

The Role of Organized Psychology in Inspiring Hope and Preventing Hate Victimization: Recommendations from a South African Hate and Bias Monitoring Initiative



**JOURNAL OF
HATE STUDIES**

ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Psychology must have as its primary focus the well-being of humans, communities, and societies and cannot be detached from – or even neutral about – our social or political systems. For those who are impacted by hate, the focus on their well-being has never mattered more. In South Africa, which is the focal point of our research, and the world, hate victimization targeting people based on identity factors like race, nationality, religion, and sexual orientation is becoming more prevalent. Given the menacing intensification of hate, how is psychology as a profession, science, and discipline keeping the pulse of society at large? The South African Hate Crimes Working Group (HCWG) conducted a five-year longitudinal research study to assess the impact and nature of hate in South Africa. It is also the first study of this nature conducted in Africa. The Psychological Society of South Africa served as research lead for the HCWG, a multi-sectoral network of civil society organizations, utilizing the customized HCWG Monitoring Form as a research instrument. A total of $N = 945$ cases were quantitatively analyzed providing descriptive information. Key results inform the role of scientific and professional organizations representing psychology in preventing hate. Not only is there the need for policy and legislative changes to effectively address hate victimization, but most importantly the significance of attending to the impact of hate, including hopelessness, distrust, and dignity lost, is indicated. Based on the findings, recommendations underscore the ways in which global and nationally representative psychological associations may contribute to improved measures of prevention, add their voice to disrupting intolerance and condemn the ubiquitous rhetoric of bigotry that elicits hate-based victimization. And, in doing so, inspire hope for humanity.

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KEYWORDS:

hate victimization; hate crime;
monitoring tool; organized
psychology; prevention; South
African Hate Crimes Working
Group

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

van Wyk, H., & Nel, J.
A. (2023). The Role of
Organized Psychology
in Inspiring Hope and
Preventing Hate Victimization:
Recommendations from a
South African Hate and Bias
Monitoring Initiative. *Journal
of Hate Studies*, 18(1), 16–30.
DOI: [https://doi.org/10.33972/
jhs.230](https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.230)

The article, firstly, draws from a longitudinal South African study that culminated in the release of the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill [B9-2018] ('the Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill') (see [Department of Justice and Correctional Services \[DoJ&CS\], 2018](#)). This study, the Monitoring Form project ([Mitchell & Nel, 2017](#); [Nel & Michell, 2019](#); [Nel et al., 2013](#)) of the South African Hate Crimes Working Group (HCWG), highlighted the impact of hate victimization on victims as well as the larger group to which they belong. Victims in the HCWG study reported anger, shame, hopelessness, loss of worth, distrust, and dignity. Confirming findings of previous international research, these victims experienced enormous trauma emotionally, mentally, physically, economically, and in terms of their relationships with others ([Marais et al., 2022](#); [McDevitt et al., 2001](#)). Also reported were exposure to revictimization by the criminal justice and healthcare systems and a severe lack of psychosocial support for victims of hate.

Following the significant impact and nature of hate victimization, this article furthermore sets out to make a case for the (potential) role of psychology associations, in South Africa and worldwide, in the prevention of hate. We commence by providing some conceptual clarity regarding hate incidents and, second, what constitutes organized psychology.

NECESSARY DISTINCTIONS

A hate incident or victimization (that this article will use interchangeably) refers to hate crime, hate speech, and/or intentional unfair discrimination ([Department of Justice and Constitutional Development \[DoJ&CD\] and Foundation for Human Rights \[FHR\], 2013](#); [Nel et al., 2013](#)). This includes behavior that ranges from targeted mob violence, graffiti, and arson toward places of worship, to corrective rape—raping members of a group that does not conform to gender norms or heterosexuality when the perpetrator's motive is to "correct" the individual ([Doan-Minh, 2019](#))—and/or murder, harassment, verbal abuse, looting of shops, inciting others to commit a hate incident, to physical violence ([Mitchell & Nel, 2017](#); [Nel & Mitchell, 2019](#); [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe \[OSCE\], 2014](#)). Specifically, the term *hate incident* refers to any action toward an individual or a group based on, among other elements, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE), or any other similar characteristic of the individual or group ([American Psychological Association \[APA\], 2017](#); [DoJ&CS, 2019](#); [Pieterse et al., 2018](#)). Although there is no universal definition for hate incidents, [Brax \(2016\)](#) suggested that the motivation behind the victimization, the intention, the expression, or discrimination against an individual or a group, and the effect the victimization has on a victim are elements to classify an occurrence as such.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, the terms *hate crime*, *hate speech*, and *intentional unfair discrimination* are interconnected, as all essentially are antidemocracy, antiequality, and contrary to a human rights culture. Individually, however, they are used to refer to considerably different occurrences. In jurisdictions where there is an established crime category, hate crimes are dealt with under the criminal justice system, since they refer to one or another form of recognized criminal activity. This is the case even when the bias motivation cannot be proved ([APA, 2017](#)). In incidents of hate speech, it is the actual expression or verbalization of hate (i.e., name-calling, slurs, and other forms of verbal abuse, including harassment) that constitutes the offense. Importantly, not all jurisdictions criminalize hate speech and/or discrimination, but where they do, proving the bias element is typically at the heart of determinations by courts as to whether a criminal offense has been committed ([Breen et al., 2016](#)).

