system that allow detection of these state variables. In other words, there is consistency between an observer impression and the states of the observed.

Therefore, at any time  $t_{\text{post-term}}$  the researcher and the participant will agree on the following statements: (1) The interaction between the participant and PsySSA produced the participant impression that PsySSA was in state X (for example, transformed), and PsySSA was in state X; (2) The interaction between the researcher and the participant-PsySSA interaction produced the researcher impression that relative to the participant PsySSA was not in state X (for example, not transformed), and PsySSA was not in state X (Durato, 2016). The two descriptions of the same situation may differ, but both descriptions are correct, and the two observers will be in agreement about the difference.

Therefore, any attempt to check the researcher's findings with participants to ensure correctness, as is often suggested in qualitative research, is not useful. In a relational-constructionist approach, reality is observer dependent, and each perspective is equally valid provided the principle of consistency alluded to above. It is important for the researcher to obtain impressions that reflect consistency. An impression reflects consistency if it relates the researcher as observer with the participant observation of the identity and transformation of PsySSA. In other words, the analytic apparatus must co-constitute the observing system (including the researcher) and the observed system (including the participant-observation apparatus) authentically. Various aspects of the observation and analytic apparatuses are discussed in the following sections, using conventional terminology to ease understanding.

## **Participants**

The current study employed convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Sourcing through convenience and purposive sampling allows for collection of data specifically related to the research questions and aims (Cozby, 2009; Creswell, 2014). The only inclusion criteria were that participants had acted as a PsySSA president between 1994 and 2021, regardless of length of tenure or number of tenures. Eighteen past presidents of PsySSA (six women and twelve men) comprising a diverse range of ages, genders, linguistic and racial backgrounds, and level of experience within the discipline of psychology were interviewed on their constructions of PsySSA. Due to the possibly sensitive nature of this study and to maintain confidentiality, all participants' names were changed to pseudonyms (P1 through P18). No further demographic information was collected, as the risk of

identification would increase substantially. Moreover, participants' pseudonyms were purposely excluded from quotes that were particularly sensitive or provocative.

### **Data Collection and Setting**

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews (Appendix A). Interviews allowed for a real-time interaction with the participants' constructions. Moreover, the flexibility of the interview schedule enabled the researcher to facilitate participants' exploration of experiences, a necessary feat considering the study aims. Interviews have been depicted as the most common form of data collection in constructionism research as they facilitate the co-construction of knowledge, as well as the emergence of linguistic patterns. Thus, given that the discursive exploration of PsySSA's identity and transformation from past presidents' perspectives was undertaken, qualitative interviews were deemed the most appropriate method to collect data.

The interview schedule comprised semi-structured questions as this method enables detailed information to be collected, while still providing enough structure to ensure that research questions are adequately answered (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Moreover, open-ended, semi-directive interviews safeguarded the researcher from presupposing a defined research outcome. For example, assumptions were not made in relation to the transformative capacity of PsySSA, rather participants were encouraged to explore their experience of PsySSA's transformation in their own terms.

The semi-structured qualitative research interviews were conducted via Zoom wherever possible to ensure that the language generated between the speaker (participant) and audience (researcher) surfaced constructs related to meanings of interest. The PsySSA office (Parktown, Johannesburg) was used by the researcher for the interviews as the venue possessed adequate resources (lighting, technical equipment, privacy and so forth). Research participants used their own offices. Contemporary scholarship indicates that Zoom is a viable data collection tool for qualitative interviews, allowing in-depth data to be obtained within the comfort of participants' homes or offices (Archibald et al., 2019; Lo Iacono et al., 2016).

### **Procedure**

Prior to participation in the study, all past presidents were contacted via email inviting them to participate in the study and they were provided an information sheet. If candidates agreed to partake in the study, arrangements were made to conduct the semi-structured interviews.

Before commencement of the interview, participants were given a clear description of the study, the expected risks and benefits, and they were provided with an opportunity to ask questions (Appendix B). Next, participants were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix C), requesting for study participation and for interviews to be audio recorded. Once informed consent was obtained, participants partook in a semi-structured interview relating to their constructions of PsySSA's identity and transformation. In the case of Zoom interviews, participants were emailed the information sheet and consent form to complete prior to the commencement of the interview.

Each interview lasted between 45 and 120 minutes. Most of the interviews (17 of 18) were conducted over Zoom, while one was conducted via a telephone call. The interviews began with an introduction of the topic and the central research question. Interviews were recorded, with the permission of participants, to later be transcribed. Additionally, the researcher made interview notes during the data collection sessions.

### **Research Instrument**

Overarching research questions related to participants' constructions of PsySSA's identity, transformative progress, and their associated contribution to these domains. Each participant was asked the same five questions during their interview, although the order in which questions were asked depended on the conversation with each participant. The researcher attempted to apply the lexicon used by each participant to allow each participant to uniquely add to the overall discourse. Where necessary, the researcher asked probing questions such as, "Would you like to elaborate on that?" or, "What do you mean by that?" In the event that a participant asked the researcher for her own opinion, she would reflect the question by asking another question or returning the focus of the discussion to the participant's narrative. Each of the questions are discussed below, followed by probing questions designed to encourage participants to expand on their narratives.

**Question 1:** What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of PsySSA, avoiding a rote repetition of the vision and mission if possible?

- What does PsySSA remind you of?
- Could you try to reflect PsySSA as a metaphor?
- What makes you think of PsySSA as [metaphor]?
- How useful do you think it is for PsySSA to be like [metaphor]?
- You consider PsySSA to be [participant's answer], do you think that this works well within a national, regional and international context?

The initial questions were considered to facilitate an exploration of participants' constructions of PsySSA's identity. The probing questions additionally allowed the researcher to gain insight into how participants have come to their perception of PsySSA.

**Question 2:** What does transformation mean to you?

- Talking about a professional society like PsySSA, what do you think transformation means?
- What is transformation all about, regionally, nationally as well as internationally?
- It is interesting that you mentioned [participant's response], can you tell me more about that? How do you see a society that needs to transform in itself while simultaneously being active in a transformative manner in society?
- Do you think PsySSA has had any impact on psychology on a national scale? And on an international scale? Please elaborate.
- How has PsySSA changed psychology?
- Can you think of ways in which PsySSA has benefited South African communities? How?

This overarching question elicited data related to participants' conceptualisations of transformation in relation to PsySSA. It was hoped that a discussion related to future transformative endeavours would further be elicited in this discussion.

**Question 3:** There are different ways in which people play a role in the transformation of a professional organisation, such as PsySSA. Some people get involved in a visible way while others are more under the radar. Do you think you contributed to the transformation and formation of PsySSA?

- Can you think of specific ways in which you contributed?
- How do you feel about your contributions?

This question provides insight into the conflicts that PsySSA faced competing in both a local and an international market. This question allows participants to consider their current and past roles within PsySSA with regards to transformation. This question further facilitates how participants construct transformation by explicating what kind of transformation they considered is important.

**Question 4:** What do you think the future of PsySSA holds?

- What do you think the future of PsySSA holds in a regional context?
- What do you think the future of PsySSA holds in an international climate?
- In which ways do you think PsySSA could continue to transform? What transformation efforts does PsySSA still need to undertake, if any?

- Are there ways in which you would personally like to participate in future transformation?

Question four aimed to highlight participants' attitudes toward transformation, as well as the extent to which they perceived PsySSA as engaging in a transformative mission.

Accordingly, the research instrument aimed to elicit in-depth data related to participants' construction of PsySSA's identity and transformation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed the analytical framework of FDA as provided by Willig (2013), which is outlined below.

1. Reading: The first step in the analysis process involved the researcher reading the transcripts devoid of an attempt at analysis. This step is purported to provide the researcher with an overview of the data and facilitate an understanding of the tone and underlying intention of the discourse.

2. Coding: The coding frame used in discourse analysis was developed from the data, considering the research question. In this case, all the information relevant to the identity and transformation of PsySSA within local and international contexts was identified and filed for analysis. The identified sections of the data did not have to refer to "identity" or "transformation" directly but included all the possible references to both these concepts. For instance, references such as "PsySSA is..." or "the purpose of PsySSA was to..." were all included. The texts were the transcripts of semi-structured interviews that encompassed a set of questions from which three broad focus areas surfaced. These were the metaphorical identity of PsySSA, the becoming identity of PsySSA, and the endorsed identity of PsySSA.

3. Analysis: First, the researcher searched for associations between the discursive constructions used by participants and the wider contextual discourses. Next, the researcher sought to understand the functions of these constructions, the positions taken up by participants, as well as their positioning of PsySSA. In other words, the aim of the analysis was to decipher in what ways participants constructed PsySSA's identity and transformation. Then, the consequences of these subjective positionings were considered. Finally, the impact of the current discourse, positionings, and identity were considered in relation to the possibility of future transformation.

4. Writing: The writing of the results and discussion occurred concurrently, as the researcher created a coherent account of the situation. During the writing of the results, the researcher continued to look for inconsistencies and tensions, both within individual accounts

and the larger discourse. The analysis of participants' constructions of identity and transformation was conducted parallel to data collection, in order to allow for comparison between cases, as well as to determine when data saturation had been reached.

5. Reflexivity: The researcher considered how she had constructed her own identity, within PsySSA and as the researcher, within this particular discourse and the potential impact this may have had.

### **Describing the Data**

Wolcott (1994) argues that qualitative approaches allow the researcher a great deal of freedom in how they choose to represent their findings. Data may be represented using a within-case or a cross-case approach. The data in the current study is described across cases and as unique cases as it attempts to answer the central research question exploring participants' constructions of PsySSA's transformation, both internally and externally, and its identity formation as a professional learned society. The discursive nature of the current study focusses on the use of language, leading to the use of direct quotes from participants and the use of participants' own language in the analysis.

### **Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity are intrinsically quantitative in nature, and less of a concern to qualitative researchers. Yet, set standards are needed to determine the quality of qualitative research (Sinkovics et al., 2008). Validity, often referred to as credibility in qualitative research, is often criticised for its lack of rigor in determining the correctness and truthfulness of the interpretations made by the researcher. The findings of qualitative research are inevitably influenced by the researcher conducting the research (Christensen et al., 2015). Accordingly, Maxwell (1992) suggests requirements for good qualitative research, such as paying special attention to the labelling process and interpretations, purposefully seeking out disconfirming cases, being aware of the researcher's own impact on the findings, and considering several different explanations or possibilities.

### ***Credibility***

Triangulation is a strategy suggested to facilitate the credibility of data. Triangulation involves making use of several data sources, investigators, theories, or methods as a comparison (Christensen et al., 2015). The current study sought to enhance the credibility of findings by building on an established theory and methodology, critical discourse analysis (Potter, 1996). Investigator triangulation was employed in the data analysis phase as co-

coding (Christensen et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). A research assistant completed an independent analysis of the data, which was then compared with the principal researcher's analysis to determine the validity of the interpretations.

Additionally, low inference descriptors (using language as close to the participants' language) were used. Using the participants' own language in the analysis is particularly valuable for discourse analysis, as the language is precisely what is under investigation. Further, demand characteristics were avoided as investigative categories were not imposed but implicitly understood. For instance, the study did not ask specific questions related to PsySSA's identity but rather allowed participants to formulate their own narratives.

### ***Dependability***

Reliability, referred to as dependability or trustworthiness in qualitative research, refers to the repeatability of the study (Christensen et al., 2015). The present study sought to obtain dependability by keeping an audit trail. A detailed chronology was documented on the research processes and activities, the potential influences on the data collection and analysis, and the emerging themes, theories, models and so forth. An audit trail has been posited to encourage the confirmability of data as researcher bias is reduced by carefully tracking all aspects of the research design (Gasson, 2004).

### ***Transferability***

Instead of generalisability, qualitative studies make use of transferability, which refers to functional and conceptual equivalence to other studies (Craig & Douglas, 2005; Salzberger et al., 1999; Sinkovics et al., 2005). Due to the contextual nature of the current study, the findings cannot be directly transferred to another study. However, the transferability of data was strengthened through the detailed reporting of the study sample, data collection methods, and analysis of data.

### ***Confirmability***

Objectivity is replaced by confirmability in qualitative research, referring to the researcher's awareness of and adherence to the assumptions of the theory and methodology used (Potter, 1996). Within the present study, the researcher practiced reflexivity (self-awareness and critical self-reflection) throughout the research process, which is discussed in the final chapter of this thesis. Confirmability also refers to the ethics of a study, and how participants were treated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The section below discusses the ethics employed in this study.



## **Ethical Considerations**

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Appendix D). Although the sample is not necessarily considered a vulnerable group, this research project endeavoured to maintain the highest level of ethical standard as stipulated in the Code of Ethics for psychological research (HPCSA, 2004). Regardless of the experience of participants with research, the best interest of participants remained critical to the researcher. Participants were fully informed of the nature of the study, as well as what was expected of them. Additionally, participants were free to decline participation or withdraw from participation at any point during the data collection and analysis phases. Although the researcher possessed a prior professional relationship with participants, great care was taken to draw biases into awareness and practice reflexivity throughout. All participants were treated with the utmost respect, regardless of their position within the society. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant either in person or via email. As for confidentiality, all the research results were aggregated to protect the confidentiality of participants. However, because the research took place in a very specific context, participants were made aware of the limitations of confidentiality in terms of contextual factors that may be ascribed to any individual participant.

Currently, there is an uncritical acceptance of the Eurocentric ethical guidelines, such as those set out by the American Psychological Association regardless of the context within which research is conducted. To attempt to apply universal ethical guidelines to a study rooted within a constructionist approach would prove counter intuitive. If context plays an important role in how reality and identity is constructed, context should be as important in the ethical decisions that guide the study. Segalo and Molobela (2019) make use of two case studies from their own research experience to demonstrate the need for the decolonialisation of ethical guidelines. These case studies exhibit how categorising participants as ‘vulnerable’ due to contextual factors, such as their social economic status, deprives participants of their agency. In turn, this categorisation leads to the denial of participants’ ability to contribute to knowledge production. Similarly, the authors explain how the use of pseudonyms may be disallowing the identities of participants, instead of protecting them. Therefore, it may be more damaging to accept pseudonyms as a universal requirement for ethical research. More so, when the research in question is aimed at exploring the creation of identity within a specific context (Segalo & Molobela, 2019). This relates to the autonomy of participants and how the decision of vulnerability and identity should be left up to the participant.

There were no direct benefits for participating in the study other than contributing to academic research, which may inform understandings of PsySSA's transformation as well as contributing to future decision-making. No incentives were provided for participating in the study. Participation in the study may, however, have empowered participants to take steps to facilitate transformation within psychology in general, or PsySSA in particular.

### **Reflection: The Role of the Researcher in Focusing the Narrative of the Participant**

In this study, the researcher had a dual role, namely to observe the participant and secondly to observe the participant's observation of PsySSA. The observation of the participant consisted of several interactions, beginning with the selection of the participant and ending with interviewing the participant. The observation of the participant's observation of PsySSA involved what would conventionally be called data analysis. However, the first role needs further clarification because the interval of the researcher's observation of the participant overlaps with the interval of the participant's observation of PsySSA, raising the possibility of these observations not being distinct processes, resulting in observation contamination. In principle the processes are distinct, but in reality, this is not clearly the case. In principle the researcher has no direct access to the cognitive, emotional, and experiential processes of the participant's observation of PsySSA, but only to the product of these processes, namely the participant's verbal account. In principle the researcher's observation of the participant concerns the focus of the participant's account, namely the participant's state of being PsySSA focussed. The overlap between the participant's and the researcher's observations occurs in the interval that marks the duration of the interview. Therefore, in conducting an interview the researcher must keep the participant focussed on PsySSA, and must avoid offering any opinions about PsySSA and refrain from evaluating and validating statements provided by participants.

In the present study, the researcher maintained PsySSA focus by structuring the interview around relevant main questions (See 'Research Instrument' above) and by steering participants using follow-up questions. The researcher did not engage in conversations that required personal opinions, and evaluative and validating remarks, using reflective questioning when pressured to do so. The ability to encourage and maintain PsySSA focus required extensive knowledge of PsySSA. The researcher was well positioned for this as she has been located within the society for over 20 years, becoming a psychologist while serving the organisation. This complicated the research process and could have promoted researcher-employee bias. However, due to the researcher's position in PsySSA, the data was

appropriately conceptualised and supported by the relevant timeline. Additionally, this allowed for the granting of access to data that an external researcher or individual might not have been able to access. Although the timeline of the history of PsySSA is factual, and based on the archives of the society, it is imperative that one notes that the reporting of the history of the society is the path that the researcher has walked and chosen.

However, this promoted the researcher's proximity to the data, not only in the sense of being too knowledgeable, holding intricate and pivotal institutional knowledge and memory, but also because of becoming part of the narrative being constructed. It must be noted that the participants were reflecting on activities that occurred in excess of ten years ago, hence the need to cue participants to relevant events without expanding on details or dictating the narrative, was identified by the researcher. By guiding the participants, the researcher focussed the participants, allowing them to expand on their vision and ideas while enabling the participants to be pivotal generators of information.

Another complicating factor was that the interviews seemed like debriefing sessions for the participants that the researcher had to facilitate this while experiencing trauma through reliving moments that challenged her and the society. Hence, guiding the participants required the professional skill of the therapist, consultant, and researcher. The process of conducting the interviews was taxing on the researcher. It also was important for the researcher to realise that congruence between the participants' and her own views was limited. The researcher might have disagreed or agreed with the views or opinions that were expressed by the participants but had to withhold her views as she was not the participant.

Additionally, the researcher had to negotiate remaining an employee of PsySSA while also critiquing PsySSA, which highlighted another professional skill: to distance oneself from the emotional impact of the subject/material and to manage socio-psychological difficulties. Due to the fact that most participants were close colleagues, friends and mentors, the researcher felt isolated and alone for the most part of her journey. A further challenge for the researcher remained managing her role as an Executive Director while simultaneously being the researcher.

Despite these challenges, this research was conducted by the researcher with the hope that this thesis will reignite and invite the society to consider, review, and evaluate the mission, priorities, structure, and its way of working. The research is aimed at providing the society with some insight into the inner workings of the society from the perspectives of its past leadership so that it can act as a resource for PsySSA's current and future leadership and members to review and consider.

**Conclusion**

The method employed to investigate how participants constructed PsySSA's identity and transformation was described in this chapter. The research aim and question were provided and the study's relational-constructionist research approach was described in some detail. The apparatuses employed for observation and analysis were discussed in terms of the conventional topics of participants, data collection, and data analysis.

## Chapter 6: Results

### The Metaphorical Identity of PsySSA

Participants were asked to come up with a metaphor that they felt could be used to represent PsySSA. A metaphor is a nonliteral expression of an object, event or action and so it is a productive expression and not merely a reflection. It aims to reveal what it refers to in a tangible and understandable form. Thus, a metaphor of PsySSA is not merely a reflection of PsySSA but a constitutive expression, which is tangible and understandable. Furthermore, having participants construct PsySSA in a metaphorical manner encouraged them to step away from their preconceived notions of what PsySSA is and how it functions. Participants could distance themselves from their role within PsySSA to see PsySSA as an object and to discern its processes. Participants' metaphorical constructions of PsySSA revealed the society as a space that accommodates and protects, but also a space that evolves and transforms. Figure 1 is a graphical representation in the form of a 'metaphorical landscape' showing the various metaphors used by the participants to describe PsySSA.

#### *PsySSA as a Home, Safe Space, and Protector*

PsySSA was constructed by some participants as a home, a safe space, and a protector of psychology and psychologists in a "new" South Africa based on a democratic constitution.

