

Unit 1

The history of psychology in Africa

Learning outcomes

After you have studied this unit, you should

- be able to identify the origin of psychology in Africa
- be able to recognise the different areas in the development of psychology in Africa
- understand the different theoretical perspectives in the development of psychology in Africa
- be able to recognise the role of psychology in colonisation and racial segregation

1.1 Introduction

The history of psychology in Africa is not a straight line, that is, the path from how it is defined or conceptualised to how it is understood and practised in Africa, especially South Africa, is not necessarily linear. Various historical events informed the way in which psychology was conceptualised and delivered in Africa and how this resulted in power shifts in society. This unit deals with psychology as the study of human behaviour and how, owing to the geographic location of its origins, the knowledge created from its conceptualisation continues to have consequences for African people. The history of psychology is important since it not only provides background but also highlights the shortcomings of the discipline of psychology in the African context. This unit will provide an introduction to the origins of psychology, including the geographic locations that informed how it was conceptualised, the different areas and theories that inform its development and, lastly, the role of psychology in colonisation and racism on the African continent.

1.2 The origin of psychology in Africa

Psychology as a discipline has a long history but, as an academic subject, it is relatively new. Although psychology has been part of African society, the content and orientation of psychology as a professional discipline are Euro-American imports (Oppong et al., 2014). According to Nsamenang (2007), Euro-American psychology was introduced to Africa during the colonial period partly through Christian missionaries, visiting Western psychologists and Africans who were returning from universities abroad after being trained in conventional Western psychology. Christian missionaries, according to Nsamenang, introduced the teaching of mainstream Western psychology in the philosophy training curriculum that was intended for the education of African candidates for theology and the priesthood. From this world view, psychology is defined as the study of thought, emotions and observed behaviour (APA, 2015), emphasising the “scientific” aspect of psychology. Psychology’s connotation of being scientific gives the discipline power and authority over the human experience (Bohmke & Tlali, 2008) since it claims to have the power to declare what behaviours are considered normal and adaptive. Nwoye (2015a, p. 104) defines psychology as the “systematic and informed study of the complexities of human mental life, culture and experience in the pre- and post-colonial African world”. This type of psychology considers local world views to be important in understanding local realities. This issue is discussed in detail in unit 2.

Universities in Africa were established following Africa’s colonial contact with Europe. Most of them started in the 1960s and 1970s after colonised countries gained political independence from their former colonisers, such as Britain, France, Belgium, Germany and Portugal. Some of the universities, like the University of Ibadan (Nigeria), the University of Ghana (Ghana), the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Makerere University (Uganda) and the University of Nairobi (Kenya), started as offshore colleges of the University of London, initially flying the flag of their “mother university” and offering various courses (including psychology) that were developed abroad and imported to Africa. Unfortunately, creating departments of psychology at that time was one thing; filling them up with relevant and local experts was quite another. That was where the major problem of Western hegemonic domination and the attempt to speak for Africans on the nature of the life of the mind in Africa had its origins. In those early years (that is, the 1940s, 1960s and 1970s, and indeed up until today), most nations of Africa, like other non-Western countries, such as China, India, Iran and the Philippines, did not have a fully articulated, scientific psychology of their own (Nwoye, 2022). In addition, there was an inability to recognise and admit that there was something worthwhile, psychologically, out there in other regions, beyond the traditional location of the European cultural and psychological tradition (Danziger, 2006).

Task 1: Colonialism and psychology

- (a) In 1960, 17 African countries declared their independence. Watch the following video by *The New York Times* in this regard:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/learning/lesson-of-the-day-a-continent-remade.html>

- (b) How would you summarise these events? Tell someone about this video.
- (c) Do you believe that when African countries became independent, colonialism ended, or are there other forms of colonisation that persist to this day?

Consequently, to fill the vacant psychology positions at African universities at the time, the authorities had no other option but to rely on recruitment drives abroad. These universities functioned as clones: they modelled the European systems, including curricular provisions and traditions, after the already existing and well-regarded Western universities in countries such as Britain, France, Germany and the United States of America (USA) (Nwoye, 2015b). This generated the need for persistent importation and transplantation of Euro-American psychologies (Danziger, 2006). In that way, the formal study of psychology in African universities emerged as a subordinated, dependent and Westernised psychology. African psychologists in continental Africa, overdetermined by the Eurocentric story of what psychology is about, have for years ended up in disappointment and traumatic bewilderment regarding how to break away from the restricted boundaries this tradition set for the study of psychology in Africa (Benjamin-Bullock & Seabi, 2013).

The dominance of the Western world view has defined what constitutes the study of psychology, and the way in which its sub-disciplines are divided is inextricably linked to how Western countries have historically oppressed people from Africa. This oppression finds expression through colonisation and imperialism. In other words, the way in which psychology is defined, as well as the emphasis on its “scientific” quality, is not necessarily divorced from history and politics of oppression (Bohmke & Tlali, 2008).

Let us now consider the implications of conceptualising psychology from a specific geographical location, specifically the implications for African people.

1.2.1 Psychology and location

The word “psychology” is derived from Greek. The first part of the word comes from the Greek *psychē*, which refers to the soul; the second part comes from the Greek

logos, which refers to studying a particular subject. Based on the etymology of the word (i.e., the origin and historical development of the meaning of the word), it could be concluded that psychology is the study of the soul. Given that some people are in Africa, and Greece is in Europe, a few critical points need to be raised.

The first critical issue is that people's location often determines their world view. A world view can be defined as a set of presumptions that particular people have about the world. Their ideas can be about the world, God, life, death, love, how to heal sickness, their relationship with nature, and so on. As such, how people in places like Greece think about and see the world will most likely differ from how people from Africa and other continents see and think about the world (see unit 3 on psychology from different parts of the world). This concept is referred to as epistemic location. In terms of this concept, people generate their world views from a particular geopolitical context and qualify truths based on their positioning (Mignolo, 2002). Consequently, psychology is not value free but is informed by a cultural reference. In the same breath, Grosfoguel (2013) questions why disciplines such as psychology are based on ideas and theories only from Western nations, thus questioning the contextual relevance and applicability of such theories in non-Western contexts.

The second critical point to examine is the idea of science informing the study of psychology. The notion of science, which is examined in unit 4, also has historical and political connotations. Science in psychology implies a couple of things about the human psyche. It implies, for instance, that human behaviour, emotions and thought can be studied objectively. This viewpoint not only privileges the supposed objective study of the human psyche but may also lead to a distortion of the ways of life of people who exist outside of Western societies. In other words, it can lead people to think about human beings in a mechanical way as though no other factors contribute to human behaviour and may not reflect the complexities of society in informing human behaviour.

