

Call for Papers

ALTERNATION SPECIAL EDITION

AFRIKAN-CENTRED PSYCHOLOGY: ILLUMINATING THE HUMAN SPIRIT (SPIRIT(NESS), MOYA, MOWA)

Psychology as it is taught in many Afrikan universities and in the Diaspora is essentially a Euro-American product. Its philosophical presuppositions, including its understanding of what it means to be a human person (*umuntu, motho*), are based on the individualistic tradition of the West. This is not surprising, as Psychology was brought to the (ex)colonies as part of the process of domination under the guise of knowledge and technology transfer. Not only did this process undermine the long-established, oral and written knowledge traditions of Afrika and other colonized countries—some of which predate the western traditions by centuries—it also led to the *colonization of being*, our understanding of who we are and how we ought to relate with each other and our surroundings. Afrikan indigenous knowledges, value systems, and ways of acquiring and disseminating knowledge—epistemologies—were regarded as mere ‘superstition’ and not belonging to the domain of knowledge proper. While universities in Afrika continued to teach a brand of psychology that was not in resonance with the epistemologies, ontologies and values of the communities in which they were located, many peoples of Afrikan ancestry turned to indigenous healers (*abelaphi bendabuko: izinyanga/ dingaka, izangoma/amagqirha, etc.*) who in turn approached their subject matter in a wholistic and spiritual manner, as opposed to the fragmented, either-or logic that has become synonymous with the mainstream western psychological tradition.

Afrikan-centered psychology privileges the Spirit (*Moya, Mowa*) that permeates all phenomena; this understanding traces its roots from the ancient Nile Valley (Afrikan/Kemetic) civilizations, from where it spread, permeating the rest of the world. To this end, the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) defines Afrikan Psychology/African Centered Psychology as:

“...a dynamic manifestation of unifying African principles, values and traditions. It is the self-conscious "centering" of psychological analyses and applications in African realities, cultures, and epistemologies. Black/African centered psychology, as a system of thought and action, examines the processes that allow for the illumination and liberation of the Spirit. Relying on the principles of harmony within the universe as a natural order of existence, Black/African centered psychology recognizes: the Spirit that permeates everything that is; the notion that everything in the universe is interconnected; the value that the collective is the most salient element of existence; and the idea that communal self-knowledge is the key to mental health. Black/African Centered psychology is ultimately concerned with understanding the systems of meaning of human beingness, the features of human functioning, and the restoration of normal/natural order to human development. As such, it is used to resolve personal and social problems and to promote optimal functioning.”

(<http://www.abpsi.org/programs.html>).

With the above-mentioned background in mind, the purpose of this special edition of *Alternation* is to advance the discourse on Afrikan/African-centered psychology. The special edition also seeks to advance the philosophical, theoretical/conceptual, methodological, healing and other refinements that serve as a foundation for an Afrikan-centered psychology. **The following topics/themes are anticipated:**

- Afrikan/African-centred psychology: Historical developments, definitions, key concepts, scope and current debates/controversies
- African Psychology: Nosology, Episteme and Grand Narrative
- Pan Africanism and Afrikan Psychology/Continental and Inter-continental collaborations
- Afrikan Psychology for Liberation (mental and other forms of liberation). This theme could draw from key figures in African-centered psychology/thinking in Afrika and the Diaspora, highlighting the current relevance of their thought.
- African Psychology and mental health/well-being: Current developments/Projects (e.g. projects/interventions aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, community violence, etc., that are underpinned by the Afrocentric paradigm)
- Methodological/Research Considerations in Afrikan Centered Psychology/Decolonising methodologies
- Ubuntu and Ma'at Paradigms in African Centered Psychology
- Training in Afrikan Centered Psychology/Thought/Curriculum imperatives: Current Practices and Recommendations
- Ethical Considerations in community work, research and professional practice: African Centered Perspectives
- Reclaiming Gender: African-Centred Perspectives (e.g. African Womanism/nego-feminism and African Psychology, issues, debates, etc.)
- African Psychology and traditional/indigenous healing/healers: Current developments/collaborations
- African Psychology and the relevance of history and/or land
- Social Justice, decoloniality/anti-coloniality, and African-Centered Psychology
- The role of African languages in African-centered psychology
- Rebuilding African families: African centred perspectives
- The role of African proverbs in African-centred psychology
- Afrikan/African-centered psychology and the significance of community-centric interventions

Timeframe

The deadline for the submission of abstracts of approximately 200 words is **30 September 2018**. Early submissions are encouraged to reduce administrative load.

Acceptance of abstracts, and notification of authors: **Monday 15 October 2018**.

Final date for submission of full articles: **18 February 2019**

The *Alternation* Guidelines for authors, and reference style sheet is available at:

<http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/submissions.aspx>

Authors are encouraged to review previous articles that have been published in this journal on this topic, available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/pages/volume-23-2016/alternation-special-edition-no-18-2016.aspx>

We are expecting the special edition to be completed and in circulation (electronically) by **August 2019**.

Submission details

Abstracts should be submitted to Mkhize@ukzn.ac.za, copying his research assistant, Ms Sphindile Machanyagwa (machanyangwa@ukzn.ac.za).

Submissions may also be done online, by registering on the *Alternation* OJS system. Just click on the following link, and follow the steps for registration of author, reader, and reviewer.

<http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/submissions.aspx>

Amongst others, the following colleagues have already committed themselves to the project.

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