*I think PsySSA, is like an open hand that is kind of curved. Where you have an open hand curved in a way that you, whatever you put inside that hand is very protected. And most of it is protecting those that are vulnerable, not because of anything else, but because of their birth, you know, where they are coming from, who they are, and so on. And I'm made to be vulnerable because of that. And I see PsySSA being that hand that was extended, especially to the African scholars in psychology, you know, to come into this hand and to be protected continentally really looking at the history of how things have, you know, emerged and transformed, one can see that sometimes actually PsySSA played a role model to most of the upcoming societies or associations in Africa. I think that is what one can say about PsySSA, and also, when you look at what PsySSA has done in collaboration with the other associations that it has collaborated with, all what people are learning always from PsySSA is, is how to embrace the African in order to make sure that no one is left behind. (P6)*

Figure 1

PsySSA's Metaphorical Landscape Through the Presidential Gaze

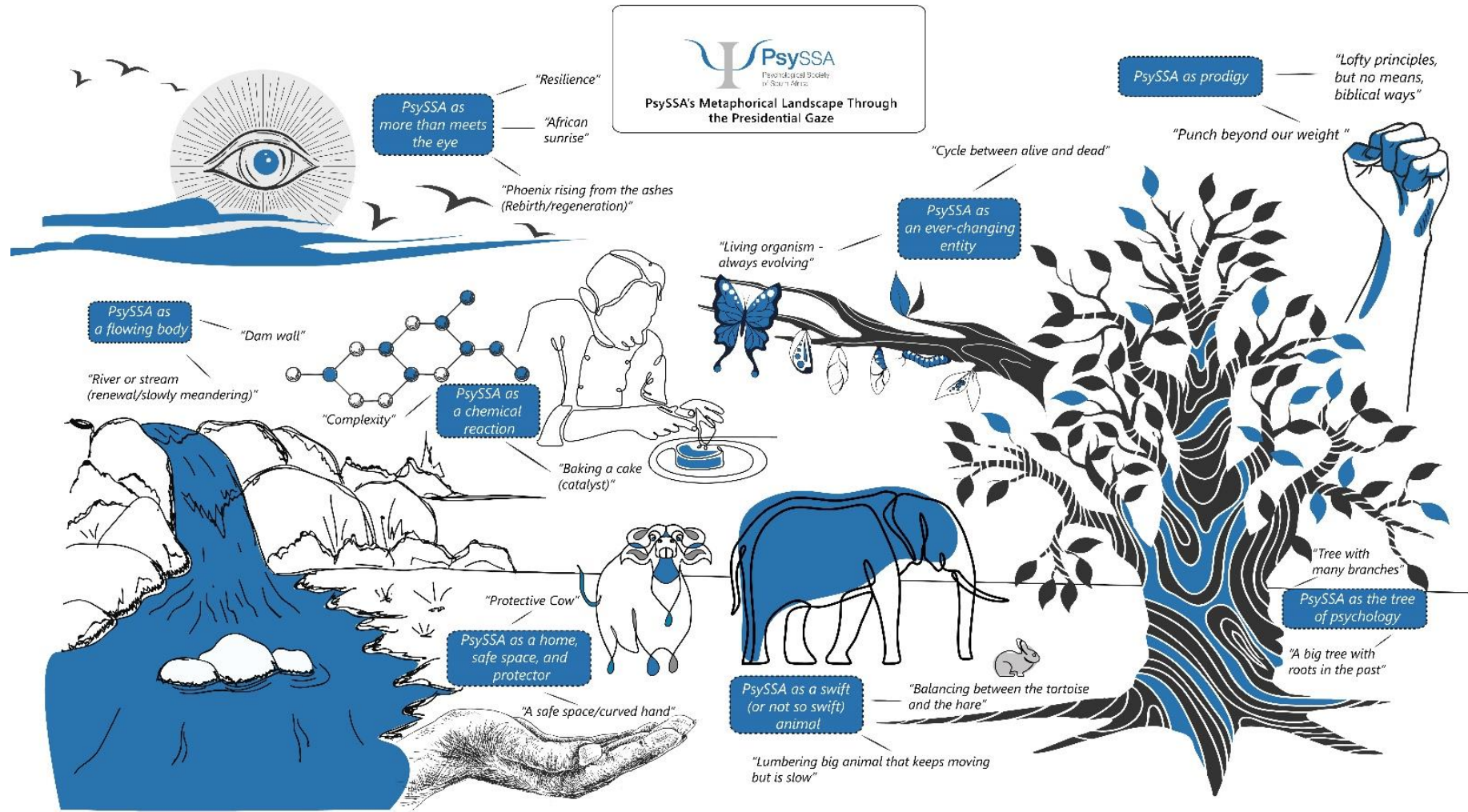


Image by Dr Ewald Crause

P6 constructs PsySSA as first an open hand that is curved, inviting those in that were previously excluded and protecting them. The speaker draws on the well-known repertoire of the hand as metaphor for holding and protecting, and also on the repertoire of apartheid classification. P6 harbours conflicting ideologies (for example, kindness of the hand versus the brutality of apartheid). PsySSA is portrayed as the solution to the brutality of apartheid. As the hand, PsySSA is a strong protector (curved hand) with a wide reach (“protected continentally”). It is a moral/ethical protector (protecting mostly the vulnerable who could not fend for themselves, given the brutalities of the apartheid system), as well as being collaborative and a role model showing how to embrace the African to ensure that no one is left behind. Most importantly PsySSA contains the history of how things have emerged and transformed. Additionally, the hand is not simply there. It is extended, although by or from whom or what we do not know. Thus, PsySSA is a disembodied organisation extending from an unknown. P6 has constructed PsySSA as left ungrounded which refers, possibly, to the lack of proper grounding that leads to a lack of clarity about the work or mission of the hand (that is, of PsySSA). PsySSA is mostly about “protecting those who are vulnerable”, and their vulnerability “is not because of anything else but because of their birth, you know, where they are coming from, who they are, and so on.” One is left wondering how much space is there in this hand for those who are not vulnerable, or not vulnerable in this way? How much opportunity and space for manoeuvring does PsySSA have when “most of it is protecting those that are vulnerable”?

P6 positions themselves explicitly as someone who is vulnerable, someone who is “made to be vulnerable” and therefore unable to fend for themselves and in need to be protected by PsySSA (“I am made to be vulnerable because of that”). However, the speaker is also key in the construction of PsySSA, being a president at the helm of the society, thus being both protector and protected. In other words, the speaker’s position is paradoxical and thus unsolvable. This elicits the paradoxical position of the leader as possibly the reason why PsySSA is without a body: an extension by or from an unknown.

This can be interpreted as a complex power relation that is concealed and one that needs further exploration. This constructs psychologists as professionals who are unable to function/practice effectively without PsySSA as they require the protection (akin to a home) that is offered by the organisation. This is followed by the imagery of an outstretched hand, reaching out to not only those previously excluded in South Africa, but to psychologists across the continent. PsySSA has become an example for other societies. P6 draws upon the historical interpretive repertoire of apartheid to legitimise this image of PsySSA, further

extending the reach of PsySSA's protection, not just with South African psychology practitioners but also within Africa. P6 provides no indication of whether those who were considered privileged during apartheid are also invited into the curved hand. It is unclear who the African is that cannot be left behind.

While P6 highlighted PsySSA as a curved hand, alluding to PsySSA as a form of protection to address vulnerability, P5 referred to PsySSA as an animal who protects:

*It is like an animal that tears, just trying to think he could be seen to be there to protect those who were not protected before. And maybe one would even think of a like a maybe a cow. A it's a killer. You know, it's calves will think that- you don't just go there and take away the calves without really facing the wrath of the cow. So, that kind of a situation where one would say we would see PsySSA as an organisation that would stand for us if there were any injustice that is going on out there. We would expect PsySSA to play that role of being a protector of being a shield. And essentially making sure that those that are vulnerable are never exposed again to the harshness of those that may want to exploit them. So yes, I would say more about the cow some kind of animal that would be mindful that it cannot allow its offspring to just be trampled upon, without giving it a fight. And so, it has to continue to be playing that kind of role of the protector of not only the profession, but those that practice the profession, and those that are in the discipline of psychology itself. So yeah, that's how I sort of would see it metaphorically. Of course, I never thought of PsySSA as a metaphor, but that, I guess, would call a, the kind of a role that I see of PsySSA as a protector, as a shield. So that if we feel we are being threatened, when we're being attacked, we should run close to it so that it can then protect us against these fossils that want to destroy us, or to harm us. That's what we would expect of PsySSA. To be that kind of a protector. But we're also aware, I'm aware that there could be a whole lot of other challenges that may make it difficult for the society to achieve that. Because remember, even within the organisation itself, there will be a whole lot of dissenting voices. So that instead of the organisation moving forward, in terms of playing that role of a protector, sometimes it's possible that the organisation may get stuck with the battles. In other words, where you may find that they could be forces within that may not want it to play that protector role, because there*



*could be either benefits may be associated with those that may be part of it, but who may not want to play that protect role I am just saying that I the time when PsySSA was successfully launched. And then it became a unifier. An organisation that would bring in everyone who associated or identified with the mission and vision of the organisation. There will also have been people who have come in there, who may claim to be associated with that mission and vision. And this will usually be people from the old order, that is those who may still have benefited from the oppressive arrangements of the past. (P5)*

PsySSA is given the qualities of a protective figure in the professional lives of South African psychologists through the use of metaphors employed by participants such as “whatever you put inside that hand is very protected”, “expect PsySSA to play that role of being a protector”, and “a refuge for its members”. P5 draws on a biological discourse that legitimises the need for an animal to protect its offspring by becoming a killer and again positioning psychologists as vulnerable and in need of care and protection from PsySSA. P5 draws on the repertoire of the mother and offspring and the idea that they constitute a family. This metaphor tables the protector-protected relationship quite obviously, but there is of course also the mother-offspring relationship, which is hierarchical and unidirectional. One can expect tension between this metaphor and the fact that the PsySSA is democratic, and thus certainly not subjected to a hierarchical, unidirectional relationship. It is interesting how the mother-offspring relationship cannot completely hold/control the protector-protected relationship. There are dissenting voices among the offspring keeping the society from fulfilling its protector role. The mother-offspring ideology prohibits the speaker from accommodating different voices that are part of a democratic society. The hierarchical unidirectional relationship between PsySSA and its members must be maintained.

This dilemma is made sense of by P5 by identifying the problem as those who should not be protected by PsySSA, “the older order”, those who would still benefit from the exploitation of others. By drawing on the historical interpretive repertoire of apartheid, a valid justification is given for PsySSA’s failure to be the protective figure it is constructed as. This amplifies PsySSA as microcosmic of South African society more broadly. It is ideologically difficult to resolve and brings into question how much protection the state should afford to those who benefited from the apartheid system. Likewise, P5’s construction questions whether or not PsySSA should protect the interests of all its members or not. This highlights PsySSA as an agent of transformation while simultaneously having to negotiate

being subject to transformation. It is important to note that if PsySSA holds the power to protect those within it, it would also hold the power of when, where and who it will use its power to protect. Those who keep PsySSA distracted from protecting its offspring will be denied the privilege of protection. Protection is only for those who agree with the dominant discourse within the society at any given time. P5 is clearly positioned as someone who wants to be protected and who sees PsySSA as protector, and consequently as someone who is threatened by the enemy (namely, the beneficiaries of the oppressive arrangements or the “old order”). This is a complicated positioning. The one in need of protection is the one who leads the protector.

### ***PsySSA as an Ever-Changing Entity***

P12 referred to PsySSA as a living organism while P2 referred to PsySSA as a butterfly. However, both these metaphors construct PsySSA as a society with energy, change, growth, and movement. Both metaphors highlight PsySSA as something that is constantly evolving. This same idea can be constructed for the butterfly as when the time is right, the caterpillar will evolve into the butterfly, as PsySSA has done since its birth in 1994.

Participants draw on a biological discourse that portrays organisms as living and surviving by evolving and adapting by changing shape and form. This discourse allows the participant to construct the identity of PsySSA as part of a process of continuous evolution/change with natural attrition and revitalisation:

*I would have to think about it as a living organism, actually my sense of PsySSA is pretty much that it is a living organism - it is something that is evolving constantly that it is something that has grown it has shifted shape and form and I suspect that it will continue to do so if it doesn't it would be dead. And so for me I'm always thinking about PsySSA as an organisation as a living entity that is constantly kind of reinventing itself yet not reinventing the kind of core fundamentals that have been at the, at the kind of heart of its formation in the first place so I'm thinking about this thing that is not static. I am thinking about this thing that's constantly changing and shifting sometimes for the worse sometimes for the better but that is the nature of growth and evolution that sometimes you know we take different pathways, and we correct we self-correct and we hope that we are self-correcting in a direction that is of course beneficial to the discipline the practice the science and the membership who are involved in PsySSA [...]*

*What made me think about this is precisely the kind of stuff that I've mentioned and that is that this is an organisation that is made up of living breathing thinking professionals and individuals who are much more collectively than simply the sum of their parts this means that as we have a natural attrition in the system and so I think about it as a living organism as a system as we think about the natural attrition in the system we also have natural revitalisation rebirth inside the organisation from time to time new members new leadership etc and this means that the organisational form for me is constantly in a dynamic movement it is never static; it is not in stasis. If it had been in stasis it would resemble what it looked like back in the, in the mid-1990s when of course it was first formed and so for me I'm thinking constantly about this partly because I think about it as a system that is constantly evolving shifting changing a system that is dynamic and interactive based on the people inside the ideas inside whom we are interacting with the kind of location that we find ourselves in contextually all of these things come to shape the nature the form the function of the organisation at a given point in time at you know in South Africa's history.*

(P12)

*I guess maybe a butterfly. I'm thinking particularly in terms of the life cycle, you know? Yeah. Initially, it appeared like you that blossomed into a butterfly. But it's constantly going to change where it will have to in a way, be reborn and get into chrysalis and then again, be much but not completed, and it has to go to that cycle repeatedly. And so, there's always some beautiful moments, and then sometimes some, you know, almost dead periods, you know, that you constantly cycling through.* (P2)

Both P12 and P2 construct PsySSA as an everchanging entity that cycles through periods of growth and death. The interpretative repertoire of evolution for both P2 and P12 legitimises the ways in which PsySSA changes as an organisation while simultaneously allowing for this change to encompass both growth and setbacks. P12 positions PsySSA as an entity that is able to self-correct, through “new members, new leadership”, while P2 frames this evolution as more nature-driven devoid of an active force outside of a natural order that enables the change. However, both of these positionings encompass change. Change is an inevitable part of survival and PsySSA has done this by changing shape and form. However, a dilemma emerges as PsySSA is always changing based on the South African context in

which it finds itself, yet the core fundamentals stay the same. P12 constructs this possibility of change and evolution through a necessity to locate PsySSA within a specific socio-historical context: PsySSA is only afforded the agency to change in democratic South Africa, but within another historical period (“the mid-1990s”) PsySSA is constructed as static. The implication is that the leadership and members in the mid-1990s did not want change. Thus, the leadership and members then are positioned quite differently to the leaders and members now. How does an organisation that is always reinventing itself able to stay the same at the core? PsySSA’s attrition and revitalisation are attached to an ever-changing South African society and the unique combination of individuals within it at any given time. This dilemma remains unresolved, as P12 refers to self-correction when the decisions made were for the worst for the discipline of psychology. It remains unclear what these decisions are and how the self-correction is implemented.

Additionally, P12 refers to decisions that were not to the benefit of the discipline of psychology, while P2 refers to stages of near death. These two constructions of PsySSA are not synonymous. Making ill-fated decisions cannot be directly equated to periods of no growth. This again highlights PsySSA as an agent of transformation while transforming. However, one is left wondering if PsySSA does come to a near standstill, or does it correct itself while continuously moving? P2 grappled with this dilemma by constructing PsySSA as a biological entity that naturally has to die. However, this can be interpreted in many ways: the repertoire of what is the ‘natural order’ may have various meanings as things have to change and that process involves death, whether it be the death of old leadership being replaced by new leadership, or the organisation as a whole.

### ***PsySSA as the Tree of Psychology***

Participants continued to draw on the biological discourse related to nature in their metaphorical construction of PsySSA’s identity. This biological interpretive repertoire legitimises the construction of PsySSA as a living organism, with the potential for continuous growth:

*If I were to kind of think of PsySSA I kind of see it as a tree because PsySSA is that tree that's firmly grounded in psychology and PsySSA has many branches just like a tree does, right, and these branches basically represent all the diverse areas of psychology in South Africa, but you have that very firm tree that holds everything together and just like a tree PsySSA doesn't, you know, it doesn't die. Trees continue to grow; sometimes leaves fall,*

*branches break, but the tree is always there, it always stands firm, it stands firm against all sorts of challenges so it weathers. I mean in the worst of weather the tree always stands firm and I think that's what PsySSA represents for psychology in South Africa, it's that firm body that people can count on. It's not to say that PsySSA doesn't have its ups and downs, you know, it's- over the years you'll see people broke away people came back, leaves fall, you know, but these come back. There's always new life, there's always new things being generated inside and so for me that's what PsySSA represents. It represents that for want of a better word like the aliveness the longevity that a tree represents as well as the stability the steadiness and essentially, it's like a life-giving force so for that reason if I were to choose a metaphor, I would compare PsySSA to a tree because there's so much within that would be reminiscent of the society. It offers a number of opportunities for PsySSA both in terms of seeing the shortcomings of the society as well as what the strengths are, so I mean there are many strengths to have that strong-rooted body, you know, that keeps things together, that's able to respond has this long-standing memory about things, but just like it's important for the society to recognise that, you know, a tree generates seeds and seeds will go off and they'll form new trees and they'll do new things but ultimately the roots were in that same original tree so I think it's important for PsySSA to recognise that. I think it's important for PsySSA to encourage that. I think similarly PsySSA needs to recognise that flowers develop, leaves develop, they have their own route as well. They- I mean their own developmental trajectory in the same way divisions might have their own trajectories, sometimes branches break off and they go but they're still part of the same tree and at other times they grow and they flourish on the tree and they need to be nurtured so I think the society must recognise and realise that it does have an active role to play, not just in terms of being the strong rooted structure but also in terms of how it grows and develops over the future. (P15)*

*It might be a pretty nice big green tree, is a metaphor for PsySSA of its roots lie in the past and in the current context, and it's a tree growing quite fruitfully over the years, and it still has much fruit to give and bear in the future. So, and tree can be home to many things. It can be a source of*

*nutrition for people, it can be lots of birds, you know, you understand what I'm getting to? It might be something like that. I think it's important. As I said, you know, as you can hear, I use a term like a home, and orientation, point and community. And so the tree actually builds upon that. And I think it's very useful of looking at PsySSA as a living organism, providing shade and providing whatever to psychologists in South Africa, you know, and in the middle of this tree. And it's growing. And it's, and I think it's, it still has a great future. (P10)*

This is a continuity of the idea that PsySSA is an evolving entity and will need to remain this way to ensure future success. PsySSA is constructed as the tree from which the life force of psychology grows. Both constructions project the feeling of being firmly rooted in standing tall and strong and being a home of resources. While initially it may seem that both constructions draw on an interpretative repertoire of essentialism, P15 goes on to construct this tree as having unique parts that are able to break away, while P10 constructs the tree as being able to provide a platform for a diversity of needs. Therefore, both constructions legitimise PsySSA's ability to provide for divergent needs by utilising an interpretative repertoire of diversity. This tree has stood firm through storms and continues to support the life of different divisions and individuals.

However, a dilemma arises in P15's discursive construction of PsySSA, as the tree from which some flourish, others break away. P15 equates the parts of the society that have broken away to leaves that have fallen from PsySSA yet indicates that these leaves always come back. The leaves that have fallen cannot be reattached to the tree. P15 takes a positive view of the branches that have broken away from the tree, as instead of them being dead to PsySSA as the branches of a tree would be, they remain part of the original tree. It remains unclear whether those who have left PsySSA are still a part of PsySSA (originating in PsySSA) or whether they have fallen and died away. P15 does seem to note this dilemma and tries to resolve it utilising an interpretative repertoire of inheritance. This enables P15 to construct any breakaways from PsySSA as still, in some essential way, part of PsySSA due to being initially grown from the same seed of PsySSA. Whether these breakaways would in fact recognise this lineage remains unclear and herein lies the tension in this construction. If certain groups break away from PsySSA, there would presumably be divergent visions and missions that result in this severance. However, P15 believes such breakaways should be encouraged. This perhaps positions PsySSA as an entity that cannot necessarily evolve in several divergent ways simultaneously and as an organisation, evolution may involve the

acceptance of divergent interests that may eventually decide to forge their own path in psychology. Similarly, P15 and P10 disagree on where the tree of PsySSA is rooted. P15 considers the tree rooted firmly in psychology, whereas P10 considers it rooted in the past and current context.

### ***PsySSA as a Flowing Body***

Participants also utilised a repertoire of nature by drawing on a natural discourse. One participant constructed PsySSA as a flowing body of water:

*I think a dam wall is the best because you must remember that a dam is designed to contain water or to create a certain kind of stability of sorts. Now psychology was used to create a certain stability. In the past there's stability that was only interested in maintaining a particular status quo. Now when we established PsySSA, PsySSA was more like that dam wall being broken so that the water would then flow downstream and nourish a bigger terrain whereas when it was contained to the dam, it was contained within just a very small terrain and that water was moving out in a very controlled manner. Whereas when you burst the dam, you free the water to just run free and populate a much larger terrain. So, it is necessary to have a dam wall. However, the difference is, once you've first blown up the wall that was covering just 25% of the land may having smaller densities, and then you allow the river to run downstream, then you construct a wall further downstream. Now, this time, you're going to have a much bigger dam in that the dam is going to cover a much larger terrain. And that is what the metaphor I have in mind for increasing the relevance of the profession to a larger section of the population than it used to be in the past.*

(P1)

P1 constructs PsySSA's identity and transformation as the breaking down of previous boundaries (dam walls) to get water to a larger part of the South African population. P1 draws on an interpretive repertoire of control and containment in this construction, which is initially developed as something in need of breaking down. The establishment of PsySSA is the turning point where this destruction was necessary, however P1 positions PsySSA as that which it initially resisted and fought against, emphasising control and containment. This positions PsySSA as an organisation that was able to initially create change to the benefit of more psychological professionals, but which has its limitations where exclusion is necessary

in order to contain and control the discipline. The boundaries of “relevance” are thus delineated by PsySSA, echoing previous power relations that delineated the profession in the past to maintain the “status quo”. How transformed is an organisation that utilises the same containment measures of previous regimes? This positions PsySSA as a superficially transformative organisation, or at least one which still needs to do more to deconstruct the boundaries that it constructs. This positioning still affords PsySSA the power to exclude. However, P1 runs into a dilemma when they state that the dam wall has to be rebuilt further downstream. By reconstructing the dam wall, PsySSA continues to have power over the access people have to psychology within South Africa. Though the new dam wall allows greater access than it did in the past, it continues to cut the water off from some. By constructing PsySSA in this manner, P1 admits that PsySSA has thus far failed to reach all South Africans. In addition, depending on where PsySSA decides to construct the new dam wall, it holds the power to admit only those who it chooses to allow into the society.