The third issue relates to the following questions: Who decides what human processes are within the scope of psychology to study? Why do they get to make this determination? On whose behalf do they make decisions? What are the consequences of developing a limited scope of studying psychology? These are the kinds of questions that are important to ask in order to understand what psychology is and what the implications are of this understanding. Demarcating psychology in this manner, as discussed in unit 2, has affected how other racial groups have been treated throughout history. For instance, in focusing on mental processes or internal states, psychology has perpetuated reason, intelligence and behaviour as the ideal measures of human functioning, mental health and civilisation. To emphasise the points raised above, we will use examples of the development of psychology in Egypt, South Africa and Zambia.

1.2.2 Psychology in Egypt

Three significant events occurred in the 19th century that influenced the rise of psychology in Egypt (Ahmed, 1992). Firstly, the Al-Abssia Mental Health Hospital, the first mental hospital for Africa and the Arab world, was opened in Cairo in 1880. Secondly, the newspapers and magazines distributed to the public paved the way for psychology in Egypt. These newspapers and magazines were established in Cairo and Alexandria, primarily by a group of immigrant Lebanese and Syrian journalists (Ahmed, 2005). Lastly, Egypt started to expand its schooling system by establishing schools all over the country, including teachers' schools, whose curriculum included some basic psychology training. Sheikh Mohammed Sherif Saliem wrote and published books, including psychology books, in 1895. The book, *Insanity*, by Egyptian physician Mohammed Nagaty was published in 1891. In Cairo, the term "psychology" first appeared in a curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education in 1906. Since 1908, the Philosophy Department at Cairo University has included psychology courses in its curriculum. After the establishment of the Higher Institute for Education in Cairo in 1929, psychology became known as a distinguished scientific discipline (Soueif & Ahmed, 2001).

1.2.3 Psychology in South Africa

Psychology has a noble purpose. However, in South Africa, it became perverted to fulfil a political purpose. As Marx (2013) notes, it was believed that the Bantu were not simply less developed than Europeans; rather, the belief was that their culture differed fundamentally from European culture and was incompatible with it. The logical conclusion was that mixing cultures would be as fatal for indigenous Africans as it would be for whites; the only possible solution was total separation in the form of apartheid. Prominent figures in the South African government were at the forefront of aiding the colonial and apartheid state directly and indirectly. At the same time, they needed to have government-sanctioned research agencies and organisations that complemented the agenda of the colonial and apartheid government, thus suppressing local knowledge and cultural systems.

Higher education in South Africa can be traced back to 1829, when the South African College (later the University of Cape Town) was established in Cape Town (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). This college prepared students for matriculation and examinations at the University of London. In 1873, the University of Good Hope was established as an examining body for degrees conferred in South Africa. In 1916, the University Act of South Africa launched the University of South Africa, the University of Stellenbosch and the South African Native College (later the University Fort Hare). The Dutch and German philosophical traditions of rationalism and idealism influenced Afrikaans universities, and British empiricism and liberalism influenced English universities.

Psychology was taught in philosophy departments until 1917. RW Wilcocks (1892–1967) was appointed as Professor of Logic and Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch after he had received his doctorate in the analysis of productive thought at the University of Berlin in 1917. He established the first experimental psychology laboratory modelled on Wundt's laboratory at the University of Stellenbosch (Louw & Foster, 1991).

Psychology in South Africa was used to perpetuate racism and oppression of the black majority. White psychologists, such as EG Malherbe, JC Smuts, RW Wilcocks, HF Verwoerd and S Biesheuvel, played a significant role in the creation of apartheid and its policies. Nonetheless, other psychologists protested against the unjust ways in which psychology perpetuated racism. Chabani N Manganyi became the first black psychologist in 1965 and established the Department of Psychology at the University of Transkei in 1976 (now Walter Sisulu University). Josephine Naidoo was the first black person to apply for South African Psychological Association membership. Sathasivan Cooper, who frequently met with political activists, such as Steve Biko, Harry Nengwekhulu and Strini Moodley, helped to establish the Black Consciousness philosophy and was instrumental in the formation of the student's representative council (SRC) at the University College. His political ideologies later led to his suspension from university in 1969. He steered the merger with the University of Natal to form what is now known as the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

1.2.4 Psychology in Zambia

Psychology emerged in Zambia during colonialism within the context of anthropological research to serve colonial British interests. The history of social anthropology goes back to the mid-thirties with the establishment of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in 1937 (Peltzer & Bless, 1989). A major development of psychology was the appointment of a British psychologist, Prof A Heron, as director of the Institute in 1963. He founded the Human Development Research Unit at the Institute for Social Research to study perceptual development in African children and young adults. These studies were carried out in the laboratory, in family settings and in schools. The Institute for Social Research also worked on educational and occupational selection. This work was then established permanently as the Educational and Occupational Assessment Service under the Ministry of Labour and Social Services. Later, the mining industry and the Ministry of Higher Education established psychological (assessment) services (Heron, 1967, as cited in Peltzer & Bless, 1989; Machungwa et al., 1984). In 1965, the first laboratory for research in experimental psychology was established in Zambia (Nsamenang, 2007). In addition, one of the first psychology departments in East and Southern Africa was founded at the University of Zambia in 1968. Following the introduction of psychology in a few

African countries at the time, basic research was required because Western techniques were not always appropriate for the African context (Heron, 1967, as cited in Peltzer & Bless, 1989). For example, in a study of reasoning in specific non-language-based school examination tasks, it was discovered that poor performance in the tasks was related to socio-economic background and thus to familiarity with and acquired skills in dealing with the information presented as pictures (Okonji, 1971). This meant that psychology and its methodological applications had to be redefined to fit the context.

From this section, one gathers that the “how” and the “where” that inform the definition of psychology are crucial to how the study of psychology becomes an extension of oppressive political systems like colonisation, apartheid and imperialism. When psychology is used to justify the oppression of one race by another, it becomes a tool that aids oppressive regimes and maintains the status quo. Hence, how the study of psychology is conceptualised, how it creates knowledge and from what location it does so have consequences for African people.

Task 2: Finding your psychology

- (a) Go out into your community and ask five people what psychology means to them. Share what these people said about psychology on your e-tutor group site on myUnisa.
- (b) Do you agree or disagree with these people’s views of psychology, and why?
- (c) Reflect on the underlying world views that inform people’s definition of psychology.