Hate crime, hate speech, and intentional unfair discrimination are not necessarily classified in the same way by different jurisdictions. Depending on the country and its laws, these behaviors may be categorized differently. For example, physical violence, rape, and murder are all criminal acts, and if a country's criminal justice system considers a bias motivation, the act may be prosecuted as a hate crime. If no such laws exist, as is still the case in South Africa pending the passing of the Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill into an Act, these actions will be prosecuted without the hate crime designation, but as criminal acts, regardless. Harassment, incitement, and verbal abuse could fall into one classification or both and thus be a criminal or a civil matter, based on the judicial system

of that country. Given a specific history of institutionalized discrimination and systemic oppression, intentional unfair discrimination within a South African legal and policy framework refers to showing favor, prejudice, or bias for or against a person on a prohibited ground that causes or perpetuates systemic disadvantage or undermines human dignity (DoJ&CD & FHR, 2013; Nel et al., 2013). However, taking measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, is not considered unfair discrimination.

ORGANIZED PSYCHOLOGY AND THE PREVENTION OF HATE VICTIMIZATION

One premise of critical community psychology is that psychology as a discipline, science, profession, and practice cannot be detached – or even neutral – from the social or political systems. Rather, it must have as its primary focus the well-being of humans, communities, and society (Nel, 2014; Prilleltensky, 2013). This understanding of psychology's (potential) sociopolitical role should also be true for those who are affected by hate and bias-motivated violent behavior.

Organized psychology describes the collection of international, national, scientific, and professional organizations that represent psychology. Typically, researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students make up the national member base. National organizations may, in turn, belong to an international structure such as the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), which was established in Paris during the First International Congress of Psychology in 1889. Currently, it represents over a million psychologists worldwide; has 82 country members, including the APA and the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), as well as 20 affiliated organizations; (IUPsyS, 2022b).

Organized psychology should set the tone and establish the rules for all psychological branches, disciplines, and subdisciplines to work following the International Declaration of Core Competences in Professional Psychology, which states:

Psychology as a profession is practiced around the world within the social, cultural, educational, political, and legal contexts of each country. Increasingly, psychologists study, practice, consult, collaborate, and communicate across international boundaries. Such changes have resulted in many benefits for clients, societies, and for the profession itself. These benefits include the ability to determine the applicability of psychological knowledge and techniques with diverse populations, the ability to share different approaches and strategies for addressing common problems, and the ability to identify areas of unmet need and to deploy appropriate resources to these areas. (International Association of Applied Psychology & IUPsyS, 2016, p. 9)

Organized psychology must involve systems analysis and consider more carefully how direct and structural violence operate together, forming an interlocking *system and context of violence* (Christie, 2006). This notion implies the need for a transnational and collaborative approach within psychological disciplines, such as is highlighted in the IUPsyS strategic plan (2018–2022), as well as between psychology and other disciplines. As psychology's global voice, IUPsyS has ambitions that include becoming an outward leader in providing examples of how psychology can contribute to global challenges, fostering cooperation between global, regional, and national psychology organizations; building relationships with global policymakers, science bodies, and partner organizations; and being a global, transversal facilitator for national organizations (IUPsyS, 2022a).

To achieve the necessary capacity development toward coordinated global, regional, and national responses one possibility is to further enable organizational monitoring and evaluation of hate incidents; identify underutilized resources or those not yet accessed; and facilitate *organizational collaboration for collective impact* in addressing hate and bias. Rather than act as a regulator serving the discipline and its subdisciplines internally, national, and international bodies of organized psychology such as IUPsyS – and others, the APA, PsySSA, and the Russian Psychological Society should serve and represent both the profession and also society.