*One could think of, of PsySSA as a river or stream. Because the river stream is never the same at any two moments in time. Sometimes it meanders slowly. And sometimes very rapidly, depending on the obstructions within the river. And depending on climatic conditions, such as downpours, etc. But it's always in constant renewal of itself and of its surroundings. Its structure needs to be flexible. The organisation itself needs to be agile. We've seen it in in recent months, when we had the outbreak of the pandemic and the organisation could not function like it had functioned like two years ago, it had to reinvent itself in this space. An organisation that's not sufficiently agile would not be able to cope in an environment like this it would not have does not have a long shelf life, the more agile an organisation, the better able it is to deal with the- suppose the vagaries of life and to deal with whatever crises appear on the horizon. And they all get into, they have been many crises on the horizon of PsySSA. And there will still be many, I mean, we think of the difficulties we had, with certain splinter groups, certain difficult customers in the past, and given PsySSA's ability to be agile, it was able to counter those difficulties and end up on the other side, I think revitalised and stronger, so it wasn't weakened by those challenges. And that's an attribute of an agile, organised institution. Now, if one utilises the metaphor of the of the river, then obviously we can think of the organisation as a structure as consisting of certain portfolio holders or*



*office bearers, but we have to think of the organisation or the society also in terms of its members, and the broader society, that it that it has to serve. Now, thinking of the of the of the metaphorical river, the river is alive in and of itself, but it gives life to the vegetation on its banks, it gives life to the farmers who need to irrigate the land. So, and that is really the role of PsySSA to not only ensure strong structure but to ensure that it gives life to psychology as a discipline and psychology as a profession in the country. That's to serve its- and service its membership. And in fact, PsySSA has been doing more than that. It has not only served its paid-up members, it's also served broader South African society by tackling issues that are of concern to broader society, where psychology itself can offer the type of knowledge skills, expertise, that other organisations and other disciplines and professions cannot provide. So, in the debates around racism in the debates around xenophobia and gender-based violence PsySSA has to take a space and it has done so in order to, I suppose, activate the necessary discussions and to sustain those discussions. And then once again, like the river, it plays a role of sustaining activism against hardship, activism against difficulties, that's what rivers do they provide water and the lifeblood of all growth, and one would hope that that's a role that's PsySSA sees itself, is being seen by others as fulfilling. I mean, firstly, one would obviously gosh, then it is a pity we were not the Amazon River or the Rhine, because that goes through several countries, like the Apies Rivier, and the Vaal and to Limpopo, but if we can make use of that river in our context, if you look at the river, if you look at this at the Orange River, and see what it can, what light it can bring to the area surrounding the river, what it offers that surrounding area is the opportunity to be fertile to grow products that can be exported. And so, if the goods and the benefits go to beyond the borders of South Africa, so yeah, ultimately, then one would hope that PsySSA does well enough in South Africa and both the discipline and profession strongly enough, in order for it to stand its own to set its own ground internationally, in order for its value to be seen internationally. Because it's senseless, I'm in one on focus only on your external profile, and you do nothing at home. I think your external profile is strengthened by the amount of good that you can do at home. (P16)*

P16 constructs PsySSA as a river that moves at a pace influenced by the context in which it exists. This river gives life to more than just the vegetation on its banks. P16 points out how PsySSA has done more than just serve its membership by responding to issues affecting the broader South African community. Central to this construct seems to be the idea of change. Drawing on an interpretative repertoire of change allows P16 to construct the organisation as agile and adaptive to these different contexts. This positions PsySSA as an entity that *has* to change in order to stay relevant within its current context, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic and its response. This creates a dilemma as PsySSA is equated to the Apies River that serves only its surrounding communities. Although the communities around the river benefit greatly from the water that it supplies, it is not possible for one river to be the life of all South Africa. P16 again places the power with PsySSA to determine where this water will flow. To make sense of this dilemma P16 refers to PsySSA serving South Africa before it attempts to serve an international community. Where P1 clearly places a boundary to those that will benefit from the water, P16 leaves this boundary vaguer, although a boundary inevitably exists in both contexts.

### ***PsySSA as More Than Meets the Eye***

Participants drew on an interpretive repertoire of mysticism, something that cannot be truly captured or defined in their construction of PsySSA as more than meets the eye. There is something intangible about PsySSA for them:

*Well, I would think of a wonderful African sunrise and why that is a metaphor for me is obviously the bush in Africa is part of my show. So, in African sunrise, you get the most wonderful colours, but you also get very interesting things happening that you don't expect. Well, I think it's, first of all, it must have been an African colour, but because now in the world, is in such beautiful sunrises and sunsets as here. So, it must have an African colour. And also, you know, what I always associate, with, if I look at the African sunrise, especially when I was in the game drive recently, is that it's a promise of a new day, a promise of new things, a promise of doing things differently, a promise of not making the same mistakes. That's exactly how I look at it in you know some, all the members of PsySSA all have their own baggage of the past. But I think what we should actually work towards is not to bring back baggage, just like the new sun rising, we start new, and we have to work together to make that day the most*

*wonderful that we can and, and not bring a lot of the baggage of the past.  
And we must be aware of the past. But we each sunset or sunrise new one.*

(P14)

P14 draws on the natural discourse surrounding the rising and setting of the sun every day, however, there is something more to this, something indiscernible that makes an African sunrise different to any other beautiful sunrise. P14 constructs PsySSA as this sunrise with the specific colours of Africa. A dilemma arises as P14 contradicts themselves by first saying that the baggage of the past should be left behind, and then stating that individuals should not bring a lot of baggage to PsySSA. If there is no baggage of the past, the past will be forgotten, but we cannot forget the past as we move forward. P14 notes the past as something severed from the present and the future. Through their construction of PsySSA as a unique sunrise each day they attempt to position the organisation as one that is forward-thinking only to the expense of the past. This construct achieves a severance from the past, but in doing so is unable to account for how the past is alive in the present. From a transformational standpoint, this position is untenable because transformation necessitates having an understanding of the past and what needs to change in order for the process to have actual meaning. Thus, P14 closes down any action for meaningful transformation in the organisation using this construction.

*Think it was probably last year, a few of us wrote short commentaries in the South African Journal of psychology to commemorate PsySSA's 25th anniversary. And I titled mine, along the lines of PsySSA, as phoenix rising from the ashes. And that's the kind of metaphor that that comes to mind. Because PsySSA represents for in my mind, and I think many people's minds, a rebirth, regeneration, of psychology, but, you know, a whole new way of conceptualising the profession, of conceptualising its purpose, its aims, its values, all of those things. So, yes, we had psychological associations before. But PsySSA has to reconceptualise, reconfigure what such an association does which represents, what its purpose is, who it aligns with all of those things. So yeah, for me, it is a phoenix rising from the ashes. Because what we're seeing here, what PsySSA over the last 26 years now, is that it is it is continuing as a learned society. But that's the only similarity with the past. In every other way. It has birthed new dimensions, new ways of thinking, new ways of representing the new progressive ways of being in the world, as a psychological society as a*

*body representing people and new visions. So, I think it does, it certainly does fulfil all of that. (P13)*

P13 draws on the interpretive repertoire of mysticism to construct PsySSA as a form of rebirth of psychology. This metaphor allows PsySSA to be constructed as a complete break from the past. PsySSA rises from “the ashes” of the past of psychology, where psychology was used to oppress certain race groups and a number of other identities. P13 contradicts themselves when stating that PsySSA is nothing like the psychology of the past and then stating that PsySSA has remained a learned society similar to the psychology of the past. This contradiction is left unresolved. P13 only emphasises that there is only one similarity between the past and current form of psychology.

*The one that immediately comes to mind is resilience. And I think it mirrors the country in many respects as well. Well, I don't, I think in the climate in which PsySSA was formed, the climate in which PsySSA has evolved, if it wasn't resilient, it wouldn't have got to where it is now. The reason for it is just as again, although you're looking at professional societies, for me, the evolution of PsySSA mirrors and is inextricably interwoven with the development with what's going on in psychology as a whole in South Africa. And, of course, what has been happening in the country post-apartheid, because they're all interwoven and PsySSA, had to find a space within that context. But certainly, the evolution of psychology or the- I'm not even going to use the word transformation, because we're not there yet of psychology in South Africa has been, PsySSA has been interwoven with that. And it's been a very rocky road. It's had some huge leaps, and some great things happen. But as you're aware, it hasn't all been plain sailing with. I think many psychologists in our country finding the transition difficult. And they will be if I look back at the history, many presidents have had to deal with upheaval related to change in what's going on in psychology, not so much PsySSA, but PsySSA has been at the forefront or received the backlash of a lot of the changes that have been rooted in psychology. And our resilience has enabled us to weather that and keep moving forward. (P7)*

P7 draws on the interpretive repertoire of psychological resilience to demonstrate the survival of PsySSA since its inception. P7 uses the concept of resilience to resolve the contradiction between the leaps that PsySSA has made and the lack of transformation.

Additionally, P7 explains the lack of transformation within PsySSA by stating that it is a mirror image and interwoven with the lack of transformation within the broader South African context. P7 creates a subject positioning that appears to be critical and reflective of PsySSA, although P7 then defends and excuses the lack of transformation within PsySSA.

***PsySSA as a Swift (or Not so Swift) Animal***

Participants also drew on the interpretive repertoire of the movement of animals while alluding to moral stories told to children to construct PsySSA as an entity that moves both swiftly and slowly:

*The one that came to mind immediately was a tale of the tortoise and the hare. And that I think, in some ways, you get the two in PsySSA, you get, he wants to get at the winning poll as quickly as possible, not looking at what is in the way or the others, the tortoise that goes about it very slowly and sometimes too slowly. For the society's sake, for me, it's that metaphor for that balancing act that we must get between the tortoise and the hare. Well, I think if I think of what happened during my presidency, and people who wanted to, to get to the winning pole, as soon as possible, in their own way, without thinking, taking into consideration the rest of PsySSA and needs of the organisation. Yeah, so for me, on the one hand, the reason was that speaking the other hand, that sometimes I was too slow in response. That's a metaphor, Fatima but on the other hand, I think we also need both metaphors in the society, maybe it would be nice if we could be a metaphor that we can use. That doesn't go too quick. But also, that doesn't go too slow.*

(P3)

*When I think of PsySSA, I think of this this lumbering, big, animal, sort of like a mammoth or an elephant that's trying to move forward. But it's not very swift. So, some reason that comes into my head, that's the way I think of it, as opposed to it the smaller animal that just zigzags and moves about him. Yes, why I think about that it's, it's, uh, you know, I don't think it's where I would have thought that people struggled. Or, and some of us were young, back then when, when PsySSA came into existence, thought of it in the way it has become, I guess is because it is such a lumbering animal that it doesn't always quite get to where I*

would have thought it would be. So yeah, that's, that's why I think it's, instead for instance, jaguar, or even as much smaller animal. Yes, PsySSA is like a big, lumbering thing. It just keeps moving. But it's not, it's not very fast, like a cheetah or a jaguar, yeah. Well, it's a, it comes with the bigger it gets, the slower it will be, the more it will have incompatible groups within it. So, you know, to like in it the African National Congress without talking about the corruption of that organisation. And so, it is a- some people who are in it for what- there are people come to PsySSA for different reasons, some just come for CPD points that PsySSA makes possible some want to achieve transformative goals. Some come from- for, you know, just meeting the people that they haven't seen in a long time or in their field. So, because of that, it's not nimble enough, but it is because it addresses many and sometimes incompatible goals. So, but there are upsides of that the larger numbers, the bigger it grows, the more it has a big voice, I guess it can have a big voice. And so that's the positive side. And the other positive side is I guess economies of scale, that it can purchase or it can- it- when it was to purchase something it can be able to do that on the- on the downside is I said for me, it can't address very well. Certain things that can only be addressed by a small organisation, such as, you know, much more pointed, the much more restricted goal, like you know what, what do you want, we want to have African psychology as the- as the central to psychology in South Africa. (P8)

P3 draws on this interpretive repertoire of movement to demonstrate the overly rapid response of PsySSA in some instances, while contradicting it by demonstrating the lack of movement of PsySSA in other instances. However, this can be further analysed where the interpretative repertoire is that of moral stories (that are told to children). The moral of the tortoise and the hare, primarily, is that doing something slowly can yield better results than doing something fast and recklessly. Constructing PsySSA as both the tortoise and the hare brings into tension different constructions of organisational change. While P8 seems to hold the position that organisational transformation is slow, they construct others in the organisation as wanting fast change. The construction of the tortoise, who P8 seems to align with more, enables P8 to position themselves as a president who was measured and thoughtful in their changes, while the hare positions other members of the organisation as too eager to create change “without

thinking” to the expense of the change being meaningful and long-lasting. Constructing others as the hare positions them as not caring as much about PsySSA’s transformation as they are unnecessarily reckless and ignorant to the “needs” of the organisation. This creates a dilemma that is resolved by suggesting the need for a metaphor that is neither too fast nor too slow. P3 creates a subject position in which they moved too slow while others moved too fast. This subject positioning shoulders some of the blame, though it positions P3 as the individual that would rather move too slow than too rapidly. P3 then becomes the individual that thinks before moving rather than moving before thinking. This individual would be preferred over one who does not think before moving and so P3 constructs a positive subject position for themselves.

P8 draws from the same interpretive repertoire of movement to demonstrate the *lack* of movement that PsySSA has made. PsySSA is constructed as an animal that has become too big to move swiftly. This positions PsySSA as weak and unable to compete with swifter competitors. This critical stance implies that P8 believes that the organisation should remain smaller and thus more focussed on fewer goals and transformative ideas. This constructs transformation not as a project of inclusion of more voices, which they construct as distracting and “lumbering”, but as a project of increased focus on particular issues such as African psychology. However, the dilemma here is that African psychology aims to redress the shortcomings of traditional Western psychology that excluded certain groups of people. Part of African psychology’s agenda is that it needs to include more diverse voices and perspectives, centring African experiences. This construct narrows the scope of what P8 believes PsySSA should be doing. P8 creates a subject position of a critical reviewer of PsySSA’s progress thus far, indicating that PsySSA is not what they expected it to become at its inception. PsySSA has become too big to adequately address internal conflicts, causing the society to be distracted from its true goal of transformation. This critical view of PsySSA is undermined when P8 finds the positives of being a big, slow-moving organisation. This act of undermining a previous point protects P8 from any backlash of being critical of PsySSA.

### ***PsySSA as a Prodigy***

Participants constructed PsySSA as an entity that is able to accomplish more than ever expected, or as failing to accomplish the perfectionist status as expected:

*I almost think it's that punching uh that you're able to punch beyond your weight so to speak and what I mean with that is if I think within a boxing kind of a context that you are allocated to a certain category*

*based on weight and very often there's assumptions made around what you're able to do on the basis of your weight, but if you look at the lean mean structure that PsySSA's office in particular, but perhaps PsySSA as a whole, we're not the biggest national society of a profession but certainly we punch way beyond our weight and the kind of reverberations, and I want to say across the world certainly on the continent and in South Africa of this actually small society is quite noteworthy. That's part of our success story I would say um and indeed we've got weighty past presidents and indeed scholars within the society so I don't want to in any case convey a message that is not the case but if you think of the society as a whole and with our few resources much had to be achieved and how laudable, but perhaps potentially unrealistic the vision and mission of the society was especially in the beginning days and to what extent we've actually been able to measure up to that I think it says it all, it's a few people, a small office, very few staff that is indeed punched above our weight and very successfully so and I think if it wasn't the case we wouldn't have been still the leading national society not only in South Africa but on the African continent and indeed we are. I think we counted among the leaders internationally as well so all important that we were able to do that, but I do think it needs to be recognised that it took most probably quite an inordinate effort to achieve. (P9)*

P9 draws on an interpretive repertoire of sport to demonstrate PsySSA's ability to achieve more than what was ever expected. This construction of PsySSA as a prodigy contradicts the previous construction made by P8 of a slow-moving animal that has grown too big. P9 constructs PsySSA as a small organisation with the ability to move very swiftly (boxers must be fleet of foot to win) and achieve more than it should be able to. P11 contradicts this construction of PsySSA:

*Standing for lofty principles, but unable to find the medium to achieve those principles. So, if you want to put it in biblical terms, it's showing the way, but unafraid to go there ourselves. I think that that metaphor is the death of PsySSA, in fact, we must ensure that there is no break in what we say and what we do. We cannot pull out when it suits us. Oh, but we believe in this when in reality it tells us something else.*



*You know, it's something wrong with the picture. And they use a problem that we have deteriorated, we have declined. And despite the best efforts of key leaders, particularly specific presidents and other executive members, we have tended to lose the focus. We've gone into minutia and in so going into the minutia, reacting to every little issue that is out there, that is discursive. That is essentially a white attack on a black organisation. And we've tended to get caught up in that rather than rising above it and looking at the bigger picture. (P11)*

P11 draws on an interpretive repertoire of biblical terms to construct PsySSA as an organisation that stands for lofty principles and one that is unafraid of living out those principles. This construction further taps into an interpretive repertoire of leadership and specifically leading by example, which enables PsySSA to be positioned as an organisation undertaking honourable work within the field of psychology, and perhaps, at times, work that others do not necessarily want to pursue. This construction suggests that transforming psychology in South Africa is a difficult task with much resistance. This construction is supported by P11's use of race as an interpretive repertoire. Their use of race legitimises their stance of the task of transformation being a difficult one because of racial divides and the associated power dynamics. Specifically, P11 positions white people as attacking a "black organisation". Drawing on race enables a recognisable form of societal inequality to legitimise PsySSA's attempts and subsequent failure to transform meaningfully, while justifying the barriers to transformation, as being based on racial differences. Racial differences are thus constructed as the primary barrier to change in the organisation. This construction closes down the opportunity for change in the organisation and positions white people as incompatible with the organisation and its objectives. However, these issues of division are positioned by P11 as ones that should be overlooked in order to focus on the "bigger picture" of organisational transformation. P11 then contradicts this construction of PsySSA by stating that PsySSA has deteriorated from these principles. This dilemma is made sense of when P11 places the blame for the decline in PsySSA on those who have not let go of the divide between different racial groups. P11 continues to protect the presidents and executive members that have tried to keep PsySSA on course.

### ***PsySSA as a Chemical Reaction***

P4 and P17 draw on the interpretive repertoire of chemistry and chemical reactions to construct PsySSA's identity:

*Can I use a chemical metaphor? I think this PsySSA must be like a catalyst. You know, what is the function of a catalyst in a chemical reaction? You bring ingredients together. And this catalyst invokes I don't know whether that's the right term, or triggers that chemical reaction to produce something else something completely different? Yeah, so or otherwise, you could imagine, I think that's the best one the other metaphor was thinking of baking a cake that you have the ingredients and the PsySSA is the cook that makes sure the ingredients are all in the right proportions and mixtures. It creates the right temperature for the cake to bake, and you get a beautiful cake. And PsySSA puts the icing on top. But I think maybe the catalyst one is a better metaphor. Professions are going through radical fundamental change. Somebody has said that professions over the next 30 years are going to be more radically transformed and they've been in the previous 300 years, 200 years. The existence and it's all about the new world in which we have to function. And the term that gets used this is kind of as an umbrella term is the fourth industrial revolution, where people have to be served in a different way. Organisations are going to operate in a different way. PsySSA will have to become a stable home for psychologists in the future. (P4)*

P4 draws on the discourse of chemistry to construct PsySSA as a catalyst (causing a reaction) or the entity that brings ingredients together. This positions PsySSA as an entity in a position of control, affording it the power to make key decisions about transformation. Coupled with their construction of how the future world of work will look, their construction places PsySSA in a position where it has to navigate this exponential change in strategic ways. Whether or not PsySSA is currently fit for this transformation P4 does not make clear, however they do position PsySSA as an entity that they believe will have to adapt to meet these changes. P4 then adds a disclosure to this by indicating that this construction of PsySSA is adequate for now, but that PsySSA will have to change as professions change rapidly over the next 30 years. P4 then draws on the interpretative repertoire of the home to construct PsySSA as a safe space and protector of psychologists, echoing a previously discussed construction. Coupled with the other constructions in this quote, there is a sense of PsySSA being constructed as a stable, guiding entity, albeit one that must adapt to some degree.

*And the one thought that comes to me is about it's about complexity. and why use that as a metaphor is I can remember the complexities of the past that needed to be navigated both in terms of creating PsySSA. And then as PsySSA, in a sense blew up. Because whilst we come from one profession and discipline, we also represent a range of different strains that have to come together. And whether it's the categories of psychology professionals, or whether it's the sub-disciplines that make up psychology, for example. And those, and one might feel that because you have, in a sense, psychology is the broad base, that there's always synergy. And that those sort of different strands, I think, have to be managed to speak to the whole of who PsySSA is, in a sense. And so, I think the leadership of PsySSA has to manage those different complexities developed to get everybody to kind of move and pull together in the same direction. But I think the complexity is also attractive, because that's what stimulates debate and gets diverse views going, etc, as opposed to an organisation that's got like, all of the same kind of people. And, yeah, you've got huge diversity, and we'll come at things from different theoretical perspectives. Not just lived experiences, but theory and assertion, etc, so I'm kind of using almost like the complexity metaphor, which I know in, in organisations psychology there. Which makes PsySSA both attractive in and think, at times, an interesting organisation to manage the lead- to making anything. I mean, the pros are you have this diversity, which represents the discipline and, and the profession and its diversity. So, you've in a sense, got a microcosm of things. And that's why conferences are good, because you get to go to discussions and papers sometimes that are not totally in your area of specialisation, if I can use that word, but you then get exposed to another sub-discipline thinks about something. And you get enriched in a good spot with new ideas and, and those types of things. And where I think it's a con is it is difficult to get people to cohere, I think we've probably had more of that in the past, in the air in the present. And when I think of the industrial side people, but it is more difficult to almost get beyond a common vision. What I haven't said yet is that I think, I think whilst the organisation probably tries to represent both the science and*

*the profession of psychology, it probably represents the science best through, and the fact that you're able to present research papers, etc. And you put the journal that publishes that and so on. But increasingly, I'm wondering about the science of and the discipline of psychology. And its place and, and how, for example, a group like PsySSA and would expand its conceptualisation of who comes into the fold. (P17)*

P17 draws on the discourse of chemistry to construct PsySSA as a complex reaction that brings diverse elements together. P17's construction contains a dilemma when the positive aspects of a diverse society are contrasted with the negative aspects of this diversity. A diverse organisation creates an interesting debate-inducing environment that aids in the progression of the discipline of psychology. However, this diversity creates an environment that must bring diverse ideas and agendas together. P17 negotiates this dilemma by suggesting that PsySSA consider who it allows to become a part of the organisation. This links back to the power PsySSA holds in deciding who it will be protecting and who will not have the privilege of that protection.

### **The Becoming Identity of PsySSA**

Participants were prompted to reflect on transformation and PsySSA. The question was meant to encourage participants to consider the progress that PsySSA has made up to this point in its transformative mission, while inviting participants to interrogate the articulation points and fault lines of PsySSA's transformational journey. In other words, it was meant to offer participants the opportunity to draw on prevalent discourses of transformation in considering PsySSA as a society in transformation and as an agent of transformation. This double identity of PsySSA was constructed around five themes, namely the establishment of PsySSA, breaking free from the past, becoming a leader in future academic transformation, maintaining a balancing act of transformation, and being in continuous transformation. The ideology of governmentality, further positions PsySSA's becoming identity, as a government that governs the government, this was supported by participants' constructions of PsySSA. PsySSA was constructed as an organisation in the process of becoming transformed and as a dynamic organisation with the ability to evolve and move along with the broader South African society. However, in these constructions several ideological dilemmas surfaced.