1.3 The different areas in the development of psychology in Africa

Psychology as a discipline is concerned with the mind and behaviour (Holt et al., 2019). The mind, in this instance, refers to internal processes such as cognition or emotional states, whereas behaviour refers to the outward manner in which these inward processes manifest. *Basic, or general, psychology* is the study of the different factors that shape an individual’s personality, learning, cognition and so forth. Basic psychology includes abnormal psychology, behaviourism, biological psychology, cognitive psychology, comparative psychology, cross-cultural psychology, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, experimental psychology,

neuropsychology, personality psychology, positive psychology, psychodynamic psychology, quantitative psychology and social psychology.

Abnormal psychology is a branch of psychology that studies unusual patterns of behaviour, emotion and thought considered to be maladaptive and disruptive to an individual's life. *Psychopathology*, which is similar to abnormal psychology, refers to the study of mental illness, mainly by psychologists and psychiatrists to reach a medical understanding of the disease process. There are mainly three historical phases of development, namely, demonology (i.e., caused by evil forces), somatogenesis (i.e., bodily causes) and psychogenesis (i.e., psychological or mental causes). Demonology is the theory that the devil or another evil entity can reside inside a person and exert a mental influence over that person. Examples of demonological beliefs can be traced to Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek records. There was a belief that abnormal behaviour was caused by evil spirits, which had to be cast out through ritualistic chanting or torture, also known as exorcism. In the fifth century BC, Hippocrates (460–377) rejected the Greek belief that the gods sent serious physical diseases and mental disturbances as punishment. He believed that illnesses were caused naturally. He is considered a pioneer of somatogenesis, which states that something wrong with the soma, or the physical body, disturbs thoughts and actions. (This is in contrast with psychogenesis, which states that a disturbance has psychological origins.). Hippocrates classified mental disorders into mania, melancholia and phrenitis, or brain fever. He believed that normal brain functioning, also known as mental health, depended on a delicate balance of four main fluids in the body: blood, black bile, yellow bile and phlegm. For example, a phlegm imbalance resulted in a person feeling sluggish and dull. Black bile resulted in melancholia and too much yellow bile resulted in irritability and anxiousness. His documented work led to information that is used to identify symptoms of epilepsy, alcoholic delusion, stroke and paranoia (Davidson et al., 2004, p. 7). Lunacy trials were held in England in the 13th century to determine individuals' sanity. However, the individuals' strange behaviour was due to injury, physical illness or emotional shock and was not necessarily caused by demonic possession. In the 15th century, there were few mental hospitals. Most hospitals were used for the treatment of leprosy (Davidson et al., 2004). These facilities were converted to asylums around 1547 in England. Patients who were admitted to these types of hospitals were seen as a burden to society and locked away in desolate circumstances. In 1883, Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926) published a classification system that could be used to establish the biological nature of mental illness. He discerned among mental disorders a tendency for certain groups of symptoms, or syndromes, to appear together, which could consequently be regarded as underlying physical causes of particular medical diseases. He regarded each mental illness as distinct from others, having its own origins, symptoms, course and outcome. The somatogenic explanation for mental illness dominated the field well into the 20th century. However, other researchers, especially in France and Austria, attributed mental disorders to psychological malfunction. Among these researchers was Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), an Austrian physician practising in Vienna,

who was one of the earliest practitioners of modern-day hypnosis. The word “mesmerise” is an older term for “hypnotise” (Davidson et al., 2004).

The history of abnormal behaviour in Africa can be traced to Kenya. In 1934, HL Gordon, who was one of the most senior physicians in the colony and the author of many papers presented to the Kenyan branch of the British Medical Association in Nairobi, reported on the African mind in the *Journal of Mental Science* while studying patients admitted at the Mathari Mental Hospital, Kenya (McCulloch, 1995, p. 46). According to Gordon, “the African had no regard for the sanctity of life, no sense of decency; and by European standards, was simply abnormal” (Nwoye, 2022).

Behaviourism dominated psychology between 1920 and the 1950s. According to behaviourism, all things that organisms do – including acting, thinking and feeling – can and should be regarded as behaviour and psychological disorders are best treated by altering behaviour patterns or modifying the environment. Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) was one of the pioneers of behaviourism. Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, carried out studies on the function of heart nerves, primary digestive glands and conditioned responses, that is, classical conditioning. His studies on primary digestive glands accidentally showed results of conditioned responses. While doing research about the function of juices secreted by dogs when given food, he noticed that dogs began to salivate even when they were not waiting for food. Dogs would salivate on seeing their keepers or even hearing their keepers’ footsteps. Pavlov found that dogs’ reflexes were stirred by other events happening at the same time as the real stimulus. Pavlov was interested in behaviour displayed by organisms against stimulus.

In 1913, John Broadus Watson (1878–1958) wrote an article, “Psychology through the eyes of a behaviourist”, in which he stated that the science of psychology deals with observable behaviours and not phenomena such as conscience or thought. It was only after Watson’s article that behaviourism was delineated into three phases. The first phase, namely, Watson’s behaviourism lasted until 1930. The second phase, namely, new-behaviourism comprised studies by Edward Tolman, Edwin Guthrie, Clark Hull and BF Skinner and lasted until the 1960s. In this phase, behaviourists claimed that (a) the base of psychology was composed of studies about learning, (b) behaviours could be explained by principles of conditioning and (c) psychology had to comply with the principle of functionalism and if a concept could not be defined functionally, it could not be studied either. The third phase, called new-new behaviourism or social behaviourism, included cognitive elements. This phase was pioneered by Bandura and Rotter. Canadian-American psychologist Albert Bandura (1925–2021) first named his theory social behaviourism and then renamed it social cognitive theory. American psychologist Julian Rotter (1916–2014) named his theory social learning theory. There are two general kinds of behaviourists, namely, radical (e.g., Watson and Skinner) and methodological (e.g., Bandura and Rotter) behaviourists. Radical behaviourists believe that psychology should study observable behaviours and environmental

processes, while methodological behaviourists believe that cognitive processes should be included when studying methods of behaviour.

Biological psychology, or biopsychology, specialises in the mind–body connection, especially how the nervous system affects behaviour (Britannica, 2020). It came into being in 1913, following researcher Hideyo Noguchi's discovery of the bacterium responsible for syphilis in the brain of a deceased patient. This discovery led to an investigation into the relationship between physiology and psychological health (Durfee, 2005).