The APA (2017)—a respected leader in psychology, internationally—roundly condemns all hate crimes (and by extension all hate victimization) and aims to address hate crimes *by following* law-enforcement and community guidelines, prevention and intervention programs and policies (like the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act); and *by offering support* for funding the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division, Office for Victims of Crime and Community Relations Service, establishing hate crime laws where states lack legislation, and strengthening laws in other states. The APA’s primary offer of only *following* and *support*—as opposed to leadership—for clinicians, teachers, researchers, law enforcement employees, and policymakers is focused on reducing the commonness of hate crimes and, naturally, alleviating the consequences for victims. Indeed, most services are applied post-bias victimization: counseling and/or therapy for the victim, and education or restorative services for the perpetrator in some cases. Prevention activities usually amount to applying “our own” (American) values of inclusion and the right to free speech, promoting the idea that we (America) are a nation of immigrants through the media and increasing contact with other groups under certain conditions (the contact hypothesis), to facilitate understanding (DeAngelis, 2001).

PsySSA is another example of a nationally representative psychology organization, with a significant international and regional profile, that has periodically responded reactively to hate incidents. While necessary, reactive responses are an insufficient deterrent for future victimization. PsySSA, the largest association for psychologists in (South) Africa and also acknowledged as a learned society, released a science-informed open statement to the leaders and citizens of Uganda concerning the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in 2009 (Nel, 2014; PsySSA, 2010); an official position statement in 2013 about sexual and gender diversity (inclusive of hate victimization) (PsySSA, 2013; Victor et al., 2014); and a statement denouncing xenophobia-related violence while advocating for violence preventative and therapeutic interventions (Ratele, 2015). Similarly reactive, PsySSA has also more concretely demonstrated its commitment to making a difference in the field of hate studies. PsySSA has taken on an active role in the HCWG—a multi-sectoral network of civil society organizations (CSOs) serving the interests of a cross-section of marginalized groups, including those targeted based on their nationality, religion, status as a sex worker, and SOGIE—by leading the research sub-committee responsible for its hate and bias monitoring project that informs this article. PsySSA has similarly brought specialist evidence on the psychological hurt and harm caused by homophobic hate speech to a court of law in the case of the *South African Human Rights Commission v. Jon Qwelane* (‘the Qwelane’ case) (Judge & Nel, 2018).

In too many other instances, hate victimization is met with silence from organized psychology. One example hereof is the 2021 cyber violation of a Russian female psychologist, Maria Sabunaeva, on the grounds of her feminism and LGBTQ+ activism in her work as a therapist. Although the Global Network of Psychologists for Human Rights (n.d.) has since featured her plight, the Russian Psychological Society has not.

The default toward reactivity is not limited to psychology as a profession but also includes the criminal justice system, as well as civil society. The following section and associated illustration highlight behavioral pathways, along with preventative and proactive measures that still need to be developed for there to be any meaningful and sustained progress in challenging hate and inspiring hope.

HATE- AND BIAS-MOTIVED BEHAVIOR CONTINUUMS AND THRESHOLDS

Figure 1 illustrates a continuum that starts with natural, permissible, mostly innocuous behavior such as perception and categorization, followed by slightly more harmful behavior like stereotyping, labeling, and pre-judgment; it then moves toward more noxious behaviors including de-prioritization, marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination. Although the latter may still be considered permissible in many societies it indicates a definitive move from pernicious passive-aggressive to aggressively bias-motivated behavior. The active, and aggressive, expression of such noxious behaviors might then drift into more overt expressions of bias like hate speech,

hate incidents, and institutionalized and symbolic violence. These behaviors could be considered “crimes of ignorance” (Harris, 2004; Nel & Mitchell, 2019, p. 30), perpetuated through prejudice, stereotypes, assumptions, and misinformation. The responses to hate victimization in the discipline of psychology seem to focus on *reacting to* hate victimization through denunciations, research, and contributions to criminal justice systems. Fewer psychological resources are aimed at practical and *applied* interventions for the interruption and prevention of hate and bias-motivated violent behaviors domestically and internationally.