### ***The Establishment of PsySSA: An Ideological Dilemma***

PsySSA was positioned by participants as an organisation that must carry the weight of the past and it is this past that allows it to draw some strength to continue to transform.

Continuation in the face of discontinuity and discontinuation in the face of continuity must leave significant unresolved dilemmas. It is important to focus on these dilemmas as they are on the one hand the fault lines that threaten the very existence of PsySSA, but on the other hand are also the articulation points that fuel and direct PsySSA's transformation.

PsySSA did not have an easy beginning, however, it was necessary to create a sense of continuity of psychology in the country to assist in the rehabilitation process for the profession and South African society. The establishment of PsySSA was in itself a power struggle with negotiations between various pre-existing psychological bodies. While this power struggle was ongoing, it could be closely mirrored by the continuity and discontinuity of psychology within South Africa, contrasting the apartheid regime and the new democratic society. The power struggle between the older organisations and members, and newer organisations and members led to caesarean birthing of PsySSA. In order for PsySSA to become a new transformative representation of psychology in South Africa, it had to reflect the needs, visions, and missions of these disparate bodies.

*I can't remember how long the process took, at least one year, Fatima, we eventually agreed, we also then generated a constitution, which we could all sign into, which was a very tricky political situation at that stage where the old PASA- because PASA itself was the merger of independent psychological societies, like the Society for Clinical Psychology for industrial psychology. And the only way they could bring these societies together was that they, they said that everyone had a veto right on all the decisions that got taken. So, what we had to do very- tread very carefully, is to convince all the, the members of, of PASA to actually come into this new merger, which resulted in PsySSA. Because any one of them at any stage could have exercised the veto rights, and then the process would have derailed. (P4)*

*PsySSA is a culmination of a long struggle and an effort to broaden participation in the psychology fraternity. (P8)*

The constitution is positioned as a reconstitution because the segregated societies that made up PASA were reconstituted as a single society. PASA and other societies were then again reconstituted into PsySSA. A reconstitution has a double logic, namely that it is simultaneously a continuation and a discontinuation. Negotiating the constitution of PsySSA was a lengthy and complicated process. During this reconstitution, every society in the

merger held the power to use their veto right, ensuring that none of the individual societies were in a powerless or suppressed position at the time. This gives PsySSA an integrity based on equality. Terms and phrases like “we eventually agreed”, “a constitution we could all sign into”, “bring [...] together”, “to convince all members of PASA to actually come into this new merger” draw on an interpretative repertoire of inclusivity and constitutionality, in other words a democratic union. Whereas terms and phrases like “merger of independent societies” and “everybody had a veto right” draw on an interpretative repertoire of merging characterised by independence of members, a federal union. This emphasises the need for continuity. The union of the pre-existing entities highlighted the need of the profession to progress together into the future with a shared vision (presumably ideally), which later becomes more complex when one looks deeper. Phrases like “tricky political situation”, “tread very carefully”, and “convince all”, and collective pronouns like “we” and “they” alert one to the fact that the interpretative repertoires constitute an ideological dilemma. The ‘we’ of PsySSA; the ‘we’ that offered an alternative way to bring the societies together; the ‘we’ that eventually agreed; the ‘we’ that generated a constitution are all in stark contrast to the ‘they’ of PASA; the ‘they’ whose only way was to allow everybody to have a veto right. The ‘we’ that treads carefully, that convinces everybody to come together in a new merger, is also the ‘we’ that subjects and replaces the ‘they’ by keeping them from using their veto right through careful convincing. Participants indicate that the ‘we’ overpowers through the power of reason. This is the ‘we’ that rejects federalism and independent identities in the name of democratic unity. An ideology of democratic unity is reproduced. However, the reproduction of identity in unity requires the reasonable (convincing) suppression of independence (of veto rights). P8 draws on an interpretative repertoire of the struggle perhaps echoing the same long struggle of the fight against apartheid. Although P8 does not mention in this extract who or what was being struggled against, this entity or the people making it up were in some way oppressive (or at the very least resistant to change, such as broadening psychology to others). As with P4’s construction, the consequence of this construction is that PsySSA had to negotiate the way forward carefully: they could not move hastily, but rather had to be effortful and this effort was not an easy task – it was a struggle, a battle. Establishing PsySSA harboured an ideological dilemma that was overcome by suppressing federal union independence in favour of a democratic union. Furthermore, this highlights that suppression was accomplished through reason while being convincing and trending carefully.

Several discursive repertoires legitimate the discourse of PsySSA as a continuity of psychology overcoming a segregated past. The constitutional discourse of South Africa

allows the participants to construct the inception of PsySSA as a process of constitution, although long and tricky, through which the past (PASA) is connected to the present (PsySSA). The professional discourse allows the participants to construct the fraternity of psychology as the culmination of a struggle of the past to the learned society that PsySSA has become. This grants PsySSA more reason to exist and more reason to fight for transformation. If PsySSA is personified, PsySSA was a child born to one activist parent and one conservative parent but grew into a rebellious teen who sided with their activist-leaning parent, while still carrying the ideologies, in some respect, of their conservative parent. There is a discourse of PsySSA as a continuity of psychology overcoming the segregated past, based on two discursive repertoires.

*... what comes to mind primarily is this organisation that was really truly inspired by the need for transformation, they need to change the way psychology was going about its basis. In fact, when I think about PsySSA going far back to the 90s, I think of an organisation that wanted to break free from an arrangement where psychology was used to perpetuate oppression. (P5)*

P5 taps into the interpretative repertoire of oppression. In the 1990s, PsySSA is constructed as a progressive organisation that had the desire to “break free” – this constructs the society and psychology, at the time, as oppressive to PsySSA, its mission, and its members, therefore, one that actively needed to be broken away from. This calls for a severance from the past. In this way, PsySSA was tasked with starting this process and broke free from the oppressive system. This was a necessity in order to separate itself from what psychology had come to represent in apartheid South Africa. The participant does not resolve the tension of how an organisation can break away from the past while still being part of the same discipline. The construction of PsySSA as a continuation was built based on the suppression of the previous regime and its identity, further highlighting the need to repress the previous identity associated with the profession in order for psychology to be reconstructed to serve the needs of a democratic society.

*[...] organised psychology, in the context of a society that was previously divided in a society where psychology was only interested in the needs of a minority and was also an instrument of power. So, PsySSA was more of a movement to transform psychology to be relevant to all the sectors of the South African population to move it away from the past, sectarian, power-*

*driven institution that was designed to entrench inequality or it was partially used as an instrument of entrenching inequality in society. So, PsySSA is more of a, an attempt to create psychology that is relevant and applicable in an equal society. (P1)*

*It was established in opposition to discrimination and racism specifically, but racial in particular, but all forms of discrimination. (P16)*

*So PsySSA created that platform to allow Africans to be able to start to express themselves and go from nothing if one is to call it that way within the association kind of setting that PASA created for the Africans. (P6)*

*There are basically two aspects to the name "PsySSA" comes to mind, one, that it's a body and organisation that represents the profession of psychology in South Africa. But at the same time, what always comes to mind, when I'm thinking about PsySSA, in that context, I'm thinking about the history that it actually represents psychology in democratic South Africa. (P13)*

P13's quote is interesting and constructs their thoughts using the acronym of PsySSA. They construct a parallel between psychology's journey and South Africa's journey to transformation, where there is a sense that PsySSA becomes a microcosm of the new South Africa. But for this participant, their construction is legitimised through the interpretive repertoire of historical continuity. Their construction allows for the past to be present, or at the very least, acknowledged: PsySSA is positioned as an organisation that has to carry the weight of the past and it is this past that allows it to draw some strength to continue to transform. Similarly, P16 draws on an interpretive repertoire of historical continuity, where PsySSA is positioned as opposed to discrimination – a construction that portrays PsySSA as actively working against discrimination in society. This construction affords PsySSA the space, as well as the necessity, to actively integrate its transformative agenda in practice, not just by advocating for increased inclusion of Africans, as P6 mentions, but working towards *resisting* the exclusion of groups. This is highlighted by P11 where the participant positioned PsySSA as an organisation that must carry the weight of the past and it is this past that allows it to draw some strength to continue to transform.

*So, PsySSA and its advent. How can an entity that embraced everyone without regard for their racial classification, would they, without regard for gender, without regard for the category that the psychologists came from,*



*and without regard for any other consideration, but the discipline, putting the discipline in the foreground, and continuing with focusing on the discipline, as such, looking back in that quest. (P11)*

Simultaneously, the merging of previously separated societies into a single PsySSA demonstrates a discontinuity from the past. Terms and phrases like “need for change”, “break free”, “away from the past”, “psychology [...] in an equal society”, and “in opposition to discrimination” draw on an interpretative repertoire of the regaining of power. Whereas terms like “oppressor”, “an instrument of power”, “only interested in the needs of minority”, and “designed to entrench inequality” draw on an interpretative repertoire of the oppressive power of the past. An ideological dilemma emerges when the psychology of the past, which was used as a tool of oppression, is contrasted to the use of psychology as a tool of liberation in a ‘new’ South Africa. PsySSA was established to break free from the apartheid past, which used psychology as a tool to oppress. However, it begs the question of what needs to be done by PsySSA and the profession in order for these tensions to be reconciled.

The use of psychology as a tool to gain power over certain groups left psychology itself in a powerless position. Those who were left without a voice in the past were given an equal voice. PsySSA was expected to be a non-discriminatory, inclusive psychological body and was created to further the dominant discourse of a democratic and equal South Africa and psychology. PsySSA was, therefore, built on the integrity of freedom and wholeness as a single psychological society for all South Africans. Some participants align with this interpretation such as P11 who is grappling with these issues. P11 highlights these issues by framing their thoughts as questions, however, P6 constructs PsySSA as specifically for the interests of Africans. There is the tension, again, of who PsySSA was for: for everyone or for the interests of those oppressed under apartheid? This interpretation draws on the interpretive repertoire of democracy and equality to construct PsySSA as a body that was able to negotiate this tension successfully. What these constructions are trying to achieve is to demonstrate that the only way forward for PsySSA was to be democratic and inclusive or it ran the risk of replicating previous regimes where some groups were excluded and oppressed. This highlights the underlying interpretative repertoires of continuity and discontinuity and the associated power dynamics at play in each construction. This led to a number of individuals, who were part of the negotiations, feeling suppressed and neglected by the leadership. P11 highlights this by saying “without regard” for particular identity characteristics. Furthermore, this emphasised how they were able to negotiate this. This highlights PsySSA as the driving force behind the merging of the profession while promoting

inclusivity and diversity. They construct psychology here in utopian terms: an idealised psychology that is able to live up to its idealised missions of being in the service for all.

This considered, PsySSA was originally constructed as a democratic agreement providing each of the individual entities the right to veto any of the decisions that were made. At some point this veto right had to become obsolete as decision-making became the role of council members as PsySSA grew in membership. The veto right, in essence, became a power move, and led to a halting of the transformation process. This created rifts or breakaway groups in PsySSA, which can be seen as another power move to disrupt smooth organisational function, while shattering that façade of unity. This process of withdrawing power from individual groupings was not discussed by any of the participants.

PsySSA's inception is further portrayed only as a unifying organisation. This is problematic as there were several tensions within, as well as eventual break-away groups. This shows the idealised constructions of PsySSA by participants.

*There have been many crises on the horizon of PsySSA, and there will still be many. We think of difficulties we had with certain splinter groups, certain difficult customers in the past and given PsySSA's ability to be agile, it was able to counter those difficulties and end up on the other side. (P16)*

*There will also have been people who have come in there, who may claim to be associated with that mission and vision. And this will usually be people from the old order, that is, those who may still have benefited from the oppressive arrangements of the past. And so, because they may have realised that it is not possible out there to be on their own, so they may have sailed along and come into the fold of PsySSA and then you'll find that they are in there. But they may want to essentially block some of the activities that PsySSA may want to get involved in, in order to take to the next level because when PsySSA flourishes and blossoms, it means for those that may have benefited from the arrangement of the past the oppressive arrangement of the past, it may then no longer be (of) benefit, benefit to them. (P5)*

*[...] we were emerging out of the whole PsySSA and SIOPSA fiasco and the whole drama. Yeah. And it was at that time when we were there were internal fights around the scope of practice issue – the there was a lot of very adversarial spirit within, within the society to where the different formations, that is, the, the, different divisions or the different branches of society was sort of at loggerheads and at each other's throats. (P1)*

*[...] we obviously found that people were still not really that interested in integrating but more interested in using what power they would have and how that could benefit them both sides from the formation of the organisation and seeing that in other parts throughout the country. (P18)*

*It was, say a slice, of members that didn't want transformation and some have caused quite a lot of problems. And thinking of SIOPSA – it was done by people that wanted to make things stay the same – certain feelings of PsySSA members were used against PsySSA council to try and get PsySSA all broken up, but luckily that didn't happen – it was a trying time, but I think it was a time that we learned quite a lot of lessons. (P14)*

*If you look out there, you have formations that have, in a sense, got their point of reference, because of the disagreement with what this country is about. So, make no mistake, the democratic project that PsySSA preceded by somewhat four months, has elements that the breakaways, our detractors, are deeply disturbed by. And, in that they have an illness. If we were to look at it, as how are you representing what you claim to be representing, there's a huge disjuncture between what they say and what they believe. And you will notice that whenever it happened with SIOPSA, and what was that PAG, and then then it was the educational people, white lead, white lead, and then when we made the comments, they quickly found a black oke to put in the front. So, in my terminology, I call that non white-ism. You know, I mean, you just put the person there as, as, an expression of the white master or, madam, you know, so it's that kind of approach. But you, you got to just listen to them. You got to just read what they say. And you find they cannot come to terms with the South African reality. (P11)*

*The educational people, I think that's where the problem started with them. (P10)*

*I sometimes pick up this tone of disgruntlement where people are saying that PsySSA, therefore, we need to form an authentic voice that will represent the interests of Africans that are psychologists. (P1)*

Participants draw on the constitutional discourse that initially brought the divided societies together. However, here, the reconstitution process becomes a form of discontinuity as a number of breakaway groups form. Terms and phrases like “difficulties with certain splinter groups”, “people from the old order”, “SIOPSA fiasco”, “internal fights”, “at loggerheads

and at each other's throats", "detractors", "they have an illness", and "they cannot come to terms" although less subtly, this again brings the subject positions of "we" versus "them" to the foreground, creating an ideological dilemma, namely whether PsySSA is a continuity or a discontinuity of the psychology of the past. Furthermore, this raises questions if indeed the profession unified or not. In this case, participants resolve this paradox by constructing those who were unhappy with the way PsySSA was representing them as distractions from the main goal of the organisation. This consequently positions them as misaligned with the goals of PsySSA. These viewpoints of the tensions between moving forward with the organisation are legitimised through the racialised discourse of whiteness. This comes through strongly with P11's comments about being "white lead" and then having a black person used as a token or symbol of change – the "non-white-ism". This positions the opposing group (that is, SIOPSA), as resisting change due to the possibilities of losing power that was gained through their white identities or given to them through legislation and the apartheid system. They are constructed as being opposed to any kind of progressive change, but also constructed as strategically trying to negotiate holding on to power. P11 draws on the interpretative repertoire of denialism where these members are constructed as being unable to face the changing reality of the country. The people constructed as holding PsySSA back only want the organisation to move forward if it suits their agenda, which was closely related to identity, rather than the profession's agenda and the needs of the majority. These individuals or groups are painted as the enemy in that they are against PsySSA's transformative mission. PsySSA is constructed as the final victor in all of these instances as groups with conflicting interest left the organisation. In other words, the paradox is resolved by splitting the discontinuity (detractors) from the continuity of a flourishing PsySSA.

PsySSA's constitution (as democratic union) is a reconstitution meant to establish continuity (only obtainable by suppression). While a reconstitution always harbours discontinuity, when the suppression becomes unsuccessful (and the fault lines are revealed and splinter groups surface) the discourse of transformation is tabled, and transformation is racialised. Most notably, in a country like South Africa, transformation is predominately placed in racial frameworks and tends to swiftly move away from the inclusion of gender, disability, socio-economic standing, religion and LGBTQI+ issues, as points of transformation. Noting the above, PsySSA remains legitimate. The correctness of the democratic union agenda is established on the wrongness of the federal union.

### *PsySSA Breaking Free from the Past*

Apartheid South Africa made use of biological markers, such as skin colour and hair texture, to divide South Africans according to different race classes. These biological 'differences' held social, economic, and political implications. With the dawn of democracy, this biological divide was eradicated. Since this was the main divider of the past, several presidents remarked on the implications of biological divisions, as well as PsySSA's manifesto to eliminate previous divisions among psychologists and the broader South African population. This bio-socio-political discourse surrounding race as an identity-defining cultural domain is drawn upon to describe the historical context of psychology, as well as how psychology was used to oppress certain groups of individuals.

*[...] one way of being relevant is you've got to reflect the demographics. If you've got a demographic that is out of sync with society, it's hard to be relevant because many of those white psychologists are also from the privileged background, and are used to servicing the small percentage, what 16 odd percentage who have private health care, so again, not able to service the population. [...] We are one humanity. You cannot be a colour. You cannot be a hair texture, you cannot be a language, you cannot be a belief alone. All those things describe who you are. But we made of the same ingredients, biologically ons is dieselfde [we are the same]. [...] When we go out there, we want to show how, you know, I'm not with her, I'm not with him, you know, we've got to excuse them, because they still hung up over apartheid. After all, we over it now. So, get over it, you know, and that is the kind of supercilious attitudes that justify their own positions, rather than dealing with the big issues that we've got in our society. So, it's time that PsySSA began to look at the big issues, began to look at how do we impact policy out there. [...] So, these were the people who are representing black psychology, by the way. So, they didn't find blacks. They would then represent blacks if they couldn't find the right black person. (P11)*

*We know historically, because of apartheid, psychology has been quite, I think it was at one point almost 90%, white, I forget, at the dawn of democracy, and 10%, in black. [...] I think we've spoken about the fact that when you just eyeball our congresses, they seem to be predominantly black as they should be. But the membership figures don't necessarily mean-mirror that so for some reason, there's this interesting disjunctive. [...] I'd*

*been to some of the so-called PASA congresses, although I had a horrific experience at one, we presented some work and was approached afterwards by somebody, I think from the HSRC [Human Sciences Research Council], asking me how we could adapt my neuropsychology work to prove that all blacks were brain damaged. (P7)*

Here there is the discontinuity with the past apartheid system and the continuity with the ‘new’ democratic South Africa. Terms and phrases like “you cannot be a colour” and “biologically ons is dieselfde [we are the same]” draw on an interpretative repertoire of equality. Yet, equality due to belonging to the same class of things (humanity) is not the same as the value of being treated as an equal. P11 constructs the untenability of reducing a human being to a set of characteristics. This statement is legitimised by the scientific interpretive repertoire of the relationship between the whole and its parts. Initially, an antireductionist stance is taken by P11, however, creating a dilemma when the same participant again reduces different individuals to a single category – humanity. An attempt is made to resolve this dilemma by stating “but we [are] made of the same ingredients, biologically ons is dieselfde [we are the same].” Once more, the “we” versus “them” ideological dilemma is expressed in terms like “they still hung up over apartheid” and “they would represent blacks”. An ideological dilemma emerges as the inequality of the past cannot be repaired immediately. Frustration emerges as people will not simply ‘move on’ from the past. The discontinuity from the past relies heavily on equality and addressing the inequalities of the past. However, there remains a sense of needing continuity in the face of discontinuity and vice versa. The participants are grappling with this and the discursive constructions of inequality versus equality are used to try work through this tension. It is both the fault line, which stops PsySSA from moving forward as a transformed society, while also being the articulation point of transformation for PsySSA, the fountain from which it drinks to justify and/or sustain its mission to transform.

Understanding how each participant constructed transformation was important to assess:

*The first thing is numbers, it’s a demographic shift and then the second is what you might call a cultural shift and ideological shift – you could have people who are excluded and they come into the organisation but the organisation pursues more or less the same ends – so, the faces might have changed but the ideology, the idea is the same – and if you think about the future, think of innovation. (P8)*

*No profession will survive if it doesn't reinvent itself – we have to break the old patterns of doing, and divisions that have become embedded, and those divisions are related largely to race and largely to gender and largely to sexual identity. (P16)*

*Transformation is inclusivity – making sure that you are aware of what is going on around you and bring up the beliefs of all the people that are in there and you understand where they're coming from. (P6)*

*The general misconception of transformation is that it's only referring to maybe race issues or things that would have happened in the past around inequality and I think transformation is much more than that – yes, diversity is important but I think diversity transcends beyond race – what are we doing with regards to gender issues, what are we doing in regards to class issues, what sort of psychologist are we attracting? (P15)*

*I would see transformation to a world where everybody in this country, and as professionals because it is a professional society, have the right to say the same, the right to have input in what we want our society to be. And everyone has the right to dignity, to be praised and to be admired for what they do academically as well, doesn't matter what their colour is. [...] I think we have to maintain it [transformation] by getting to know each other's culture, getting to know each other well because I think there's lots of myths about different cultures. (P14)*

*For me, it's very broad and it's kind of multimodal. So obviously, what the most obvious aspect of transformation being located where we are in this country, transformation has had to address the issues of race transformation. But obviously, it includes other dimensions, so issues of gender, sexual orientation, etc. But for me, there are also other issues that we need to look at, in terms of transformation. And that includes academic contexts includes theoretical contexts, it includes how we move psychology forward. (P13)*

*Transformation is, to me, in an organisational sense, is actually allowing people and communities that were not allowed to have a voice in institutions and organisations to allow them to do that – so, transformation is, to me, the issue of equal opportunities – universities are still struggling to train black and coloured and Indian psychologists. (P10)*

*[...] the transformation agenda of PsySSA cannot be divorced from the transformation agenda of the entire country. (P5)*

*[...] transformation is that you change your society such that there are equal opportunities, with equal access for everybody in the society according to their interests, their personality and their abilities. So, as a person, context fit for me, that is fair and equitable to everybody – and where there's been past discriminations, past distortions, if you want to call it, how do you equalise the opportunities and access the opportunities? And how do you make it then available on an equal basis for everybody, which may then require some corrective action intervention. If it has been distorted in the past, you also have to, you have to, kind of work with the past, correct that, but you also have to work with a future, otherwise it gets continued into the future. (P4)*

*I am very much for inclusivity. And everybody should be included. I'm very much for social justice. Social justice, to me, is an important aspect in the whole transforming of PsySSA, coupled with social justice. (P3)*

There is a strong reliance on the socio-political discourse of inclusivity and equality that links participants to the wider South African political ideals. The interpretive repertoire of inclusivity and equality is drawn on by participants in the same way that it is drawn on by political figures in South Africa. The use of terms or phrases such as “the faces may have changed, but the ideology is the same”, “divisions [between people] have become embedded”, “universities are still struggling to train black and coloured and Indian psychologists”, and “what are we doing” draw from an interpretive repertoire of a lack of inclusivity and are often used to legitimate claims within the political realm as a criticism of the progress of transformation in South Africa. While this can also be labelled as superficial transformation, further drawing on the P11’s comments of having a black person used almost as a token or symbol of change.