Cognitive psychology involves the study of cognition, including mental processes underlying perception, learning, problem-solving, reasoning, thinking, memory, attention, language and emotions.

Cross-cultural psychology refers to the scientific study of human behaviour and mental processes under diverse cultural conditions. The discipline grew in the 1960s in order to explain disparities in topics such as affect, cognition, conceptions of self, psychopathology, anxiety and depression. Researchers such as Paul Eckman (born in 1934) examined facial expressions or emotions of participants from ten different cultures. The results showed that some facial expressions are universal.

<h1>EKMAN'S 6 BASIC EMOTIONS</h1> <h2>& How They Affect Our Behavior</h2>		
	HAPPINESS	1. Hopefulness & Optimism 2. Gratitude 3. Smile and laughter 4. Reduces stress & depression 5. Increased satisfaction 6. Improves immune system 7. Reduces risk of heart disease 8. Increases life expectancy
	SADNESS	1. Grief 2. Hopelessness & disappointment 3. Depression 4. Crying 5. Loss of interest 6. Social Withdrawal 7. Substance abuse 8. Increases mortality risk
	FEAR	1. Survival mechanism 2. Alerts for threats & danger 3. Activates fight-flight-freeze response 4. Chills, trembling or sweating 5. Chest pain & upset stomach 6. Rapid heartbeat & breathing 7. Tense, nervous & panic-stricken 8. Repeated exposure reduces anxiety
	ANGER	1. Aggressive, multi-faceted, unpleasant feeling 2. Coping mechanism for threats & dangers 3. Hostility, agitation, frustration & antagonism 4. Activates fight-or-flight response 5. Frowning, teeth grinding, clenching fists, yelling 6. Increased cardiac activity & breathing rate 7. Affects decision making skills
	DISGUST	1. Disease-avoidance mechanism 2. Avoidance of toxic substances 3. Severe displeasure 4. Nausea & vomiting 5. Rapid heartbeat & breathing, GI problems 6. Evolutionary and adaptive behavior 7. Revulsion towards food, death & social stimuli 8. Evolutionary & adaptive behavior
	SURPRISE	1. Reaction to unexpected stimulus 2. Lack of conscious awareness 3. Activates attention & curiosity 4. Activates fight-flight-freeze response 5. Physically freeze for 1/25th of a second 6. Physiological startle response 7. Widening eyes, gasping & screaming 8. Reduced heart rate, deeper breathing
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Figure 1.1: Eckman's six basic facial expressions (www.themindsjournal.com)

Developmental psychology is concerned with studying humans throughout the various life stages. It explores physical, emotional and social development to give a complete picture of human development through the entire lifespan (APA, 2015). Developmental psychology as a discipline started as a philosophical field with John Locke (1632–1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). Locke stated that a child is a *tabula rasa*, or a blank slate, on which experience writes. Rousseau was the first to argue that a child grows in stages. Baby biographies, that is, descriptive accounts of children's development were first created in 1787 by German philosopher Dietrich

Tiedemann (1748–1803). A century later, German biologist Wilhelm Preyer (1841–1897) documented the first four years of his son's life and published *Die seele des kindes* (*The mind of the child*) in 1882.

Evolutionary psychology explains traits and processes such as memory, perception and language in terms of humans having to adapt to an evolving environment. Historically, Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) theory of natural selection provides the basis for an understanding of evolution.

Experimental psychology represents a methodological approach to psychology and refers to the use of experiments to understand human and animal participants' sensation, perception, memory, cognition, learning, motivation, emotion and developmental processes, as well as social issues. Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) founded the first laboratory for experimental psychology in Leipzig, Germany. Charles Bell (1774–1842), a British physiologist, did research on the nervous system and Ernst Heinrich Weber (1795–1878), a German physicist, suggested that judgements of sensory differences are relative, not absolute. This led to Weber's law, which is considered the first quantitative law in the history of psychology.

Neuropsychology involves the study of the structure and the functions of the brain in relation to specific psychological processes and overt behaviours (Gluck, Mercado & Meyers, 2016). The first textbook on neuropsychology, *Fundamentals of human neuropsychology*, was published by Kolb and Whishaw (Finger, 2000). Although this is a recent textbook, the history of the field can be traced back to the third dynasty of ancient Egypt. Imhotep, an Egyptian priest, first wrote about a scientific approach to medicine and disease and described the brain, trauma, abnormalities and remedies (Finger, 2000). As the field of medicine developed its understanding of human anatomy and physiology, different theories developed to understand why the body functions the way it does.

Personality psychology as a field investigates characteristics that all people have that shape their thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Young, 2020). The Big 5 personality model is often used to describe individual differences in people.

Social psychology studies social behaviour and mental processes that pertain to social behaviour. It is concerned with how humans think about and relate to one another. Social psychologists study topics such as conformity, the effect of persuasion on human behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes.

Psychology was imported into Africa. The different fields described above were mainly Western. The history of some of these disciplines, including biological, behavioural, and personality psychology, in South Africa can be traced back to the development of gold mines in South Africa (1900–1950). The structuring of the migrant labour system, including legislation such as the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, afforded white

scientists a chance to study migrants' intelligence, behaviour, personalities and anatomical structure.

The basic psychological methods (e.g., abnormal psychology, behaviourism, biological psychology, cognitive psychology, comparative psychology, cross-cultural psychology, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, experimental psychology, neuropsychology, personality psychology, positive psychology, psychodynamic psychology, quantitative psychology and social psychology) are used in applied psychology to solve issues of behaviour and experience. Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916), a German-American psychologist, pioneered applied psychology, extending his research and theories to industrial/organisational, legal, medical, clinical, educational and business contexts (Hergenhahn, 2005). Types of applied psychology include clinical psychology, community psychology, consumer psychology, counselling, critical psychology, educational psychology, environmental psychology, ergonomics, food psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, humanistic psychology, industrial/organisational psychology, legal psychology, medical psychology, military psychology, psychology of music, occupational health, political psychology, psychometrics, psychology of religion, school psychology, sport psychology and traffic psychology. Only a few of these areas of specialisation are available in South Africa, as will be discussed in another unit of this module.