Transformation extends beyond racial domains towards an equality that accounts for the intersection of marginalised cultural identities. This political discourse is drawn upon through the participants’ discussions around the success of PsySSA’s transformation up to this point in time. This draws on the tension between social justice and inclusivity while begging the question, are the two ideologies compatible? On the surface they should be, however, should one explore further, social justice has to be *just* about something as it emerges because of some kind of inequality or *injustice*. In this context this injustice would



presumably be members who do not want the organisation to transform in a way that does not benefit them solely. The utopian notion of inclusivity of all is incompatible with a social justice agenda if everyone is included without some kind of *personal* transformation that happens first.

While P5's comment that parallels the transformation of the country with the transformation of PsySSA, it surfaced more often that PsySSA is in some ways reflective of the state of the country and its movement towards change. This points towards how the organisation is very much embedded in a particular socio-historical context that it cannot ignore. Further, this constructs the project of transformation as one that is inextricably linked to the past and one that has to negotiate all the associated tensions that come with carrying the baggage of the past into the present in order to create lines of continuity that can be threaded into the future. P10 points towards this in a practical sense: "...psychologists of colour need to be trained but universities are struggling to do this". This constructs universities as a contributor to the problem: why are they struggling to do this when there is such a dire need for such psychologists, and where undergraduate lecture halls overflow with people of all races and genders interested in psychology? This highlights the theme of organisational transformation of higher education. One is left considering if people from the 'old order' are perhaps part of these psychology departments and are therefore making decisions about who is let in and who is not.

Building on the idea of whether members of the 'old order' are perhaps part of psychology departments today, it is interestingly highlighted that a number of PsySSA presidents have been and currently are in positions of power where they have the ability to make transformational choices. Additionally, this reiterates the need for PsySSA to dictate the narrative of the profession, highlighting PsySSA as the gatekeeper to the profession. Moreover, this drives home the idea that PsySSA continues in the face of discontinuity. One is hopeful that the vision and mission of PsySSA are engrained into these individuals and is then filtered down when they have to make these transformational decisions.

*I think we are doing well in the transformation of numbers – as far as the cultural climate or the ideology that has not always been successful – just because the people that are running the organisation are black, does not mean that they are not bullies. (P8)*

*PsySSA embodies progressive change. (P16)*

*I think we must, we've got to be looking at the issue of race, of gender, all of those variables that we have, and I think PsySSA has been very successful,*

*very, extremely successful. [...] I think PsySSA has always pushed the idea of democratic free profession that trains, that employs on a, on a, on an equitable basis, on a representative basis. (P13)*

*I think PsySSA is on a very, you know, correct route. And they will just continue. And what is going to be very important now is not only to transform to, with regard to race, but also to transform with regards to embracing this fourth industrial revolution situation, where you also start to look at engaging the millennials, because those are quite another society on its own. (P6)*

*Psychology is changed at a political level because of the interventions of PsySSA. Why am I saying that we have changed at a political level, because now, psychology or science has fought the battles to ensure that justice prevails, PsySSA has been in the forefront to a wage those battles to ensure that there is justice, there is equality in the country, not easy battles. (P5)*

Here “I think we are doing well in the transformation of numbers”, “PsySSA has been very successful, very, extremely successful”, and “Psychology is changed at a political level because of the interventions of PsySSA” indicate a belief that PsySSA has been successful in its transformative mission. While it should be noted that the presidents are invested in representing PsySSA as a transformed or a transforming society, the participants also provide some nuance. P8 constructs transformation as extending beyond representation in terms of numbers, arguing that it is also about cultural and ideological change. Participants construct PsySSA as a transformed organisation by drawing on the political interpretive repertoire of equality and a transformed society. An ideological dilemma is created by drawing on an interpretive repertoire of a lack of transformation over the past 29 years of democracy and the belief that transformation has been successful. The dilemma stands unresolved as participants remain on opposite sides of this argument. However, they are certainly aware that transformation is a process that involves more than correcting racial injustices. This highlights that PsySSA is still becoming and promoting a larger understanding of transformation as an on-going project where progress happens in minor ways that are sometimes hard to see. Although PsySSA is still transforming, it has taken the lead in the mission of transformation, like the child bearing the flame of change, however, the ‘lofty’ principles which it was founded on have led it to face more discontinuity in the face of continuity showing more cracks in its foundation that have led to a number of splinters.

Additionally, the integrity of PsySSA at its inception is only a temporary integrity as it can be disrupted at any time. Whenever the equality of the society is disrupted, the integrity is broken. This is highlighted through the issues faced with SIOPSA and SEPSA. The ideological ideals on which PsySSA is built, the equality of all, is not always upheld. The same political interpretive repertoire can be drawn from to legitimate the discontinuity of this integrity.

*We've still got a little bit of that apartheid mentality in us – we need our minds constantly open to other ways of thinking and other research. (P17)*

*People were thinking that PsySSA doesn't represent them well. [...]*

*Psychology was white. It was dominated by white men at a certain point up until the late 80s – now psychology is dominated in the practitioner field by white women. (P8)*

*That history [apartheid] is inseparable from PsySSA. (P16)*

*The competition keeps creeping in especially when you look at the whole history of where we are coming from. (P6)*

*We are moving in the direction of making, of giving, a psychology, if you will, a black face, that's a lovely phrase there, right there, psychology an African face or a black face and but what kind? So, that's what we fail at determining what kind of face is this? (P8)*

*The way things are at the moment still to do not reflect that reality that we want to see. If you look at the demographic representation, for instance, you see, there's still a bit of a challenge there – this is going to be a journey.*

*And it is never going to be a destination. (P5)*

Transformation is constructed here as a process rather than a destination. This interpretative repertoire of the journey validates this construction as one that is fraught with twists and turns. The path is not linear, where 'monsters' have to be fought along every route. This enables transformation to be an on-going commitment that requires willing adventurers (leaders and members) to be part of this journey. Moreover, the constructions of transformation by the participants allows one to interpret that transformation involves movement, movement of energy, time, and favour. However, these constructions further elicit that the participants do not have a clear and collective view on what transformation is. This construction is found alongside the interpretive repertoire of representation. These further highlight that the journey of transformation is not a symbolic change but a systemic dismantling of a

failing and oppressive system. This was noted by P8, who stated that when they assumed the position of president, it was as though PsySSA needed “a black face”.

P15 constructs historical legacy as an important feature of PsySSA, where continuity is the name of the game. As much as one tries, the past will always be present: for them you have to acknowledge the past and deal with it. This is the tension of wanting to discontinue that legacy without acknowledging the system it left behind. Additionally, this links to P8’s construction that the legacy is still visible in ways that make members feel like the organisation does not represent them because they perhaps see the legacy of apartheid within the organisation:

*If I sometimes feel as a white person I'm left behind. [...] But PsySSA, should be more inclusive here. Because the conversations about race, and I say to myself that I think more white people should be involved as well. So that we can get a perspective from all over the spectrum. [...] I think we can do more in terms of psychologists working in schools to help them to see how they can transform schools. That stat it's not only about working in the therapeutic situation, but in a systemic situation, now, systemically you can be about that change. (P3)*

The ideological dilemma of a lack of transformation versus successful transformation is highlighted through phrases such as “a little bit of that apartheid mentality in us”, “PsySSA doesn’t represent them well”, and “PsySSA should be more inclusive here”. Participants construct PsySSA as an organisation in the process of becoming transformed, indicating that further transformation is required. This construction of PsySSA is in several instances seen as an entity that has the potential to continue on the path of transformation by reconstructing itself. Participants negotiate the issue of a lack of transformation through the construction of rebirth and continuous progress. PsySSA has not failed in its mandate to transform but rather is in the *process* of this transformation. PsySSA is constructed as an organisation on the way to reaching the promise of equality. P8 highlights “the black face”, an interpretive repertoire of race, at the superficial level of skin colour, to discuss the type of person who is needed to represent the society. Similarly, the much earlier construction of PsySSA being like a hand reaching out by P6, this black face is disembodied: who does this black face belong to? P8 does go on to recognise this shortcoming in their construction because they also question who this face is, but they do not resolve this dilemma. But what this construction achieves is putting forth their idea that an organisation that needs to represent a majority black membership needs to also be black. But this construction does, at least from this extract,

construct this black face as *put* in that place rather than having got there on their own accord and by their own merits. This again is aligning with tokenism.

P3 draws on the interpretative repertoire of race, and whiteness specifically, where they construct their whiteness as the reason for them being “left behind”. It is unclear where they are being left or where they imagine PsySSA is headed without them, but this is of less concern to this construction. PsySSA is constructed, through this positioning, as an organisation that is not concerned about the interests of white people. Through their construction P3 makes it clear that their agency as a white person in the society has been limited and thus they are unable to progress because of their whiteness. They clearly feel upset about this subject position. P8 also talks about this representation, but they do not make it clear along what lines they mean.

The same socio-political discourse referred to earlier is drawn on as a participant shared their own experience of being reduced to the characteristics used to classify individuals during apartheid. The whole of being human is again reduced to the parts of race classification:

*When I came immediately after P7, and, and P7 is a white woman. And, you know, when you come after such in South Africa, you, you are very much aware of the fact that there's no way you can be treated like her, but at the same time, you are going to try your best to make sure that that doesn't, you know, derail you from what it is that you are supposed to do - because there were times when you felt that when she was in as a president, certain things were done in a certain way. And when you come in, suddenly, some of those things change a little bit - I remember there was little things. You know, the other day I was, I was thinking of, you know, simple allocation of rooms where you kind of you look at it, and it's like, this allocation is like you lucky to even be in a hotel, you know, kind of approach to doing things. And I, and I remember, also for if you look at the years, that I had to be a president elect for two years, I remember. And because I don't even know the reason and that was never discussed. The day in which I was supposed to take over I couldn't. And that in itself was something that made to me wonder is it because I'm black, and the lady and the woman - and you, you are, you are ready to take over presidency. And the day of doing those things are happening around you and you don't understand. And like I was saying, again, it's a black woman and a white woman kind of thing. So those are*

*some of the things that, you know, were coming up and always reminded me that you are black and a woman. So that's, that's actually what sometimes becomes a problem where you are constantly reminded of who you are, and what it is that you may not be able to do. (P6)*

P6 claims that following P7 they did not expect to be treated as their predecessor when stating “P7 is a white woman, and, you know, when you come after such in South Africa, you, you are very much aware of the fact that there's no way you can be treated like her”. The use of the “you know” expresses the belief that this is common knowledge shared by the participant and the researcher. The sentence “I had to be a president elect for two years, I remember. And because I don't even know the reason and that was never discussed. The day in which I was supposed to take over I couldn't, and that in itself was something that made to me wonder is it because I'm black” and “again, it's a black woman and a white woman kind of thing” constructs PsySSA as an organisation that is only in name different to the segregated psychological societies of the apartheid era. Yet, this creates a major incongruity as P6 metaphorically constructed PsySSA, the same organisation that has discriminated against them based on race, as “an open hand that is kind of curved”. This demonstrates that contradictory constructions of PsySSA are used by individual participants. P6 draws on the interpretative repertoire of race and gender. Her race legitimises her experience of feeling like she had to carefully navigate her position in PsySSA, and she offers up her race as the reason why she could not assume the position of president immediately. This construction does binarise race where white people are afforded trust and responsibility, whereas black people are treated in a cautious manner as if they have to first prove themselves and only then can they be given trust and responsibility. This limits what P6 felt she could do as president of PsySSA. Her construction of race is also alongside her construction of South Africa as a particularly racialised space that invites comparisons across racial lines. This highlights the broader issue of leadership in organisations in South Africa along with the lack of continuity between presidents. If the transformation agenda is not passed on from one president to the next, in a smooth manner, then transformation will falter. Moreover, an intersectional experience was highlighted by P8. Both her race and her gender *together* shaped her experience, and both are drawn on discursively to validate her experience of feeling constrained in her position as president.

### ***PsySSA as a Leader in Future Academic Transformation***

The analysis of PsySSA extends beyond PsySSA as a society as it remains active in other spaces such as academia. This can be directly related to the fact that most presidents have been situated in academia while the majority are registered clinical psychologists. Participants draw on an academic discourse to construct transformation as the need for change in education and training. This situates PsySSA in a powerful position to influence knowledge creation and future psychologists:

*There is a whole lot of transformation that has to happen in learning and teaching in psychology – things like how to develop apps, for example. [...] If you think differently about undergrad psychology and its application in the real-world, then you start thinking differently about other qualifications that could be more useful to that student now. (P17)*

*[...] very specific history, we know the importance of getting that right and 25 years later we're certainly not there but I do think transformation means much more than getting it right in terms of race I think it's all those other um historic silences and redress that are required – I think there are many, many more possibilities of establishing that kind of uh ability for reach and influence and when I think transformation then it's also transformation of higher institutions of our learning and the curriculum in, in ways such as that. (P9)*

*I took over as you will recall, at Emperor's Palace at a congress, at an AGM, that was so angry with, so much anger amongst those present, that they were bouncers lining the walls of the venue hall. So, I came into that, also, with threats, almost immediately receiving threats from colleagues, if a psychologist is hard to believe that they were now going to shut down my practice by blocking emails and all kinds of threats. So, I had personal threats to me. And if you recall, if you can believe it now, this was primarily around the introduction of CPD. [...] I think is what I found most difficult to deal with, because I thought these are psychologists, fellow psychologists, and if this is how they behave, what kind of psychology do we have? What kind of psychologists are we training? You know? Who can behave in this way? All over continuing professional development when you think about it? (P7)*

*PsySSA then also does need to influence academic departments. (P17)*

*We [PsySSA] can encourage much more interaction in Africa between the academics in Africa to share more joint research projects – it is important to encourage academics and psychologists to keep on learning. (P14)*

*We as individual academics, as researchers, as a broader professional society, need to look how we're going to transform psychology as a theoretical discipline, as an applied discipline, the kinds of techniques that we apply, not all of those are applicable from it, from their traditional roots, so we need to change that. [...] I think we must look at how we are going to be partnering with other professional bodies. (P13)*

*I think only in this way by showing that science is not of exclusively sort of a Western concept, but that we in Africa can practice psychology as a science, in a diverse environment that can teach other people about how to do that the multicultural aspects of practicing science, I think, is very, very important and which we can lead the way – there are aspects within practicing psychology as a science that needs to be urgently addressed in training across a number of universities. (P10)*

*The next point of call for transformation for PsySSA would be to look at the transformation of academia. (P1)*

*I think each and every professional society must have a research programme of burning platforms, critical issues in the society, that they want to address and mobilise their members also in in that way, to make a greater contribution – I think the society plays a very important role as well in how the research as a bridge catalyst, between the academic world and the practice world to get the movement of knowledge between these spheres on the one hand, research needs from the practice side. And on the side from the academic, university side, this research has been done, how can we move it in. (P4)*

*I think that PsySSA must do more and the roadshows is an important aspect that has come to the fore now again, that they must be specific roadshows for universities for all departments. (P3)*

The use of phrases like “transformation of higher institutions of our learning and the curriculum”, “We [PsySSA] can encourage much more interaction in Africa”, and “but that we in Africa, can practice psychology as a science, in a diverse environment” draws from an academic interpretive repertoire that creates a powerful position wherein PsySSA is able to



influence training institutions in a substantial way. PsySSA is constructed as a leader in the future of academic transformation, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when PsySSA is constructed as a learned society. This is further discussed later in this chapter.

P9 draws on their understanding of historical continuity to explain their understanding of transformation as arising from a specific need, and to be continually reevaluated as it progresses. They mention the “historical silences” that need to be redressed. This constructs PsySSA as an organisation that needs to unsilence these issues and thus transformation is about opening up spaces for more equality. They then draw on these constructions to provide credence to their construction of the higher education space, and specifically the curriculum as needing change. Perhaps this also implies that the current curriculum is in service of these historical silences and until changes are made to the curriculum these silences will be perpetuated. This highlights the difference between being silent and being silenced. This is a form of discontinuity in order to continue to move forward with the mission of PsySSA.

There is a strong emphasis on the need for academic transformation and the power that PsySSA holds in this arena. These constructions point towards the interconnectedness of PsySSA and psychology in various domains. The majority of PsySSA’s leadership has generally worked in academia, however most of the members presumably do not. This talks towards how transformation is a multistakeholder exercise because the curriculum and higher educational experience in some way sets the stage for future psychologists and ‘disciplines’ them into particular constructions of knowledge. This is, however, in stark contrast to the lack of influence demonstrated in “almost immediately receiving threats from colleagues, if a psychologist is hard to believe that they were now going to shut down my practice by blocking emails and all kinds of threats”, “bouncers lining the walls of the venue hall”, and “this is how they behave”. Here PsySSA and the subject position of the participant proves ineffective in influencing others. PsySSA is constructed as powerless against the will of the majority of psychologists. Again, a dilemma is constructed and is not dealt with. This highlights the disconnect between the leadership and its members. However, this calls for the members of PsySSA to be in support of the transformation agenda and not just its leadership. These dilemmas threaten the existence and purpose of PsySSA.

### ***PsySSA as a Balancing Act of Transformation***

PsySSA was constructed as a transformed society breaking free from the political divisions of the past through the constructions of P3, P7, P9 and P17, as well as a transforming society that needed to internally transform to become a unified and equal

society. Concurrently, PsySSA has and continues to function in a transforming society as South Africa is a relatively young democracy attempting to correct the inequalities of the past. While this already indicates multi-layered transformation, PsySSA is also required to play on a continental and international field, adding to the layers of transformation that PsySSA is required to address:

*We need to take the transformation to the next level. And in the context of the society, I think, I see PsySSA being an organisation that has to continue to agitate, it's really opened, I see PsySSA as an agitator. It has to [be] voracious, and all, at all times, push for transformation in society. First and foremost, particularly if you look at what the situation [is] now today, things are just getting out of hand, we definitely have to have PsySSA as an agitator to ensure that our society doesn't go up in flames, because of the greed or whatever evils that we see in society to be. (P5)*

The participant draws on a more aggressive political discourse often portrayed in the South African media, creating the image of violent demonstrations seen throughout the country as a means to display dissatisfaction. This is legitimised by the dominant discourse of dissatisfaction and/or disgruntlement. To be heard (or feel heard) in South Africa, violence or the threat thereof, has become a norm. This type of voracious approach is a discontinuity with the constitution of PsySSA, yet it is a continuity or mirror image of violence in the South African context. Transformation is a complex balancing act between what PsySSA is facing internally versus what it faces externally. What this construction also achieves is making clear that the participant does not believe that calmer tactics of negotiation and debate work, therefore, by implication, a more aggressive approach is needed. There is an ideological dilemma as the participant both constructs PsySSA as needing to be an agitator but also pushes back against the idea of “society going up in flames”. However, they fail to recognise that their construction of PsySSA as an agitator may in fact contribute to this supposed decay and the “evils” of society. But it is particularly this dissatisfaction with society and the lack of transformation that allow for the participant to construct PsySSA in more aggressive terms as this allows for the space where the society can be allowed to progress more rapidly. This constructs PsySSA as having the duty to be more aggressive to bring about increased transformation but again, does this contribute to the destruction of society in the manner they propose?

*I suspect that, that, that these are processes that are constantly occurring in parallel and in tandem. I don't think the one occurs at the expense of the*

*other or before the other, I think that they have to be done simultaneously and, and for me that that is the trick, the trick, is that one needs an organisational form and content that is amenable to being both externally uh focused and internally focused, simultaneously. (P12)*

*This balance is a very tricky one – so you have to do it internally while you are responding to external conditions. So internally to be able to generate the kind of internal that you can always be hitting the refresh button – and in tandem with that the divisions and so PsySSA, all divisions is really your part to respond to things on the outside. (P8)*

*I think it's a juggling game. You have to balance both. I think you also have to act as a role model. You can't promote these good things if you're not as a society, yourself, a role model of that. (P4)*

*I think internal and external transformation are going to be intertwined. Because the organisation and the people who are selling that organisation like we PsySSA, those people are a, let's call it a representative sample of the society of that external environment. So, as members of a professional society and as members of a South African society, we are in constant interaction with the society that we are existing in. And we're also in constant interaction with the subject matter of our profession. Because the subject matter of our profession has to be relevant and applicable to what is going on in the external society. And then the external, the external society also has to derive value out of what we are doing as a professional society as a profession. So, I see it as a mutual interaction. (P1)*

The participants indicated that the multi-layered transformation that PsySSA has to engage in is a balancing act. This draws on the discourse of showmanship, as a balancing act creates the image of a skilled performer who is able to juggle multiple objects at once. PsySSA is constructed as an entity that is able to address several issues in several different domains simultaneously, without dropping the ball in any of these areas. PsySSA holds the power to transform internally while it transforms along with an external South African society. This highlights the need for parallel transformation and that internal transformation and external transformation, for some of the participants, has to happen at the same time, noting that the processes are intertwined. This interpretative repertoire of interconnectedness allows for a linking of PsySSA's mission to the broader transformational agenda in the country post-apartheid. P12 draws on this interpretative repertoire of balancing as well in their

construction of the dual roles that PsySSA, according to them, should perform. They position PsySSA as the organisation appropriately positioned to take up this complex balancing act. Importantly, this construction points towards a key element of PsySSA's identity that has to attend to the internal identity of the organisation as one undergoing transformation, while, as the participant clearly constructs, simultaneously having to be a player beyond just the organisation by contributing to society more broadly including contributing internationally. The participant does not address the tensions in this construction or interrogate whether these internal and external foci may clash. P1's use of the interpretative repertoire of democratic representation links to the idea that what PsySSA does is related to the greater agenda in the country. This positions PsySSA as progressive and part of a movement towards inclusivity and equality in the society as well as in the country as a whole. Thus, PsySSA's work became part of the national work of redress. PsySSA has the responsibility or the duty, according to these constructions, to contribute to transformation in society.

This balancing act is not limited to the physical boundaries of South Africa. PsySSA is expected to perform on a national, continental, and international stage, in tandem balancing internal and external transformation. This relationship is dyadic: PsySSA changed internally because the external environment changed, and internal players try to transform particular aspects of the external environment, both locally and internationally.

*We haven't transported ourselves, I think, well enough across the region.*

(P15)

*Our fundamental footprint is a South African footprint – the penetration of psychology more broadly into Africa is not as great as one would have hoped – I think that one of the things that we would have to be careful of in the coming years is the way that South African psychology is perceived on the continent and what I think we want to avoid is the idea of a kind of South African psychology that is almost an imperialist psychology that that just enters into other spaces in Africa and puts its particular viewpoint of psychology onto other spaces. (P12)*

P12 draws on an interpretative repertoire of legacy in a number of ways. Firstly, they draw on it to legitimise the impact that PsySSA has had in South Africa. This construction alludes to the suggestion that PsySSA is well-established locally. This is about the past and the present. However, the participant is also concerned about the future legacy of PsySSA as linked to the African continent. P12 draws on the imperialist history of psychology to motivate why the discipline in South Africa

needs to proceed with caution so as to not become like Western psychology (or more pointedly, to not repeat the mistakes and horrors of the past in South Africa). Thus, the idea of duty and responsibility is present here again.

*It feels as if PsySSA, is doing better outside of Africa than it is at least in.*

(P8)

*I think PsySSA is an organisation that is very well located and placed to position itself as uh one of the voices of a Global South psychology that can speak back to, um, can speak on behalf of uh so it can speak back to the*

*Global North but can also speak on behalf of the Global South. (P12)*

P12 utilised an interpretative repertoire of democratic representation again. This is used to position PsySSA as a voice, or representative, of psychology in the Global South. This highlights a reductionist construction because it reduces both psychology in the south and the north to their respective homogenised psychologies. The Global North and the Global South are positioned as binaries, closing down any opportunity for collaboration and understanding across these superficial boundaries. But Global North psychology is constructed as the more powerful and in need of being spoken back to. Thus, PsySSA is positioned as the primary, or the ideal, organisation that is capable of representing the voices of psychology in the Global South in relation to the Global North. There is, however, a tension, between PsySSA's local and international identities, as internationally PsySSA is seen as a leader, however, nationally, PsySSA is not:

*I think in a national context very well. And it's only in the last few years that I've seen PsySSA on growing into Africa as well. I mean, we have linkages all over the world, but I still think that PsySSA can make a major impression worldwide or internationally. (P10)*

*I don't think its current identity is, is necessarily relevant to the national, or the regional. Internationally, I think, yeah, it probably ranks with the best in terms of organisation and the contributions that it can make. But nationally, or regionally, I don't think so. (P2)*

*PsySSA has not failed to come up with a statement to say this is what we say, this is our position. And in some cases or in a number of cases, our interventions have been recognised and acknowledged. And so, in that sense, I would say yes, the organisation has played a pivotal role in the community. And of course, I must hasten to say that there is still room for more interventions from a PsySSA. We have done our best under the*

*circumstances, but I feel better still, much, much more that we need to do at a community level. (P5)*

*I think in terms of the African and international context, such as moving forward quickly, and in a positive way, to get all these various memorandums of understanding with the different societies across the world. And also in Africa, I think in, in that sense we moved forward, very quickly, in terms of I think, nationally, we sometimes move too slow. (P3)*

P5 and P3 constructed PsySSA as being slow to respond locally. Should transformation in contexts of South Africa care more about transforming the local context or should it be responsive to a more global order so that the local context is able to respond well enough to the international community? These constructions place some blame on PsySSA for ignoring the local context to the expense of being more dominant on the international stage. This then suggests that the transformative agenda locally has much more to do. This raises the question of who transformation is for. P1 below echoes similar constructions.

*[...] we should prioritise the national context. Yes, the international context is important in that we use it to benchmark. But what's important for me is that we should focus more on the national context, because the psychology that we've been learning over the years was more of an extraction from the international context, which we know was not designed with, within a purely South African context in mind, not every context in the social sciences, context is everything. So, I would actually prioritise focusing more on the national context, because we need to make it relevant to our context and our circumstances and our people. (P1)*

Here “the penetration of psychology more broadly into Africa is not as great as one would have hoped”, “nationally, we sometimes move too slow”, and “I would actually prioritise focusing more on the national context” constructs PsySSA in a much less powerful role in terms of transformation. Participants indicate that PsySSA is unable to transform in multiple areas simultaneously, and a prioritisation of certain types of transformation is required. There is a continuity between the need to implement the multi-layered transformation on several different stages. However, the tension is evident in how different participants evaluate PsySSA’s performance in terms of transformation. On the national stage, PsySSA has been tasked with addressing the previously mentioned inequalities of the past. However, a point of consideration is enquiring whether or not the leadership have fallen for the trap of wanting

international ‘fame’ and glory at the expense of focussing on the issues of PsySSA and the country.

*It's the way in which PsySSA members live out their citizenship – some of them don't make good use of their positions. (P16)*

P16 utilises an interpretative repertoire of citizenship to legitimise their construction of some members as unfit for their positions. The use of “good” does imply a degree of moral discourse that is being used as a yard stick to measure these members’ actions by. This construction implies that there is indeed a good way to use one’s position in the society. This shows a salient linking of the use of one’s position in the society to something broader than the society itself, one’s citizenship. This construction necessitates that proper involvement as part of PsySSA is a broader commitment to better citizenship and is thus a critique of the people’s lack of taking up action that can contribute towards the betterment of the country.

Noting the critique of PsySSA in the above analysis, some participants had more positive constructions. However, this does emerge as a central dilemma as there is a lack of consensus around PsySSA's responsiveness. This shows a lack of unity in some sense in terms of how presidents have seen the organisation functioning.

*It [PsySSA] tries to pay its dues to society wherever it can. (P15)*

*I think in instances where the society has been threatened or where there was a really important, let's say, battle in the national sphere people have been able to pull through amazingly and shine and I suppose it would be in instances where one branch of psychology challenged the, the mother body if you want to call it that and legal proceedings followed – in the case of a John Qwelani where something that is so, um, important to a certain constituency and or division and we're able to sustain a challenge since 2008 to 2020 and for as long as it might take. (P9)*

*So, people know from that, just the simple fact that people know about South African psychology. And yeah, that was a, that was there was successful. [...] I'm not able to measure that, but it reaches a lot of people. And then, I guess as part of that, there seems to be an awareness, quite a lot of awareness in South African society about psychology. (P8)*

*I think has been at the forefront of bringing psychology into awareness and fighting, I'm going to use that word deliberately, for transformation in the discipline. [...] the role we played in the Phelophepa healthcare. I think we forget that. Because that train won a service award, an award for service, a*

*UN [United Nations] Service Award for the UN award for service delivery in 2008 and psychology pioneer to the psychology clinic, on the train, the train continues to run today. And they're now two trains or two, each with a clinic. And that I think has played a big role in helping get psychology services to outlying areas where there is actually nothing. [...] If you look at leadership, if you look at a lot of the work that's being done the issues that PsySSA is tackling, the gender-based violence, the racism, all of this, we are certainly speaking to the needs of the country. (P7)*

The use of terms such as “fighting”, “threatened”, and “challenge” draw on the previously mentioned aggressive political discourse and fighting, again indicating the need to be heard can only be achieved through violence. The participant invites PsySSA to construct a more assertive attitude for some participants. Drawing on an interpretative repertoire of conflict, this construction's function is to show that PsySSA does need to, at times, be more assertive in order to advance a transformational agenda. Who PsySSA is fighting against is not mentioned but it can be presumed that people who resist the transformational agenda is whom this participant is talking about. PsySSA is constructed as a passionate defender of psychology and transformation. The continuity of mirroring the broader South African society is highlighted by this construction. PsySSA is given the powerful position of defender through these statements.

### ***PsySSA in Continuous Transformation***

The process of transformation is complex within the South African context. The inequalities of the past require consideration while the future remains important. The framework of transformation, therefore, needs to be able to holistically encompass the entire society in order to prevent further splinters or tensions that can lead to the demise of PsySSA. While noting that PsySSA is a mirror for South African society, it is imperative that it remains an agent of transformation while transforming and interrogating its internal and external transformative tensions and/or challenges.

*Psychologists are not very good at that, we very individualistic, we sit in our individual practices and they will do our thing. And also, we wait for the public come to us instead of saying proactively maybe in my community given COVID-19 I'm going to run free of charge, a kind of a well-being programme for a couple of nights, pro bono type stuff. So, we are not, I mean claim we in*



*the, in the human sciences, we are not very socially conscious, say, we're not very self-conscious. (P4)*

P4 draws on the interpretative repertoire of individualism as well as the practice of traditional psychology. This positions psychology, and consequently PsySSA, as having to overcome a historical legacy of individualism by means of transforming through a more collectivistic paradigm. This construction justifies the lack of action that psychologists, according to this participant, have taken. This participant aligns with their construction using words like “we”, so they do admit some guilt in being part of the problem. This construction functions to show how perhaps a transformed discipline thinks about psychological practice in more collective terms where psychologists do not exist in ivory towers, but instead actively engage in community-based work that sees people as part of a system rather than individuals in need of individual counselling. If this is taken even further, we could even say that this is a critique of the discipline and that for transformation to occur, psychology needs to become a discipline of the people and for the people rather than a discipline locked up in fancy buildings. P4 also alludes to this: that transformation is somewhat about service to the people.

*[...] that's one of the transformations we are undergoing, become much more purpose-driven, within the context of being good social citizens serving the common good, the greater good. [...] PsySSA's not visible. I haven't heard once, “We're PsySSA.” So during this, let's take the recent period of COVID-19, [PsySSA] has made a visible statement, press release about just what we've discussed about a mental health recovery programme, the voice of psychology is not heard. [...] We're not in the face of the public in the face of the policymakers. [...] Either people get pushed to change, or they get pulled to change. And I think you can apply to the situation as well. Yes, you can do press releases, and you can do this, then, if you're still in a push situation, you try you like a gate crasher at a party, you have to force your way in, then you're not as well placed as when you are pulled, your places secure at the table. Then we have arrived. We haven't arrived, we still gate crashers. (P4) I think we can do more in terms of psychologists working in schools to help them to see how they can transform schools. That stat it's not only about working in the therapeutic situation, but in a systemic situation, now, systemically you can be about that change. (P3)*

*So, if you look at the, the reality, the social reality, the economic reality, the cultural reality, if you like, we remain a microcosm of those convenient*

*engagements amongst ourselves where we tend to use a more politically correct language, but don't deal below that surface. And that, I think is the big issue that we continue to confront. (P11)*

P11 draws on the interpretative repertoire of political correctness here pointing out that political correctness inhibits PsySSA from dealing with issues that reach beyond a superficial level. By drawing on this discourse, the participant is able to critique the status quo as one that does not involve much transformation beyond the superficial where the “convenient arrangements” are maintained. Presumably the participant is referring to other psychological professionals when they refer to “ourselves” in the quote. Thus, this participant frames political correctness as a barrier to transformation that impedes progress on a deeper, more structural level. While P4 initially spoke about PsySSA in ideal terms, “serving the common good”, they then proceeded to explain why this is perhaps not what PsySSA currently is, but rather “gate crashers”. This emphasises the barrier to transformation as political correctness.

*The huge amount of violence that our society is notorious for, is because of our failure to deal with it at its core, and in its historic antecedents. (P11)*

P11 continues in this quote to argue, through utilising a historical interpretative repertoire, that the present is linked to the past. This construction necessitates the only way forward for transformation to happen meaningfully is to understand and deal with what has happened in the past. Thus, transformation is constructed as a continuous process from past to future that has to be mediated in the present. The participant also draws on a discourse of essentialism, that socio-historical and socio-cultural problems have a definitive root cause that can be dealt with. This construction enables a fixing of the problems of the past, making them seem solvable if one digs deep enough to the “core” of the problem. Thus, it becomes the duty of an organisation such as PsySSA to work towards uncovering this core and dealing with it definitively.

*We've not gone to people and said, “You know, so and so who's been jumping around about how equal his version of psychology is, to the other versions, has been diddling the system, double dipping”, etc. pleading poverty, even though coming from Potchefstroom were fully, were fully, funded to attend. And I'm just giving examples at the top of my head, we've not done that. But that perhaps it's one of the reasons that they take advantage, and we speak. You know, we speak English. And English has a way of sugar-coating sometimes. And we can say very nice things to each other very polite. But it's time that we confronted what has led to the parlous state of psychology [...]*

*So, you can't blame the kids for doing what they're doing in the schools. You can't blame the teachers who read those kids. You can't blame a stupid education minister, who is uneducated herself for saying the stupid thing. She says it's because we have failed. We have not gone into that policy space and told him, you know, from our vantage point, this is the position. This is the research all over the world. This is the locally available research. Instead, what do we do? What do we get? We get apologists for the kind of rubbish put out by Stellenbosch last year. And it perpetuates itself. [...] Well, look, it's still I think rankles with the many people who are detractors, and not within us who look at PsySSA and see that like the opening lines of the Bible, God created man in His image, the image of the leadership is not what they see in the mirror, when they look at the mirror, whenever they do, so it's so rankles with them because they think they should be there. You know, and that's part of that problem. So, unless we tackle the issues of deep-seated, endemic historic racism, sexism, and violence, in its philosophical, physical, and other forms, we will still not be able to stand up and represent ourselves effectively. [...] We have black leadership, the management is black, but the body is still one that is out of kilter with where we should be. And that's partly because of the history. But it's also because in nearly all training schools of psychology, PsySSA is not on the radar at all. (P11)*

*I mean, we already 27 years into democracy, and we don't have a racially transform, or we don't have a psychology that reflects South African society yet. It's improving, but we're not there yet. So that is one obvious transformation. (P7)*

P11 contrasts the leadership with the body: the leadership is black, but the body does not reflect this. Race is again being used here to construct transformation along racial lines – that in order for the society to be transformed it needs to transform racially. The participant is grappling with the recalibration of PsySSA to be more responsive (that is, more transformed). What is part of the discourse of these participants is the legacy of apartheid that has to be dealt with. Again, the continuity of the organisation that has to deal with bringing about the discontinuity of societal ills of the past surfaced. They cannot be ignored, but yet, when faced, there is opposition. The participant then links this to the training of psychologists in universities: PsySSA is constructed as being a progressive organisation whereas psychology

departments are less so, and so it is PsySSA's responsibility to be more present in these spaces to ensure a transformative agenda is advocated for.

Phrases used by participants such as “it is never going to be a destination”, “the voice of psychology is not heard”, “the body is still one that is out of kilter with where we should be”, and “It's improving, but we're not there yet” constructs PsySSA as an organisation in the process of transformation. The language used here is legitimised by drawing on a political interpretive repertoire. By constructing PsySSA in the process of transformation, participants avoid any responsibility for the lack of transformation. Additionally, without any set measurement of transformation, progress cannot accurately be measured. The goalpost of transformation will keep moving as transformation is defined and redefined by each new president of PsySSA, as well as by South African politics. Thus, constructing PsySSA in the process of transformation also means the purpose and destination (or end point) of transformation remains unclear.

*But PsySSA, should be more inclusive here. Because the conversations about race, and I say to myself that I think more white people should be involved as well. So that we can get a perspective from all over the spectrum. (P3)*

Participants place themselves in a blameless position by deliberately withholding or concealing information. The assumption here is that the constructions serve the purpose of both revealing certain elements in a particular light, while also hiding certain things by using those constructions. For instance, a white participant cannot be blamed for their lack of involvement in the transformation of PsySSA if PsySSA is not involving white people in this transformative mission. The interpretative repertoire of diversity, along with race, is used here as a means to justify the continuation of the inclusion of white people's perspectives of transformation. PsySSA is constructed as not being inclusive by supposedly excluding white perspectives, yet the ideological dilemma that arises from this construction is that white people cannot necessarily provide a perspective about other races. Thus, this participant utilises diversity and inclusivity as a means to couch their promotion of whiteness, trying to promote whiteness under the guise of getting perspectives “from all over the spectrum”. But the spectrum cannot be reduced to whiteness.

Some participants indicated that their influence was limited by other situations that had to be dealt with:

*I have to admit during my presidency the bulk of the presidency really was involved in fighting against people who, and groupings who really wanted*

*nothing to do with transformation and who were busy advising both sides and seeing how they could stop some kinds of transformation that was required. (P18)*

*What happened with the ED psych group that was really, as I always say, it was a side show at the side show that has the potential to derail people from the bigger show. And so, we'll have a lot of those. And that may come in the way and confuse the process of transformation – the leadership, therefore needs to be very vigilant. And to always be on the lookout for this kind of sideshows that may want to elevate themselves into main shows. (P5)*

*I think the kind of role that I played around transformation during my leadership had much more to do with the organisational ability and an emphasis on sustainability – I became very hands-on, um, potentially too hands-on. (P9)*

These provide a valid excuse for a lack of transformation during their tenure. The detractors and the short time frame are blamed for the lack of transformation. Similarly, if the ideal face of PsySSA is impossible to determine, how can participants be to blame for the lack of this ideal face? The construction of in-fighting allows the participants to account for a lack of transformation. They draw on an interpretative repertoire of conflict management where this construction enabled them to justify why their attention and effort was diverted elsewhere. But in doing so, this construction frames transformation as separate from the day-to-day conflict management thus requiring the attention of the presidents at the time, which impedes any transformational progress. However, the participants do not discuss how transformational opportunities may be found in these moments of conflict management that may in fact be part of the transformational project. P5 constructs these moments as “side shows” and thus separate from the “bigger show”, which is presumably the transformational agenda. It is through the separation of the transformational agenda from the day-to-day conflict management that the participants are able to discursively account for a lack of, or less than desired, transformation.

*We are moving in the direction of making of giving a psychology, if you will, a black face, that's a lovely phrase there, right there, psychology and African face or a black face and but what kind? So that's what we fail, what kind of face is this? (P8)*

The problem of giving psychology an African face is pointed at the diversity of South Africans. How can an African face be used if it is impossible to define what an African face

would be? The lack of transformation within psychology is further shifted to others, such as government and the legacy of apartheid.

*In terms of taking psychology to the South African population on a broader scale, I think the current model advocated by the Health Professions Council doesn't really allow for that room. (P15)*

This demonstrates how the blame is placed outside of the control of participants. This is inconsistent with the idea that PsySSA is a powerful body as the society cannot escape the legacy of the past, the examples set by government, or make a change outside of the model constructed by the HPCSA. Again, there is a sense of interconnectedness that transformation requires. These constructions suggest that, through an interpretative repertoire of professional governance, there is only so much that an organisation such as PsySSA can do on its own. This participant is perhaps alluding to the limitations of the scopes of practice of psychology and how this is a structural barrier to practicing psychology in a transformed way. Thus, this is used to legitimise the limits of transformation they experienced. Through this construction, it becomes clearer that for this participant transformation involves the provision of services to all South African citizens, and one that is less regulated by professional bodies and more in the spirit of community engagement.

In contrast to this, some participants place themselves at the centre of the success of PsySSA's transformation:

*When the Labour Relations Act was being reviewed, and the employment Equity Act, and there was this view that we should throw out psychological tests, of course, it is understandable why those who felt psychological tests should be done away with were arguing that way. But so, PsySSA, I came to the party, and argued convincingly to say, we're not going to throw out psychological tests willy nilly, just like that, we have to accommodate the good side of psychological testing. (P5)*

Here the past president is making it clear that they as an individual stepped up and spoke for PsySSA and psychology in South Africa. They position themselves in such a way that they hold the power to convince policymakers to reconsider the benefits of psychological testing. P5 constructs psychological testing as an entity that has the potential to be both used for good or bad ends. However, they show an awareness that transformation, for them, is not a process of completely replacing what has come before with newly formed objects of knowledge, but rather utilising and transforming the knowledge of the past in a thoughtful and considered way so as to build on progress of the past to tailor psychological knowledge to the local

context. The discontinuity is clear in the positions taken by those who have been successful and those who have failed to create transformation. The ‘us’ versus ‘them’ conflict is seen here as successful transformation is claimed as a personal accomplishment, constructing PsySSA as part of the individual participant, while a lack of transformation is placed on the ‘them’ who are not part of PsySSA. In other words, participants construct PsySSA as the exclusionary society.

This section demonstrated the internal struggles that PsySSA has faced and continues to face in developing its inner identity as well as its national identity. For as long as PsySSA is constructed as in the *process* of transformation, the purpose and the ultimate end point of this transformation will remain unclear. However, while a number of the issues remain with heightened levels of tension and discord, the external (international) identity of PsySSA has developed. This external identity has been influenced by the internal (national) identity issues, which has seeped through its international networks. This reveals cracks in its endorsed identity.

### **PsySSA’s Endorsed Identity**

In 2018, post the conclusion of the first Pan-African Psychology Congress, and after PsySSA’s Strategic Plan was formulated, the leadership at the time evaluated and considered that some organisational introspection was needed to realign the organisation to its vision, mission, and founding principles (PsySSA, 2018). The identity of PsySSA has been a contentious debate for many years (PsySSA, 2018). It was therefore imperative to understand the endorsed identity of PsySSA that the participants of the study had constructed. In this section, PsySSA’s identity as a learned society and its role as an international role player are analysed.

### ***PsySSA as a Learned Society***

PsySSA defined itself as a learned society (PsySSA, 2018), however, the discourses of the participants revealed difficulties in the constructions of PsySSA as a learned society. This primarily surfaced as ideological tensions between PsySSA constructed as a learned society and PsySSA constructed as a trade union. The problem is that PsySSA as a learned society does not sit easily with PsySSA as a trade union, and that an ideology of inclusivity is undermined by the inevitability of exclusivity. This section of the analysis discusses how PsySSA was constructed as a trade union in tension with constructions of it as a learned society. A discussion of these ideological dilemmas inherent to these constructions is provided.