1.4 Different theoretical perspectives in the development of psychology in Africa

The beginning of psychological work in Africa can be traced back to research done by missionaries, explorers, anthropologists and colonial administrators (Oppong et al., 2013). The results (which were often biased, called “scientific racism”) were grounded in factors that sought to distinguish racial differences between Africans and Euro-Americans. The training of practising psychologists in Africa failed to fully account for the lived realities of African people and provided an inaccurate representation of African reality, and Africans struggled to incorporate or to find relevance in the training in their immediate socio-cultural contexts (Oppong, 2022). The critical researchers in African countries (i.e., Ghana, Egypt, Zambia and South Africa) in the early 1920s were Europeans and Americans. In the 1960s, psychology departments were established in African countries such as Zambia, which had the first laboratory for experimental research in sub-Saharan Africa (de-Graft Aikins, 2012; Nsamenang, 1993). In the 1980s, universities in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Malawi established psychology departments (Mundy-Castle, 1989). Most approaches were paternalistic, imperial, scientific, semi-mystical and proto-fascist. This meant that psychological activities as Europeans conducted them were focused on pursuing a racist agenda and were oppressive (Richards, 1997). Research was crucial to the

creation of psychology, which merely focused on diagnosing Africans rather than their indigenous realities (Nsamenang, 1993).

Psychologists in Africa continued to follow the principles and traditions of Western psychology. White psychologists in South Africa followed the script of Euro-American psychology in the sense that their theories and research studies informed their world view on racial classification and political duties. Bulhan (1985) identifies the following three ways in which Eurocentric psychology continued to manifest itself:

- 1) *Assumptive solipsism*. Assumptive solipsism is the assumption that the Euro-American world view is the only or most significant world view.
- 2) *Methodological solipsism*. Methodological solipsism is the assumption that positivism or neo-positivism is the only or best way to conduct scientific research.
- 3) *Experiential solipsism*. Experiential solipsism is the assumption that middle-class white men's experiences are the most valid.

These assumptions make up the foundation of Eurocentric psychology and are seen in how other perspectives of understanding human psychology have been disregarded.

The adherence to Western thought is also seen in the further development and validation of Western techniques and theories. The assumptive solipsism of Eurocentric psychology continues to function in South African psychology in the form of biases (Bulhan, 1985). Table 1.1 sets out the forms of assumptive solipsism.

Table 1.1: The forms of assumptive solipsism (adapted from Bulhan, 1985)

Control-prediction bias	This bias is articulated in methodology when the control of variables and prediction are seen as necessities for scientific inquiry (seen in the research section). The idea is to control nature and to predict events before they happen. This led to social control and the oppression of others, especially since psychology functioned within colonial discourse.
Analytical-reductionist bias	This bias is founded on the assumption that complex human experience is understood better when it is reduced to elemental and simple units. This bias is the result of psychology identifying with natural science, in terms of which complex human behaviour is compromised, to be quantified (reductionism of behaviour) and compared with the behaviour of animals such as rats in experiments.
Trait-comparison bias	According to this bias, the aim of psychology is to assess traits or abilities and to compare them with one another. These traits are seen as stable and not influenced by socio-historical determinants. Abilities are usually quantified and measured through IQ tests.

Stability-equilibrium bias	This bias serves to maintain and exercise social control in order to further perpetuate the status quo. Stability is desirable, and conflict and change are not. This bias appeals to those who are part of the status quo and who are not in favour of change.
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Within this context, we realise that the history of psychology is entangled with Euro-American psychology and racism (Nicholas, 2014). The key theoretical movements in Africa were involved in dissecting the African personality, child-rearing practices, education, sexuality and cognitive abilities. In South Africa, for example, psychology involved the extension of the theoretical work of Euro-American psychologists and fraternisation with them. Personality theory, psychometry and psychoanalysis were among the highly classified areas of development. All these areas of development contributed to the propagation of racist views about black people.

The solipsism described above could be seen in the obsession with psychometric testing as an area of development. Psychologists such as Gideon Malherbe and Raymond Wilcocks were some of the pioneers of psychometric testing. Intelligence testing became central to developing psychometric testing and maintaining political control. Tests developed in America or Europe were used and standardised. They were seen as universal and were mainly used for testing blacks, Indians, coloureds and whites with a view to making racial comparisons. Some of the scales used included the Official Mental Hygiene Individual Scale (also known as the Fick Scale), published in 1926 by Martin Laurence Fick (1898–1945), which was the first South African intelligence test. Other intelligence tests included the Stanford–Binet Intelligence Scale (originally published in 1916), which tests intelligence across six areas, namely, general intelligence, knowledge, fluid reasoning, quantitative reasoning, visual-spatial processing and working memory. It is within the same principles and modus operandi that an investment in test development became essential in apartheid South Africa. The assessment patterns were similar to those of Euro-America, and the investment in these activities was predominantly aimed at maintaining racial segregation. Hence, institutions such as the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the NIPR and the South African Defence Force (SADF) were developed to carry out this type of research and developed such tests.

Simon Biesheuvel adapted some of these tests for black people and other races in South Africa (Laher & Cockcroft, 2013). Apartheid scholars' function was to determine ways by which to make black people assimilate white people's ways of being and living, in line with Euro-American psychology. French philosopher Lucien Levy-Bruhl was preoccupied with describing and comprehending the human mind in so-called primitives. He wrote books such as *How natives think* (1910) and *Primitive mentality* (1923/1924). He concluded that there are differences in mentality between primitive and modern societies and that these differences are caused by collective representations rather than individual thoughts (www.newencyclopedia.org). In countries such as Zambia, Western concepts of cognitive development were applied

in the Zambian cultural context to determine cognitive development, resulting in findings that Zambians had lower cognitive development than their Western counterparts (Peltzer & Bless, 1989).

Psychoanalysis was often used to explain racial relations and conflict between black and white people. Psychoanalytic perspectives became useful for determining race relations and for maintaining that certain races are not supposed to procreate/bear offspring together. Wulf Sachs, a European psychoanalyst, established a psychoanalytic training institute and published a study on a Zimbabwean healer named John Chavafambira (Nicholas, 2014; Dubow, 1995). The primary goal of the study was for two different people to meet and to try to understand each other while also defining psychoanalysis across cultures (Dubow, 1995). The need to incorporate Africans into these theories proved futile for Africans since it frequently resulted in misdiagnosis and misinterpretation of African cultures. The advancement of psychoanalysis through personality theory saw the child-rearing practices of Africans at the centre of analysis. This also led to the development of psychotherapy techniques by Perls and Wolpe, who advocated Gestalt therapy and behavioural therapy, respectively (Smith, 1982). The word “eugenics” comes from the Greek word *eugenes* (*eu*, i.e., well and *genos*, i.e., born). The term refers to the study of methods of improving the human race through the bearing of healthy offspring (Garver & Garver, 1991). The eugenics movement became part of all the psychological developments in which racial classification was part of research processes and the testing of abnormal and expected behaviour. The case study below illustrates how psychologists treated black Africans.

Case study: Black insanity

In 1955, John Colin D Carothers (1903–1989), a colonial psychiatrist in Kenya, claimed that the brains of Africans were underdeveloped compared to those of whites. Mental health services were greatly influenced by colonisation, homeland policies and the legislation of the apartheid regime in South Africa (Sukeri, Betancourt & Emsley, 2014).

As early as 1875, asylums were opened in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, to accommodate individuals deemed “insane”. By then, racial segregation policies overlapped with the classification of patients according to social class, and “better-paying”, predominantly white patients were accommodated separately from violent, mostly black patients (Swartz, 1995). Furthermore, it was believed that in order for patients to recover, they needed to be separated by race and class for the recovery process, as well as to protect the feelings of white patients (Swartz, 1995; Sukeri, Betancourt & Emsley, 2014). Segregation did not only mean the separation of patients; it was also deemed degrading for white nurses to look after male patients who were perceived as violent and sexually aggressive. Racial differences

influenced the diagnostic practices of practitioners, who maintained that black Africans and coloureds could not experience depression.

Facilities were resourced differently; administrators rationalised the provision of accommodation, which posed a fire hazard and had poor sanitation, arguing that natives preferred to maintain their indigenous style of living (Swartz, 1995). As part of occupational therapy, black male patients performed manual labour, including garden and laundry services for the white asylums. Separate health services were made available in terms of the Public Health Act 36 of 1919. A hierarchy was established, with males being fed more than women, and whites more than Indians, coloureds and blacks. Subsequently, black patients were dying in numbers more than white patients. Wards were overcrowded; there was rarely any contact between black patients and their families, and the hospital staff did not speak the patients' language, which made communication and thus the road to recovery difficult, with nurses giving little attention to the black patients.

According to Vaughan (1991), asylum and psychiatric admissions indicate deculturation and the breaking down of barriers of difference and silence. "Individuals who had forgotten who they were and had ceased to conform to the notion of the African subject were the ones who often found themselves behind the walls of an asylum" (Vaughan, 1991, p. 125, as cited in Swartz, 2009). According to Dr Thomas Duncan Greenlees, a medical specialist at the asylum in Grahamstown, South Africa, civilisation and, thus, the mixing of the different cultures (i.e., civilisation) led to higher rates of insanity among black Africans. Black men and women who refused to confine themselves to the areas assigned to them were labelled insane; similarly, whites who disregarded their social status were labelled insane. As an example, Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a prophet, was confined for many years (1922–1935) in a psychiatric hospital for disrupting the regimes and disciplines of work on a white farm. The confinement of "insane" black patients was "less about curing them or alleviating their mental pain, but more about removing them as a source of disturbance to society" (Edgar & Sapire, 2000, p. 34). Female Africans (blacks) were rarely admitted to asylums, especially because most of them stayed far from cities or where they would be in close contact with whites. Therefore, admission into mental hospitals was generally restricted to those who were found "straying" or found in the "wrong place" (Jackson, 2005, p. 127). On the other hand, whites who were confined to psychiatric hospitals were the ones who had forgotten who they were and "gone native". They failed to maintain civilised behaviour and ended up as alcoholics or contracted sexually transmitted diseases (Swartz, 2009).

Task 3: Black insanity

With reference to the above case study, answer the following questions:

- (a) Identify the different reasons why both black and white people were placed in asylums.
- (b) Do you think that the reasons were justifiable? Explain why or why not.

Given the limitations of Western psychology discussed above, African psychologists have developed other forms of understanding of the human mind and other ways of defining what psychology means in the Afrocentric context. The emergence of psychology in the African context is tied to the historical, social and political conditions that have seriously impacted African people in the diaspora (Nwoye, 2015b). Table 1.2 gives an overview of the socio-political context that influenced the emergence of black/African psychology.

Table 1.2: The emergence of African psychology (adapted from Nwoye, 2015b)

(i)	The portrayal of African people in a negative light by Europeans
(ii)	The inability of Eurocentric psychological theories to explain the lives of African people pre- and post-colonisation
(iii)	The publishing of dehumanising scholarly research that concludes that African people have below-average intellectual ability; this research was used as a justification for slavery and a low standard of living for black people
(iv)	Psychological theory and research imitative of Western psychological theory, resulting in psychological theory that is irrelevant
(v)	Eurocentric psychology operates in an atomistic, mechanistic and reductionistic fashion, providing the framework within which mental life is regarded

1.5 The role of psychology in colonisation and racial segregation

The discipline of psychology did not, of course, emerge in a social vacuum unrelated to Europe's history of conquest and violence. From its beginning to the present, the discipline has been entangled in that history of conquest and violence. This fact is often unappreciated and conveniently avoided. Yet for a discipline known for its commitment to unmasking the repressed and for its profusion of studies, such neglect and avoidance of human history and role of the psychologist in that history is curious indeed (Bulhan, 1985, p. 37).

In fact, psychology began to form in all those practical locales that took shape across the 19th century where problems of human individual and collective conduct were of concern to those authorities who sought to govern them – in the factory, the prison, the army, the schoolroom, and the courtroom. Psychology initially took shape, not so much as a discipline but as a mode of expertise, an array of knowledge claims about persons, individually and collectively, that would enable them to be better managed (Rose, 1988, p. 448).

The above quotes show how the psychological study of humans emerged and in which context and further make us aware of the role and position of psychology in society. The political nature of the discipline is thus established and outlined. When we embark on dissecting the history of psychology in Africa, we should bear these two quotes in mind. Rose (1988) teaches us that psychology was involved in giving birth to government rationality, whereby states/governments found new ways to control and manage their citizens. He further maintains that psychological science is a body of beliefs, institutes and techniques whose nature and development should be understood within a global context. Psychology can be understood as a science that translates human subjectivity into a language used by governments for the regulation of schools, prisons, factories, labour markets and economies. Psychological science then becomes a device for obtaining information on human capacities and mental processes that governments can use to make decisions about people and to manage them. As such, the role of psychology is to provide governments with vocabulary, information and regulatory techniques, particularly in relation to the identification of the mentally ill, the management of disabled children and the management of racial classification.