Participants consider PsySSA to be influential within the academic space of universities and state that other entities, such as the HPCSA, take care of the activities that are more linked to trade unions. However, how the participants consume this position of PsySSA in their constructions of PsySSA's identity creates an ideological dilemma. How the learned society is constructed is what dawns the dilemmas. A learned society is constructed as either inclusive or exclusive. The *inclusive construction* presents the learned society as an influentially extended society, specifically extended to academia. This is constructed as the upper tier of a tiered society. This was seen in the constructions of P2 and P17:

*Through the fact that you are a learned society means that you have opportunities through both your journals, your conferences, your leadership to influence, to influence what is happening in academia as well. (P17)*

*I think as a learned society, we have to transform our training models and the way we look at that aspect of it. And when you look at a learned society, it's, it's also a society that sets a bar for people to, to, to, to aspire to and to achieve at and [which] establishes standards as to what should be in [and] what shouldn't be in training. (P2)*

Both P17 and P2 draw on the interpretative repertoire of academia as a means of constructing PsySSA's influence in this realm. It is through academia that the "opportunities" are found and that the "bar [...] to aspire to and to achieve" is set. This positions PsySSA's extension and influence in academia as something desirable and aspirational as well as focussed on individual efforts and achievements rather than collective action. However, P9 highlights the tiering as a contentious issue:

*Look, this is a bit of a bone of contention so to speak because I do think it's a, it's a call that PsySSA had to make and I suppose it speaks to, to what extent uh we are trade union; a guild; a learned society – I think the, the most mileage for PsySSA is to be derived from the learned society uh, and within those science councils and with the international reach that follows from that and I do think um, the academics who um have a very natural home within PsySSA - I do think some of the, the, the trade union aspects can indeed be achieved without it bogging down the presidency the executive and the PsySSA head office. (P9)*

Similarly to P2 and P17, it is through the interpretative repertoire of academia that PsySSA is constructed as having further reach and influence by P9. This construction shows that it is through being a learned society (that is, one invested in academic knowledge production and



application) that provides PsySSA the power to be influential. Phrases such as “to influence what is happening in academia as well”, “establishes standards as to what should be in [and] what shouldn't be in training”, and “the most mileage for PsySSA is to be derived from the learned society” construct PsySSA as promoter of the science and discipline of psychology. P9 constructs PsySSA as having the ability to influence psychology internationally on the academic stage, and they construct this as one of the most effective ways PsySSA can exert influence.

However, this extract opens with a statement of dilemma. Academics as having “a very natural home within PsySSA” is in tension with trade union aspects. Being a learned society is not the same as being a trade union. P9 recognises that there is this dilemma and they negotiated this dilemma by stating that trade union elements can be achieved alongside being a learned society. However, the footwork done to accommodate some of these trade union aspects is to do so without bogging down the presidency, executive, and head office – in other words, a conditional accommodation. This highlights conditional inclusivity. Thus, PsySSA is constructed as a society that primarily protects its learned professionals as a trade union would do with its members. The extent to which PsySSA has elements of a trade union surfaced in some of the participants’ constructions, particular in the realm of participating in the socio-political realm in the country:

*We look at conditions of service for psychologists in, in government employ, that PsySSA's role there has paid off very well, in pushing for that, to the point where the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) implementation saw huge differences in the recognition of psychology, of psychologists, in government departments, especially in health and education, in terms of salary improvements as well. Similarly, when we look across then also at the private sector, with PsySSA's involvement with medical aids, for example, and negotiating there in terms of various issues that have come up apart from just specific payment benefits. [...] If we look at PsySSA's, submission on the NHI [National Health Insurance] it is a very comprehensive submission that addresses a lot of key issues that, that need to be that, that government needs to, to, address. [...] So, certainly, in the area of forensic mental health, of criminal justice, child justice PsySSA's really done, done a lot of work. (P13) There have been, there have been particular issues that I think PsySSA has been at the forefront of whether it has been a matter like scope of practice or telehealth or questions of an African psychology or decolonial psychology it*

*has certainly been at the forefront of questions around sexuality and gender and its relationship to psychology; mental health feminism, pro-feminism – it has shaped, I think, uh, in my view, it has shaped um elements of training in South African psychology – that, I think, that, it has had some influence on shaping legislative and regulatory frameworks in the country and of course I think that it has had an impact in the, in the, kind of public space more broadly where you know PsySSA has had a voice uh, to be able to articulate, in some instances better than in others but to articulate uh aspects of what was perhaps in the, in the, public in the interest of the public good - I think PsySSA has also had an impact in advocacy work so the kind of advocacy work that I'm talking about is simply uh putting its institutional body and weight behind critical questions whether it's pit latrines at schools and the importance of attending to uh under-resourced schooling systems, whether it's about the health system more broadly, whether it was on violence, whether it was on gender fluidity and the recognition of gender fluidity, whether it was on um you know uh the killing of uh a child with down syndrome, uh whether it was on police brutality etc etc. I think there's an advocacy element here that of course is done primarily through the kind of public uh, you know, commitment to uh to statements. (P12)*

Here phrases such as “PsySSA’s role there has paid off very well [...] to the point where the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) implementation saw huge differences in the recognition of psychology” and “PsySSA has been at the forefront of whether it has been a matter like scope of practice or telehealth” draw from a political interpretive repertoire to construct PsySSA as a politically active trade union, which places PsySSA as a learned society in contrast to this. This dilemma is made sense of by P12 as they construct an account that marries PsySSA as the professional body of psychological knowledge with PsySSA the political advocate. They do this by showing how PsySSA leverages its academic knowledge and understanding of psychological science to play an advocacy role in order to advance important political issues in society such as the advancement of gender and sexual diversity, advocating for safer schools and so on. As with P9, this indicates a society that is tiered where academic knowledge is constructed as privileged, and it is through this knowledge that PsySSA is able to contribute to political issues. This culminates in the construction of PsySSA as transformative insofar as the society utilises its academic capital in order to advocate for a more equitable society not only for its members but also for the general public.

P2 provides an interesting contrast between efforts across time:

*The other thing is, I think, you know, P11's early drive with the ministers around psychology in every spot, in all the places there we really achieved a lot. But, but subsequent to that we've been less of an effect in the criminal justice system – we wax and wane we do, but, but it's personality based, Who's there? Who can drive it? I don't think we have a kind of agenda that, that keeps the momentum on these things. And, and with many of these things, the society has to be on the ball with all of them. And then some, and sometimes what we do, yeah, sorry, and sometimes what we do is we tend to be politically moved, rather than driven by our policies and our, you know, the, the profession. So, we kind of, you know, play the politic role. (P2)*

P2 negotiates the dilemma in the constructions of PsySSA as a learned society that has trade union elements, specifically political activism, in this extract. PsySSA is constructed as both active in helping bring about political awareness of psychology but also as being unable to sustain this activity. P2 states that these changes are due to the leadership changing in the organisation over time where different leaders have varying agendas. Thus, PsySSA's organisational efforts are conducted as individualised according to the president of a given year ("personality based"). This is a construction of PsySSA not as an organisation with a continuous agenda, but rather as a tapestry of individual president's agendas of a given year. The leadership of PsySSA in this instance is in fact constructed as bigger than PsySSA's mission, or else there would be a sense of continuity across time with certain agendas. P2 makes sense of this dilemma, where the learned society is at odds with being more politically active, by stating that some leadership choices were in fact politically motivated and PsySSA "play[ed] the politic[al] role". This participant also creates a contrast between PsySSA's mission and politics, where they construct PsySSA as sometimes losing sight of its own mission in order to satisfy a political role. For this participant, these two roles are constructed as incompatible, or at least the political role should be secondary to the profession role.

PsySSA's endorsed identity also surfaced as exclusive constructions that presented the learned society as based on clearly formulated differentiation from a trade union. This was noted by P12:

*The reason for the existence of the organisation is not, and I want to reiterate, is not a guild or a trade union. It is a professional learned society that is directed towards supporting its members in the pursuit of promoting*

*and advancing the science, the practice and the discipline of psychology and its relevance for a public, in this case, the public of South Africa. (P12)*

P12 initially constructs PsySSA in terms of what it is not (that is, its exclusive identity), and then proceeds to construct the society, through an interpretative repertoire of professionalism, as a society that is exclusively for learned professionals while simultaneously being relevant for the public, thus exclusive yet extended. This raises an ideological dilemma where the society is constructed as exclusively for learned professionals yet is still able to remain relevant to those who it excludes. This paternalism constructs the public as a passive receiver of this knowledge, developed by those at the top of this tiered system. This construction functions to position PsySSA as the protector of the discipline of psychology, a protection which is only possible through the exclusion of those who are not learned psychological professionals. The differentiated and exclusive learned society is a society divested of an economy of crafting and trading (which guilds and trade unions would be interested in) and invested in the politics of promoting and advancing the science, practice, practitioners, and discipline of psychology as well as its relevance for a public (for example, the public of South Africa). However, the learned society as having an extended influence and being a tiered society means PsySSA is constructed as transformative and at the forefront of psychological knowledge and practice. The decision to invest in a political agenda while divesting in one of economics is itself political, and one that could not be avoided. The ideological dilemma that P12 is negotiating is the conflict between a learned society that adopts a scientific approach to knowledge through its professional practice on the one hand, and the activities that PsySSA undertakes such as advocating for the needs and rights of practitioners and the public on the other. The degree to which PsySSA takes up these positions is what participants are grappling with.

*It's important to have an identity because once you say you are a learned society, this is the kind of things that you do. And so, some people will be excluded, but then once they are excluded, they will form other structures that would be relevant to that – where psychologists should form themselves into some kind of structure that deal with issues, bread and butter issues. (P5)*

P5 utilised an interpretative repertoire of identity where PsySSA is constructed as a society that is not for everyone. This construction positions PsySSA as for a specific group of people, namely learned professionals. This construction presents the dilemma between exclusionism while simultaneously claiming to serve or represent everyday people and their daily struggles, similar to P12's construction. The participant manages this dilemma by stating that

breakaway groups can form to represent interests that the society is unable to. This constructs PsySSA as separate from the working for the betterment of citizens, and thus divested somewhat of a political agenda. The interpretative repertoire of identity also functions to tie particular actions to a particular identity, thus P5 constructs a learned society as exclusive and consequently separate from issues of socio-political concern, namely the “bread and butter issues”, which, to them, are issues that PsySSA should not be dealing with.

The main ideological dilemma discussed in this section were the tensions between constructing PsySSA as an exclusive learned society for professionals, while simultaneously trying to construct PsySSA as a trade union that can deal with political issues and agendas as well. This is in fact a critique of PsySSA as an organisation that lacks a clear and agreed upon ideological focus that extends across presidencies. These dilemmas culminate in a contentious question: Is PsySSA for psychological professionals, or is PsySSA for the advancement of the psychological well-being of the people of South Africa? This is a sobering question that cuts to the core of the organisation's operations. Through the analysis one can see the lack of focus: from presidency to presidency; an internal agenda (promoting the discipline of psychology through professional learned means) versus an external agenda (responding to crises in the country); and tensions of being an inclusive society (extending the hand out to other sectors of society) versus an exclusive society (one that is for the learned psychological professional's interests).

### ***PsySSA as an International Role Player***

The analysis in this section focuses on how ICP 2012 was constructed by participants as a legitimate ‘coming out’ event for PsySSA on the international stage, thus constructing PsySSA as a debutant. ICP, as well as similar events such as the first Pan-African Psychology Union Congress, enabled an introduction of South African psychology to the international community. It represented a turning point for PsySSA, according to the participants, and helped grow its membership, which enabled it to find a home and a validated identity in the profession and in the country. The ideological dilemma that emerged, and will be discussed, is that the construction of PsySSA as an international role player is a construction of PsySSA being international because it had been introduced to and accepted in the international arena, reproducing a discourse of legitimacy gained only through international acceptance.

PsySSA debuted as a maturing society, obtaining gravitas internationally as a leader for psychology regionally and among developing countries while giving South African universities a further international footprint. PsySSA's international debut was used to

construct PsySSA as nationally powerful. In terms of the international position of PsySSA, the International Psychology Congress (ICP), which was hosted in 2012 in Cape Town, is considered to be a turning point in the history of PsySSA.

*It [ICP 2012] helped promote PsySSA in its role. (P17)*

*It [ICP 2012] did generate a lot of interest in psychology amongst people that ordinarily would not have given a second thought to attending conferences [...] The critical thing for psychologists was that South African psychologists felt part of the international community. (P16)*

*I think for PsySSA it [ICP 2012] was great. It cemented their space as a leader for psychology within the country regionally within Africa but also as a leader amongst developing countries – It also gave universities a further international footprint [...] The two events [ICP and PAPU] kind of sped up the maturation of the society. (P15)*

*I think we can proudly talk about that to say this is definitely just to show how important that kind of arrangement was for us as an organisation and effort for identity. Because once you have a home, you have an identity. PsySSA has an identity today which it has simply because we have a home. And that whole couldn't have been there if we didn't have this kind of a big events like ICP 2012. (P5)*

*And South African psychology has never looked back again. All sorts of little groups, at universities, largely racial, and so on, have been out there. They've gotten mileage; individuals have benefited themselves and their careers on it. When we did it, we did it for psychology in the country, it's natural that the individuals would have benefited. [...] It came after a few health scares, China, swine flu, etc, etc. And we had the smallest number of an ICP for four years, but it was the richest programme in terms of its diversity. And in terms of its inclusion, it was also the most financially successful ICP. [...] The only president, the only, only black person to become a president. President of IUPsyS all the previous presidents have been from Western Europe and, and the USA. (P11)*

*[...] it certainly changed perceptions. As you know, we will, you are with us and me when we marketed the conference around the world, and I think a lot of what we did was change perceptions of Africa and African psychology. So, it had a huge impact globally. (P7)*

*PsySSA played a role model to most of the upcoming societies or associations in Africa – people are always learning from PsySSA how to embrace the African in order to make sure that no one is left behind . [...] We [PsySSA] had a number of MOUs with the Norwegians, APA, the BPS and all those.*

(P6)

The participants agreed that ICP 2012 acted as a catalyst for PsySSA and is described as a turning point in the history of PsySSA linking it more firmly to the international community. Here “South African psychologists felt part of the international community”, “sped up the maturation of the society”, and “2012 conference that put us on the world map”, PsySSA is constructed as a role player in the international field of psychology through participants drawing on an interpretative repertoire of internationalisation to legitimise PsySSA’s identity. This can be seen clearly in P5’s construction of PsySSA’s identity. P5 draws on the interpretative repertoire of internationalisation as the means through which PsySSA was able to find its “home” and “identity” through ICP 2012. Had it not been for ICP 2012 the society “couldn’t” have found this home and identity. ICP 2012 is constructed as a legitimate ‘coming out’ event for PsySSA on the international stage, while simultaneously finding credibility because of the event, so much so that it is a *given* that “no organisation or institution in South Africa can do something about psychology if PsySSA is not involved”. This promotes the idea that PsySSA is the only credible and scientific learned voice of professional psychology in South Africa.

African psychology is mentioned by P7 as being recognised differently by the international community alluding to a unique offering that contributed to internationalisation. This is further described as enabling PsySSA to reach international standards, while carving a global voice and making globally worthwhile contributions. The event can therefore be thought of as a transformational milestone where much progress was made. It also constructs the event as a legitimate coming out event. The participants had a lot to gain from ICP 2012 being international where these connections could be established. But for some participants it also extends to a sense of PsySSA being validated and recognised by the international community. This constructs PsySSA as a legitimate debutante.

However, if these ideas of legitimacy follow from PsySSA’s international debut, the construction of PsySSA is highly problematic and replicates colonial power relations. If PsySSA’s international debut can be translated back into national powerfulness and legitimacy, a discourse is present that draws heavily on the remnants of developing-developed or Global North-Global South divides. This construction of PsySSA’s

internationality does not present PsySSA positively. One hopes that the “number of MOUs with the Norwegians, APA, the BPS and all those” are meaningful and not simply because “all those” represent the international that PsySSA so desperately wants to come home with and that PsySSA so desperately needs, but that these MOUs are meaningful because “all those” see PsySSA as equal partners in knowledge and practice.

The participants also reflected on PsySSA in comparison to other international psychological societies, where participants construct PsySSA as powerful, a power which is tied to the aforementioned legitimacy it is given through the discourse of internationalisation.

*We don't want to become another APA. (P17)*

*The fact that South Africa was hosting the ICP 2012 meant that it was on the world radar. (P16)*

*People often conflate PsySSA and the HPCSA which in a way is good, it's a powerful position for the society to be in but it's limiting in the sense that people don't see the value add that society offers. [...] We're probably the only body that has some sort of gravitas [internationally]. (P15)*

*No organisation or institution in South Africa can do something about psychology if PsySSA is not involved, I think that's a given. [...] PsySSA seems at this stage, the only credible scientific and learned voice of professional psychology, you see, I place quite a lot of emphasis on the importance of PsySSA. (P10)*

*[...] there is no other scientific learning society. It is PsySSA, that's one.*

*Secondly, there is no other representative, professional society but PsySSA.*

*(P11)*

Participants legitimise their description of PsySSA's superior position in the country through the discourse related to power dynamics as tied to its international recognition (that is, ICP 2012 put PsySSA “on the world radar”). PsySSA is constructed as the authoritative body of psychology in South Africa by most of these participants. This affords PsySSA a great deal of power, almost a monopoly, to represent psychology and psychological professionals in the country. P10 constructs PsySSA as invaluable in the progress of psychology in South Africa, without which decisions cannot credibly be made. Similarly, they construct PsySSA through an interpretative repertoire of authority, stating that it is the only credible body that represents psychology (drawing as well on discourses of scientific rigour and academia). P11 holds much the same view: PsySSA is the one and only organisation that represents psychological professionals in South Africa. Furthermore, constructing PsySSA as powerful functions to



legitimise PsySSA becoming a mentor to other psychological societies in Africa. In this discourse lies a sense of pride in PsySSA's standing and contribution.

However, when considering these discourses, PsySSA's endorsed identities as a learned society and as an international role player are flawed and in need of proper consideration. While there seems to be no link between these two endorsements, they are in fact the endorsement of an inner and outer identity. This means that they are components of a fully endorsed identity of PsySSA, however the analysis revealed that its leadership held many varying views of PsySSA's identity. Therefore, PsySSA is constructed with no clear identity. Additionally, by PsySSA focussing on the international, the inner identity is relegated and the work of the national society is reduced. In this regard, PsySSA (specifically, its identity) continues to be disembodied from its goals, vision, and mission, reiterating continuity in the face of discontinuity. In other words, PsySSA will continue to function while disregarding/dislodging anything that does not continue to serve it or the goal for the presidential term.

PsySSA does carry a large weight of responsibility for the profession and the country and based on the constructions of the participants, it has emerged as an influential and powerful organisation in the field of psychology to the point, at times, that it is mistaken for the HPCSA. But despite this, the legitimisation through international recognition gained from ICP 2012 is problematic when it *suppresses* legitimisation through local knowledge and practice, thus buying into the superiority of the international community. Further, the degree to which participants construct PsySSA's goals and mission as a learned society with elements of a trade union differs, which has implications for the transformation of the society moving forward. An agreed upon agenda is needed regarding what the society's goals of transformation are.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

By way of conclusion, it is paramount to consider PsySSA's identity with reference to its birth and its continued journey. The establishment of PsySSA was in itself a power struggle with negotiations between various pre-existing psychological bodies. Due to the fact that the power struggle was never resolved and that the negotiations positioned PsySSA as a reconstitution based on existing values and principles, rather than a development of a new set of founding values and principles, fault lines developed during the birth of PsySSA. One could say that this was the early onset of continuity in the face of discontinuity. The fault lines continued to seep through the identity and work of PsySSA, hence, through its existence, the society had seen a number of breakaway groups and formations of isolated professional societies.

As a social construct, organisational transformation has no fixed and absolute truth. It is not a standard against and in terms of which stakeholder behaviour can be evaluated. It is the product of stakeholder behaviour, and more precisely the product of stakeholder discourses found in their talk, texts, signs, and symbols they produced, including the rules and regulations they laid down to formulate and govern their own behaviour. The truth of organisational transformation, and therefore the truth of the transformation of PsySSA, lies in the discourses that stakeholders drew on, legitimised, and created in their PsySSA endeavours. The study aimed to investigate the transformation of PsySSA with reference to its identity. In this chapter, the analysis, consequences and implications of the study, limitations of the study, recommendations, and the researcher's reflections will be discussed.

### Primary Outcomes of the Analysis

Based on the analysis in the preceding chapter, it is clear that PsySSA emerged out of a particular socio-political context that it cannot be separated from. The participants' discourse around PsySSA's identity was often tied to issues of race, inclusion or exclusion, and the role of the past apartheid atrocities in considering the future for the organisation and psychology in South Africa more broadly. The birth of PsySSA, as well as its heritage (the system it found itself in), had to ultimately address three concerning points before it could consider its identity, namely:

- Transform psychology to serve the needs of all South Africans and psychology professionals

- Repair the harms done by psychology during apartheid, while promoting reconciliation (further addressing the mental health problems that the public was facing)
- Establish itself as a unified professional body that is able to compete nationally and globally.

All three of these points surfaced in the discourse of the participants, particularly when constructing PsySSA's becoming identity as well as its role beyond South Africa. However, the reconstitution of PsySSA, which was riddled with the negotiations of the various bodies' identities, visions, and missions, accompanied by the veto vote right in its early days and lack of compromise, almost deterred the birth of PsySSA. Nationally, the initial formation of PsySSA can be compared to CODESA I (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) (South African History Online, 2017b) discussions, as those discussions broke down, and following this it seemed that a way forward was almost entirely not possible. However, once compromises were made, PsySSA began to emerge. However, as compromises had to be made, similarly to how Nelson Mandela made various compromises in CODESA II discussions resulting in being labelled as a 'sell-out' (South African History Online, 2017a), PsySSA can be considered a sell-out for not adhering to the vision of the oppressed without compromise.