One of the most important functions of psychology, as we saw in the above section, was to classify human differences. This basically means that psychology classified human beings into their capabilities and conduct, inscribing and recording their human attributes and shortcomings and managing and utilising their individuality and variability. The insistence on describing differences between humans progressed to an emphasis on describing differences between racial groups. Racial classification was, therefore, the result of the insistence on describing differences. This was the period when psychology as a discipline allowed itself to be used as a colonial tool. In Africa, especially in South Africa, and in other parts of the world (such as the USA), psychologists started to concern themselves with that which made whites and blacks different from one another. The issues of black insanity and black mentality became key in the academic pursuits of white psychologists. Psychologists' interest in these issues was not based on concern for black people's mental health; rather, it formed part of political and colonial pursuits. Biased research was done and the results of

these studies maintained that blacks were inferior and, therefore, should not be allowed to self-determine. The assumed differences between whites and blacks became critical in determining labour and industrial practices. Hence, policy formation on the type of work to be done by people of different colours was established. Intelligence testing was one of the instruments used to determine differences among races (Rose, 1985).

Identity formation was one of the products of psychology through the exertion of control over people and the ascribing of racial differences. As psychology became a source of information for governments about human behaviour, it allowed people to be managed, controlled and changed. Racial identities were ascribed according to racial differences. These included the political identities of white superiority and black inferiority. The inquiry into the poor white problem in South Africa that was commissioned by the Carnegie Commission is an example of the superiority/inferiority division of the different races. The Carnegie Commission (1932) reported on poverty among white South Africans and made recommendations about segregation. The segregation programme was meant to help poor whites by giving them institutional assistance and preventing racial mixing, thus maintaining their racial purity and promoting their economic power. Willoughby-Herard (2007) explains that white psychologists identified issues faced by the poor whites to make sure that white superiority was maintained, as a way of social reform. Psychological science thus transformed the ways in which individuals were produced, ordered, accumulated and circulated (Rose, 2008). The black inferiority advanced by white psychologists stipulated how black people should be positioned in society. The type of education, employment and accommodation provided to black people was the result of this construction of inferiority.

Let us now examine two important concepts that form the basis of our discussion, namely, apartheid and colonisation. Apartheid was a formalised system of racial segregation and oppression in South Africa. Powerful institutions, such as the courts, parliament and law enforcement, worked together to ensure that different races in South Africa lived separately and that white people enjoyed material, social and spiritual freedom. In contrast, black South Africans were subjected to oppression in all forms of life. Colonisation and apartheid are similar, but colonisation predates apartheid. Colonisation is a system of oppression where a settler group invades a territory occupied by indigenous people and systematically exploits them economically, culturally, politically and psychologically. Colonialism is much more than just capturing land; it is the domination of indigenous people by foreign people (Bulhan, 2015). It entails the economic exploitation of a country, the elimination of cultures and the degradation of the country's inhabitants to less-than-human entities. It stands for the manipulation of the mind of the oppressed, giving them the perception that their ways of living and thinking are inferior and that the only way to civilisation is through westernisation (Bulhan, 2015). Slavery is the most common precursor of colonialism in Africa. It led to the depopulation of Africa, derailing the political history and economic

development of its people. It justified racism by delineating the dominating versus dominated group for colonial exploitation. Slavery ended, but racism, self-promotion and a sense of superiority did not. Following the forceful occupation of land in African countries, the control of the populations allowed for cheap labour and the exploitation of material resources, and the populations were held captive in their land. This domination included educating local individuals in colonial schools or identifying individuals who would serve as subordinates in the colonial system. Both colonisation and apartheid constitute crimes against humanity. In South Africa, colonisation and apartheid were not mutually exclusive. This is because apartheid merely represented a continuation of the oppression of black South Africans and a privileging of white South Africans.

What do colonisation and apartheid have to do with psychology? Psychology as a discipline was co-opted by the colonial and apartheid regime to meet its political ends. For example, to justify apartheid and colonisation, authorities drew from their supposed scientific findings about the inferior nature of Africans (Rose, 2008). In other words, psychology was used as a tool for justifying the oppression of black South Africans. Some contemporary scholars argue that psychology continues to be used to marginalise individuals in some form or another. This example shows us that knowledge systems like psychology do not function in isolation but are the by-products of a complex interaction between powerful institutions established during the colonial and apartheid era. These knowledge systems only represent a Eurocentric view of human behaviour. Grosfoguel (2013) remarks that these knowledge systems in general originated in five countries in the Western world, namely, Italy, France, England, Germany and the USA.

Psychology in South Africa provides an interesting example of how institutions and individual actors complemented one another to produce an oppressive social system. For instance, JC Smuts and HF Verwoerd were psychologists who later became prime ministers in South Africa and who were infamous for their support of apartheid (Nicholas, 2014). Relative to most disciplines in the social sciences, psychology has strived to move beyond just being a body of knowledge; it has continuously attempted to use psychological knowledge to address societal needs. Rose (2008) argues that psychology is a discipline that developed to make itself useful to society. This is evident through applied practices like therapy, psychological testing and other psychology-related interventions. Nonetheless, psychology was used as a tool to perpetuate what was contrary to the discipline. Early founders of psychology, research institutions and psychological associations played a crucial role in ensuring that psychology in Africa became a useful apparatus of the colonial state. Psychological knowledge and practices were applied in the education, labour and health sectors in South Africa to further the apartheid grand scheme of racial segregation and oppression (Seedat & Mackenzie, 2008).

As indicated earlier, the history of South Africa was influenced by psychologists, especially in relation to their role in developing and implementing policies that perpetuated racist ideologies. The following individuals are worth mentioning as role players who shaped the history of psychology in South Africa:

- Ernst Gideon Malherbe (1896–1983) occupied various high-profile positions. His role in the poor white study and his views on psychology's role in society made him a prominent figure.
- Jan Christian Smuts (1870–1950) was a psychologist and a lawyer and served as the prime minister of South Africa from 1919 to 1924 and again from 1939 to 1948 (Nicholas, 2014). Smuts made significant contributions to the development of government policies, including the Mines and Works Act of 1911 and the Native Land Act of 1913.
- Raymond William Wilcocks (1892–1967) joined Malherbe in large-scale psychometric testing of poor whites in the 1930s.
- Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd (1901–1966) graduated from Stellenbosch University in 1936 with a PhD in Psychology, around the same time that Wilcocks was there and working on the poor white study. Given the close relationship that Wilcocks and Verwoerd seem to have had, it is not surprising that they had similar views regarding race relations in South Africa (Miller, 1993).

1.5.1 The role of psychological associations and research institutes in South Africa

The military and industry began using psychology's knowledge base for their ends. The South African Air Force (SAAF), the National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR), the National Commission of Education and the South African Association for the Advancement of Science (SAAAS) all produced psychological knowledge that justified the oppression of black South Africans. The NIPR was established shortly after World War II under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). It was introduced by the government and businesses to improve productivity and to reduce industrial action among the workforce (Seedat & Mackenzie, 2008).

Simon Biesheuvel was a psychology lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch from 1934 to 1935 and the University of Witwatersrand from 1936 to 1940. In 1940, during World War II, he was hired by the SAAF to command the Aptitude Test Section (ATS), which used psychometrics for the selection and placement of SAAF members. It also focused on operations stress, psychological assessments for aircrew members, training methods, flight performance, factors that lead to flight accidents and staff morale (Seedat & Mackenzie, 2008). The SAAAS had a Eugenics and Genetics Standing Committee in the 1920s. The word "eugenics" comes from the Greek word *eugenes* (*eu*, i.e., "well" and *genos*, i.e., "born"). The term refers to the study of

methods of improving the human race through the bearing of healthy offspring (Garver & Garver, 1991). The eugenics movement became part of all the psychological developments in which racial classification was part of research processes and the testing of abnormal and expected behaviour. The eugenics movement was also used to justify racial hierarchy and segregation.

The Army Education Scheme was established under the leadership of EG Malherbe to prepare soldiers for combat. Psychologists were hired as education officers to present talks on topics related to politics and the rationale for war to ensure that soldiers were patriotic to the state. The above-mentioned events are summarised below.

Summary of important developments in respect of research institutes and associations in South Africa

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A unit called the Aptitude Test Section was established in the South African Air Force.• Psychologists at the ATS were recruited from the then Transvaal University College, which split into the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Pretoria.• The National Institute for Personnel Research was established to prevent labour unrest and to improve production. |
|--|

After the demise of apartheid, political power in the professional body of psychology passed into the hands of black psychologists. Yet, they still represent only a fraction of the psychologists in a country where blacks constitute more than 80% of the total population. According to Holdstock (2000), the lives of the black population are virtually untouched by any positive benefits that may accrue from the practice of psychology as a science and a profession. Psychology continues to follow the sickness model. The emphasis is on one-to-one therapy rather than group and community approaches. Despite the advances made by black psychologists in gaining a foothold in the professional body of psychology in the country, psychology continues to be Westrocentric.

Progressive psychologists, who consider themselves 'liberatory' and 'political' (the reactive mainstream group), have called attention to the psychological effects of apartheid, highlighting the importance of focusing on the victims of apartheid. For them, a monocultural psychology with serious shortcomings, if not flaws, in its ideological base is unlikely to provide an effective foundation for a discipline that is to serve all the people in the country. We need to acknowledge the shortcomings of contemporary psychology. The intention is certainly not to throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water. The focus should be on critically appraising to what extent psychology perpetuates not just apartheid but also colonial practices and attitudes.

In addition, it is argued that cognisance and recognition of the indigenous psychological viewpoints in South Africa can go a long way towards revising the discipline of psychology nationally and, in so doing, contribute to the development of psychology internationally. This group constitutes by far the smallest fraction of the psychological community.

Furthermore, recent years have witnessed unprecedented increases in the population of black students at South African universities, and calls for the decolonisation of higher education in South Africa have grown louder and louder. With respect to the discipline of psychology, students are increasingly questioning the appropriateness and relevance to their lives of a discipline that is exclusively Eurocentric in perspective and that, consequently, has no space to accommodate the psychology and understanding of African realities. Elsewhere on the continent, many universities, particularly in the South and East African subregions, have called for the urgent creation and inclusion of courses and modules on African psychology in their psychology degree curricula.

Summary

This unit introduced you to the origin of psychology in Africa and how the European models of psychology have shaped psychology on the African continent. The unit also dealt with the different areas in the development of psychology in Africa, as well as the different theoretical perspectives in the development of psychology in Africa that emanated from different regions across the continent. The role of psychology in colonisation and racial segregation was emphasised in a discussion on key figures who advocated the use of psychology to enforce racial oppression. The unit also examined how other key figures in the discipline of psychology resisted oppression through advocacy of a psychology that is context relevant, responsive, non-discriminatory and sensitive to issues of African people.

Glossary

African indigenous knowledge systems: African effort to identify and globalise the values generated by her people from local African perspectives

biopsychology: the branch of psychology concerned with its biological and physiological aspects

Black Consciousness: awareness of one's identity as a black person, especially as a basis for a political grouping or movement

community psychology: the branch of psychology that studies the relationship between individuals and society

developmental psychology: the study of how humans grow, change and adapt across the course of their lives

epistemic: refers to knowledge or the degree of its validation

eugenics movement: a set of beliefs and practices aimed at improving the genetic quality of a human population

Gestalt therapy: a client-centred approach to psychotherapy that assists clients in focusing on the present and understanding what is really going on in their lives right now

imperialism: a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonisation, military force or other means

health psychology: a sub-field of psychology concerned with how social, psychological and biological factors interact to influence human health

overt behaviour: observable behaviour or an overt response that can be seen by others, including speaking, walking, running, working and so on (by contrast, covert behaviour refers to behaviour that is not openly acknowledged or displayed, such as thinking, dreaming, glandular responses and reasoning)

paternalistic: related to or characterised by the restriction of subordinates' or dependents' freedom and responsibilities in their supposed interest

personality psychology: systematic and scientific study of personality

proto-fascist (proto-fascism): the ideologies and cultural movements that influenced and formed the foundation of fascism (an authoritarian and nationalistic right-wing system of government and social organisation)

psychology: the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behaviour in a given context

psychometric testing: an assessment used to measure an individual's cognitive ability, personality or behaviour

psychopathology: the scientific study of mental illness or disorders

reflex: behaviour that an organism brings from birth, displayed to a certain stimulus in daily life

scientific: based on or characterised by the methods and principles of science

social psychology: the branch of psychology that deals with social interactions, including their origins and their effects on the individual

semi-mystical: having some qualities of mysticism (vague or ill-defined religious or spiritual belief, or cultlike)

solipsism: the quality of being very self-centred or selfish

Stanford–Binet Intelligence Scale (or, more commonly, the Stanford–Binet test): an individually administered IQ test

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