In reference to the above, the constructions regarding PsySSA's identity and mandate revealed fault lines. These fault lines persisted through its work and its journey having surfaced in many of the interviews. These included hidden power dynamics within PsySSA and sometimes between presidents, breakaway groupings, and the veto right, which can be referenced to the dictations that the "old order" still implement today. Examining the constructions of PsySSA's birth, one can consider Lewin's (1947) planned approach to change, which has three phases, namely unfreezing, moving, and freezing/refreezing. The identity of the various organisations was unfrozen in the negotiations process. This was followed by 'moving' during the negotiations and freezing the identity once the relevant compromises had been made. This then developed the fault line and PsySSA's way of operating for years to come. For example, when the society considers its strategic plan and drivers for a particular time frame, the society follows the above model by stopping any other work, unfreezing itself, moving towards developing a relevant and responsive strategic plan and then continuing once the relevant compromise has been made. This is similar to how the implementation and management of apartheid policy and legislation was managed.

For this particular reason, the identity of PsySSA cannot be separated from the context of apartheid, which is both birthed from and is tasked with managing, and ultimately stems from, particularly because of the compromises that were made on its identity. Systemically this constructed PsySSA's tension of where it is rooted as an organisation by the participants. Further to this, PsySSA was constructed as the protector of psychology and psychological professionals in the country, while some participants simultaneously constructed themselves as in need of protection. In this way psychologists were positioned by such discursive constructions as unable to function without PsySSA. Despite this, and aligned with the challenges PsySSA faced emerging into a new democratic order, the society faced an existential threat from dissenters within who may have wanted to undermine that was protecting a 'new' generation of psychology and psychologists in the country.

When evaluating PsySSA's identity, participants' views of its identity seeped through their views of the society's response to organisational change. Metaphorical constructions allowed for participants to reflect on and distance themselves from PsySSA, which allowed a surfacing of a mix of constructions of PsySSA, which essentially came up repeatedly in the interviews. These constructions encompassed many elements of organisational transformation/change. PsySSA was constructed as a home or a place of refuge, particularly for those who were previously "not protected" by the system; however, this described PsySSA as being slow to organisational change and managing its responsiveness, as traditionally a home is meant to remain consistent and unaffected by change as it is a place of safety and familiarity. However, a home generally changes when it is to improve itself – evolving. Therefore, the society is further constructed as an evolving society, specifically to its surroundings and the time it finds itself in. Based on the need for the society to be responsive, participants constructed PsySSA's identity as discontinuous in the face of continuity and vice versa. In doing so, PsySSA tends to transform while being an agent of transformation. While this promotes PsySSA as active and responsive, it further enables the identity of PsySSA which is disembodied, discarding anything that no longer serves the vision of the society, which was constructed through the participants' metaphors. This is further supported by the organisation's structure and tenure terms. Further, this begs numerous questions regarding what is left behind, what is deemed important to bring from the past, how much of the past should be remembered, and how much the society should look to the past when planning for the future. Herein lies overlap with PsySSA and South Africa's socio-economic and socio-political issues.

While the participants described PsySSA's structure as enabling a disembodied being, they further highlighted tensions between hierarchical unidirectional relationships through the constructions of PsySSA as a mother to a child through the metaphor of a cow and its calf. This speaks to the management of the organisation and highlights the space that a president may have to push their relevant agenda as noted in Chapter 6. This positions the leadership of PsySSA as a dictator that believes their vision is the appropriate identity for the society (and profession) in a given time frame. This undermines PsySSA's official positioning as a democratic society.

The society's structure, which enables a dictatorship, therefore, enables the space for various splinter groups. Participants described the development of splinter groups as inferior to that of the national society. Although the development of splinter groups was supported by the structure of the organisation, it was further supported by the consequences of change. Muthusamy (2019) found that members of an organisation are less likely to oppose change should they feel that they are part of the process, however, leading up to establishment of PsySSA, the negotiations only involved the leaders of the various organisations. Most recently, participants noted that the development of the 2014 to 2018 and 2019 to 2022 strategic plans involved high-level leadership and various meetings and engagements, alluding to minimal membership engagement. This supports disgruntlement among members. However, it is ultimately impossible to be representative of all individuals by disregarding one while regarding the other. Additionally, operationally it is not possible to engage with all members at the strategic planning levels.

Considering these tensions that PsySSA has to negotiate, a primary contribution of the findings is that organisational change, in a South African context, is a tightrope walk between a sense of a continued and enduring identity that remains true to the organisation's core values and missions, and balancing this with a more dynamic and fluid identity that is able to evolve as society's needs change. While an enduring organisational identity may be seen as separate from a dynamic organisational identity, this study purports that these two identities are not in fact separate for an organisation like PsySSA, but rather are constitutive elements of it. While PsySSA does have elements of durability (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten & Mackey, 2002), its moments of transition did not unfold in a linear manner that had a predetermined trajectory as Van de Ven and Poole (1995) suggest. Corley (2004) argues that organisational members who hold higher positions of power consider an organisation's identity more fluid, which this study partially supports.

PsySSA's identity was constructed as tied closely to academia, finding legitimacy in its position to influence psychological knowledge and practice. This was present across several participants and was an element of an enduring rather than fluid identity. However, in alignment with Hannan and Freeman (1977), PsySSA's organisational identity seemed quick to change when driven by the need for external legitimisation. This found expression most notably in ICP 2012 being constructed as a legitimate coming out event for PsySSA as a debutante on the international stage. This legitimacy gained from international recognition was marked as a turning point for PsySSA's growth and influence by several participants. Thus, PsySSA's organisational identity contained several elements, some of which are dynamic and others that are more enduring.

The current structure of PsySSA was constructed as a tiered society, further enabling the hierarchy within the society and supporting the boundaries within the organisation. PsySSA was constructed as a river that is constantly flowing by participants. This alludes to the idea of serving some but not all, as the space of a river is limited and constricted. This further contradicts the society's democratic identity. Moreover, this dilemma was highlighted in the negotiations leading to the development of PsySSA with various tensions between past and future psychology professionals at the time. This identity crisis seeped through PsySSA's modern day identity. This begs the questions, who does PsySSA represent? Would PsySSA ever 'expel' someone for their views (dislodge)? What process would this look like? If PsySSA is to be inclusive then it must include all, regardless of their past.

Participants highlighted PsySSA's role in academia as a learned society by highlighting the society's achievements in the academic space. However, this was contrasted to the society's achievements as a trade union. By pointing out the accomplishments of PsySSA within the role of a trade union, participants were protecting their worth as past presidents, as some presidents focussed almost solely on resolving a single issue during their tenure. If PsySSA is a learned society that should operate only in the academic realm, the work done by presidents that does not fall into this specific area is diminished.

Constructions that were heavily invested in discourses of academia had to necessarily also be invested in PsySSA as exclusively for the learned professional. This positioning excludes knowledge systems that do not fit into academia and are deemed as less than by these constructions as they might not come from a learned space. For example, indigenous knowledge systems, or grassroots activism and community work that organises itself around networks of care by community members who may not even have a matric certificate to their name. This begs the question: how will PsySSA reach the people of South Africa most in

need of psychological intervention? Furthermore, how will PsySSA reach those who are carrying out the everyday psychological work?

This places a great deal of responsibility on the shoulders of PsySSA and its leadership. These past presidents constructed PsySSA in this way because of their personal involvement in the society, however, this does make one wonder how valuable it is for one organisation to carry the weight of that responsibility alone. Certainly it does construct PsySSA as a highly significant and influential organisation, without whose approval the discipline of psychology cannot be advanced in South Africa. The dilemma arises here when one thinks of this in light of PsySSA not always carrying out its mission consistently according to some participants. This is enabled by whether or not there is still a lot of internal fighting and disagreements. This was highlighted by the participants when there was a shift to the first female black president, where both her race and her gender were constructed as limiting how much she could do as president. This describes the society as forcing a “black face”. But what does this say about an organisation that is steering psychology towards its future? This still makes one wonder, who does PsySSA belong too and/or represent?

### **Implications of the Findings**

Given the above, the implications for translating these findings into utile data in the service of transformation are fairly extensive. The identity of PsySSA remains a contentious topic as there is no clear direction of what PsySSA is meant to address. This can be alluded to PsySSA’s expected outcomes and the mandate it has been given by its members. The discourse analysis indicated that the strategic plans are too broad and therefore are unattainable within the given time frames of the terms of leadership. To this end, the society will need to reconsider its strategic plan so that it aligns to its vision, mission, and aims and is directed by its members’ mandate and needs. However, it will also need to consider its role nationally, continental, and internationally. It must be noted that the hosting of the ICP 2012 propelled and developed the society’s international identity. Furthermore, it prepared the society to assist with the development and establishment of PAPU, enabling PsySSA to be systemically and infrastructurally large enough to host the first Pan-African Psychology Congress. This allowed PsySSA to become the leading African society on the continent. Therefore, through its assistance, PsySSA enabled the development of psychology and its identity in Africa. However, as long as the paradox between continuity and discontinuity continues to run through PsySSA as a fault line, accompanied by internal and external tensions along with exclusionary and inclusionary regulations, transformation will remain an

unachievable goal. While there are no clear 'rules' and 'regulations' to ensure the consistency in reference to its outputs and operations accompanied with a lack of a clear identity, transformation seems all but impossible.

The continuity-discontinuity fault line is the very impetus of PsySSA's transformation. It was inscribed at birth and is still present. But it keeps the possibility of transformation alive. However, this prohibits a clear picture of what transformation means for PsySSA and where it is leading to. While this fault line is still present, PsySSA's transformational goals remain unclear. Consequently, any changes in the society cannot be measured if they are in the service of transformation. Clear goals need to be set in this regard. However, it must be kept in mind that if such goals are too rigid then this disallows adapting in a fast-changing world. Thus, strong leadership is required to guide PsySSA through the complex negotiation of what elements of the society's identity are to remain as fixed anchors, and what elements should be allowed more fluidity. These considerations are needed as they stem from the construction that PsySSA does not understand the logic that is built into its very fabric. It is structured adequately, but it does not understand its own logic or thinking. It wants to command, control, and own its own transformation and that of psychology, but this desire for ownership of transformation undermines the plurality of the voices of its members and the articulation of transformation, which undermines its desire for democracy.

PsySSA had to emerge from the ashes of isolation and built itself up to be recognised internationally. The international recognition it achieved, given the context of its birth, was too sweet to ignore and was seductive, especially for presidents gaining international recognition for their organisation. This may also be about academic practices where academics often aspire to achieve international recognition in their field. As has been seen, the learned element in PsySSA is strong so legitimacy from the international community is a perfect storm that brings together the elements of international recognition for academics as well as provides validation from outside South Africa for PsySSA (a validation that South Africa previously lacked due to apartheid's isolation).

Moreover, the discourse analysis unearthed the hidden power dynamics that hold space within the society that allows the direction of the society to be shaped by it. However, it should be noted that the discourse revealed that the definition of transformation is unclear and debatable from various perspectives. For PsySSA, the transformation process is not a destination but rather a constant ongoing process that needs to be constantly reviewed and assessed.



A single society, with a small office and heavy reliance on volunteers cannot function optimally while being pulled in several different directions. To be forthright, PsySSA does not have the administrative and leadership capacity, at this point, to be performing as Cirque du Soleil on multiple national, continental, and international stages. Hence, as P9 noted: “What PsySSA has achieved has been nothing short of punching beyond our weight class.”

### **Limitations of the Study**

The most significant limitation in the study pertained to the methodological approach utilised, and in particular, the data collection and analysis. Given that such a large collection of text was generated through the narratives of participants, the study was simply not exhaustive in its exploration of PsySSA as an organisation. While this is a limitation of most qualitative studies of this nature, it would nevertheless have been useful to have mined the data further, as there are a range of analytical possibilities that are discarded within such large qualitative data sets. The findings therefore represent one possible, partial, and perspectival analysis of the data set, not only because of its participants, but also because the process of interpretation is in itself a socially constructed endeavour (Burr, 2015). Moreover, the researcher’s role in the society might have prompted particular responses from the participants as she has been part of the society’s journey for more than 24 years and has worked closely with all the participants within PsySSA.

Additionally, due to the fact that all interviews were conducted on Zoom, the personal, one-on-one element may have been reduced and could have led to misconceptions or miscommunications. However, as this study is the first of its kind to the knowledge of the researcher, it must be noted that it is a start to enable similar organisations to evaluate their transformation agendas.

### **Consequences of the Study and Recommendations**

As transformation is an ongoing process, PsySSA must evaluate its purpose by considering its strategic plan more frequently, with quarterly reviews happening yearly. This will reduce the vague and broad-spectrum goals to concise and achievable goals. This will aid addressing the fault line of discontinuity in the face of continuity as short-sightedness rather than far-sightedness, which is preferable in a fast-paced and changing world. Furthermore, it must consider its role in Africa to ensure that it is not perceived as a dictator within the space, but rather a facilitator to promote the development of other African societies through PAFU. Specifically, assessing where the organisation is currently and the desired outcome is needed as the purpose of an organisation will determine the desired outcome/goal.

However, the purpose of the organisation cannot be identified unless clear ideas of transformation and the role of the organisation are established. This will aid in addressing the fault lines surrounding its identity. Furthermore, the establishment of 'buy-in' to the organisation's identity from members and leadership is integral to the implementation of the purpose of the society. While an expansion and boost of the human resources is needed (which will assist in decentralising the leadership into the periphery of the organisation), the society should also consider other income streams (possibly grants) and other membership models while facilitating other stakeholder engagements to assess the success of its activities. This will ensure the addressing of the inclusivity and exclusivity fault line.

Moreover, the current membership and leadership models are unsustainable and do not promote drive within individuals to carry out the work of PsySSA. Transformation within the society has been too slow and there is a need to draw young talent into the structures to become the society of the future. This requires an institutional culture that reflects the African context, and an investment in positioning PsySSA more clearly as that. This identity can accentuate the position and role of PsySSA in wider society. Being an African psychological association in a particular context should feed into all structures across the society. The office and society do not presently reflect this reality. There is a sizable cohort of African psychologists across the country who can be drawn into the society's work. Therefore, the society should consider the development and implementation of a young leaders academy that will aid in the transference of institutional memory and succession planning. Furthermore, the society should consider sending individuals from leadership and the office for more training to improve their skills and cater to the mandate and/or purpose of the organisation.

Additionally, it will be imperative for the organisation to consider its structure, and the terms thereof, so that it is not perceived as a dictator, therefore promoting a reduced likelihood of splinter groups or withdrawals of structures. However, the society must improve its communication and define its relationship expectations with its structures in order to assist this process. However, it is important to assess the impact of the current leadership model and the duration placed on it. Importantly, the society must assess if the current leadership model is conducive to a successful and impactful management of the society. The structure of the society must be complemented by a transition between presidents and an induction period while the process for electing new leadership is undertaken in order to maintain continuity through its young leaders academy and mentorship programmes.

Matters not central to the plan, programme, mandate, and principles of the society exhausts leaders, which results in leadership being drawn into chasing down particular, immediate, and/or short-term issues. Instead of the pursuit of priorities, resolutions and plans, these become subsumed by other matters that are then all-consuming. The result is that operations have also been put into crisis/reactive mode. This is historical and goes back to earlier presidencies (for example, SIOPSA and now the Educational Psychology Association of South Africa). A central dynamic here is a resistance to change (by predominantly white-led groups), which also presents an anti-transformation agenda. The racial dynamics are masked, and their re-manifestation can be seen through different structures and issues. At times there is disrespect and verbal abuse in these situations, causing high stress for both leadership and staff. The Executive should take formal disciplinary steps in the case of targeted attacks against leaders or staff.

To this end, future studies on PsySSA (or even South African organisations, or more broadly, international organisations that are undergoing transformation) should focus on the experiences of members within the society as this might be beneficial to assess its transformation agenda and promote member engagement and buy-in. This can be driven by the Past Presidents Forum and Standing Committee on Equity & Transformation in consultation with the PsySSA Council to ensure relevance.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Questions

**Question 1:** You know that the study is about PsySSA and what people in PsySSA think about PsySSA. So, can I ask you, what do you think of PsySSA?

- What does PsySSA remind you of?
- Can you think of a metaphor that captions and/or describes PsySSA?
- What makes you think of PsySSA as [metaphor]?
- How useful do you think it is for PsySSA to be like [metaphor]?
- You consider PsySSA to be [participant's answer], do you think that this works well within a regional, national, and international context?

**Question 2:** You raised some interesting thoughts, in contrast to this what are your specific thoughts about transformation and PsySSA?

- Talking about a professional society like PsySSA, what do you think transformation means?
- What is transformation all about, regionally, nationally as well as internationally?
- It is interesting that you mentioned [participant's response], can you tell me more about that?
- How do you see a society that needs to transform in itself while simultaneously being active in a transformative manner in society?
- Do you think PsySSA has really changed psychology nationally and internationally?
- How has PsySSA changed psychology?
- Can you think of ways in which PsySSA has benefited South African communities?

**Question 3:** What do you think the future of PsySSA holds?

- What if you were to look at PsySSA in a regional context?
- Is this also true in an international climate?
- Has PsySSA benefited from this transformation?
- In which ways do you think PsySSA could continue to transform?

- Are there ways in which you would personally like to participate in future transformation?

**Question 4:** There are different ways in which people play a role in the transformation of a professional organisation, such as PsySSA. Some people get involved in a visible way while others are more under the radar. Do you think you contributed to the transformation and formation of PsySSA?

- Can you think specific ways in which you contributed?
- How do you feel about your contributions?

## **Appendix B: Information Sheet**

**Ethics clearance number:** 2020-PsyREC-32721196

**Title:** Transformation of an African Psychological Society in an International Climate: The transformation and identity formation of PsySSA

### **Dear prospective participant**

As you have been involved with PsySSA in the capacity of at least one of the following positions including past president; executive committee member; office staff; student; young leader or as a PsySSA member I would like to invite you to reflect on your perception of PsySSA's transformation and identity.

### **What is the aim of the research?**

The study aims to investigate transformation of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) in a local and global context, as well as to examine how stakeholders perceive organisational transformation and identity. The resulting documentation will be prepared for the publication of a) a PhD dissertation b) article/s in relevant scientific journals and/or conference presentations, as well as c) to inform future learning and practice.

### **What is the nature of my participation in this study?**

Your role as participant will be to discuss your perception of PsySSA's transformation as a South African psychological society within a local and global context. Additionally, to discuss your perception of PsySSA's identity within these contexts. The duration of the interview will be approximately 45 – 60 minutes.

### **Can I withdraw from the study after agreeing to participate?**

Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. Should you provide consent, you are free to withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason, without any consequences. However, you will not be able to withdraw once the findings have been published by the researcher. Participation is entirely up to you and you will not receive any incentives for participating, nonetheless, your participation will be greatly appreciated.

### **Will my details be kept confidential?**

None of your personal details or identifying characteristics will be made public. If you prefer, you may be identified by a pseudonym. You are welcome to select your own pseudonym or have one assigned to you by the researcher.

### **How will the researcher protect the security of my information?**

With your permission, your interview will be audio recorded to allow ease of transcription and analysis. These recordings, as well as all research notes, will be stored electronically in a password protect file on the researcher's personal computer and in the cloud for five years. After five years these recordings will be permanently deleted.

### **What are the potential risks of participation?**

Participation in this study will not cause any discomfort and there are no risks involved in participation (psychologically or physically).

**What are the benefits of participation?**

The study will not provide any direct benefit; however, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of PsySSA's transformation and identity as perceived by stakeholders.

**How will I be informed of the outcomes of this study?**

If you would like to be provided with the findings of this study, please contact Ms. Fatima Seedat ([fatima@psyssa.com](mailto:fatima@psyssa.com)).

Any further questions about the study may be directed to Ms Fatima Seedat ([fatima@psyssa.com](mailto:fatima@psyssa.com)).

**Appendix C: Informed Consent**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated risks involved with participation in this study.

- I have read and understood the study as explained by the information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without any consequences.
- I am aware that the findings will be presented in a PhD dissertation, articles in scientific journals and/or conference proceedings.
- I consent to the audio recording of the interview.
- I have received a signed copy of the information sheet.

**Participant signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D: Ethical Clearance Letter



### COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

14 August 2020

Dear Fatima Bhamjee

NHREC Registration # :

Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # : 2020-  
PsyREC-32721196

**Decision:**  
Ethics Approval from 14 August  
2020 to 31 October 2023

Researcher(s): Fatima Bhamjee

fatima@psyssa.com

Prof SH van Deventer

vasivd@gmail.com

Transformation of an African psychological society in an international climate: the transformation and identity formation of PsySSA

Qualification Applied: Staff research

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa Department of Psychology College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

*The low risk application was reviewed and expedited by Department of Psychology College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on 14 August 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Psychology Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will obtain permission for making use of Unisa students as research participants.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
8. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (31 October 2023). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number 2020-PsyREC-32721196 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,



Signature :

Prof I. Ferns  
Ethics Chair: Psychology  
Email: [femsi@unisa.ac.za](mailto:femsi@unisa.ac.za)



Signature :

Prof K. Masemola  
Executive Dean : CHS  
E-mail: [masemk@unisa.ac.za](mailto:masemk@unisa.ac.za)



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## Appendix E: Editor's Certificate

**Richard van Rensburg**

*Language Editing Services*

Richard.Leslievan@gmail.com  
0728212151

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# CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

30 January 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am an associate member of the Professional Editors' Guild (membership number VAN092) and hold a copy-editing and proofreading course qualification through the SA Writers College. This certificate serves as confirmation that I, in my capacity as a language editor and proofreader, have performed a language edit and proofreading of the following student's work:

Student name: **Bhamjee, Fatima**  
University: **UNISA**  
Degree: **PhD**  
Document type: **Thesis**  
Title of research: **The Complex Transformation of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA)**

Conventions as outlined in *New Oxford Style Manual* have been applied in the language editing process, and discretion applied where needed to ensure consistency with conventions in South Africa. The thesis has been formatted according to APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition standards and the references have been checked against APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition guidelines.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any further queries in this regard.

Yours faithfully,



**Mr Richard van Rensburg**