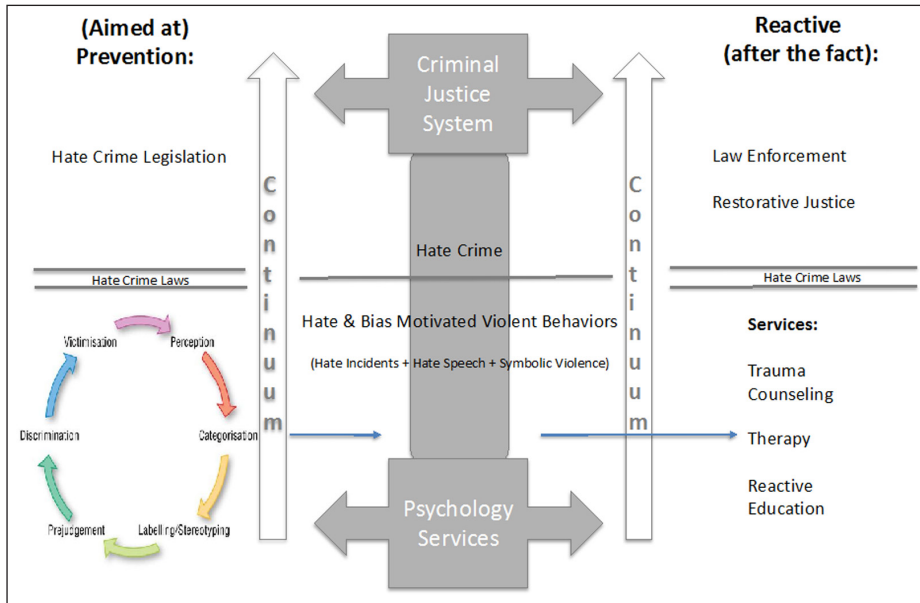


Figure 1 The Continuum of Hate.

In the instance where there are comprehensive laws that act as deterrents to hate victimization, the criminal justice system should have processes to enforce these laws once a hate incident has been perpetrated. However, the fact that subsequent prosecution may lack an agreed-upon and appropriate legal model for hate crimes legislation (Breen & Nel, 2011; OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights [ODIHR], 2009) may make successful enforcement and prosecution unlikely. Internationally, two legal models of such legislation are the hostility model and discriminatory selection model, the second providing a broader definition of what constitutes hate crimes. Even if those laws exist, they will not necessarily prevent such crimes if they are not consistently enforced by a nonbiased police force and criminal justice system. The criminal justice system may be a deterrent in this way but could be lacking as an effective method of prevention of such actions and crimes.

Laws can also differ in significant ways. Australia, Canada, and Germany are examples of countries that have comprehensive hate crime laws, which consider all bias-motivated violent behaviors equally. However, in the United States, existing laws cover bias based on race, ethnicity, or religion, but many states do not include gender, disability, and SOGIE (Lieberman, 2021). Even then, News21 (n.d.) reports that hate crime law enforcement depends largely on the officer who responds to the call.

Participants in the 1998 International Association of Chiefs of Police Hate Crime in America Policy Summit worked with schools, communities, and justice system agencies to make and maintain conditions in which prejudice would yield to tolerance and bias-motivated violence and be substituted with peaceful problem-solving. They outlined 18 proactive initiatives and 22 policy recommendations to help communities prevent bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes (International Association of Chiefs of Police, n.d.). Although such actions are both admirable and necessary, the participants acknowledge that the work outlined will require continuing collaboration and commitment of public agencies, community leaders, schools, parents, and families and cannot be accomplished solely through the efforts of law enforcement agencies.

What, then, is the role of civil society? Social problems require social solutions, and civil society has often been at the forefront of recognizing the early signs of, and fighting against, intolerance and discrimination. Factors contributing to social problems, such as hate victimization, are often threefold—individual, cultural, and structural—and cannot be treated in isolation (Mallick & Das, 2013). Solving social problems necessitates dealing with types of problems that might affect the broader community and society (e.g., crime, racial discrimination), as well as a person's functioning.

The OSCE ODIHR (2009) recognized the crucial role civil society can play in challenging hate. Since civil society representatives live in communities, they can witness acts of intolerance and assist victims before reports reach the authorities and allow them to respond. The OSCE ODIHR (2009) *Resource Guide on Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes* forms part of a wider program aimed at devising, developing, and implementing adequate strategies against hate crimes to support civil society. The OSCE ODIHR acknowledges that state authorities bear the responsibility for combating hate crimes. Yet, civil society leaders must hold state authorities accountable and remind them that it is the duty of the state to protect everyone by reporting and responding to hate crimes. Indeed, in some contexts, civil society has empowered communities to induce legal reforms and inspire. Still, civil society alone cannot meet the growing demand for prevention, care, and facilitation of access to the criminal justice system. However, in the absence of adequate responses by governments, CSOs have a fundamental role to play in the monitoring and recording of hate incidents.

Before introducing a groundbreaking hate- and bias-monitoring initiative of South African civil society to serve as an example of what is suggested above, an overview of hate victimization in this country must be examined.

HATE- AND BIAS-MOTIVATED INCIDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

As a society founded on democratic values and a constitution, South Africa is often applauded for its peaceful and rapid transformation (Republic of South Africa, 1996)—one that preserves the principles of freedom, human dignity, and social justice. Nevertheless, the country is continuously challenged by its past. This is evident in struggles with pervasive criminal violence and victimization, in general (Breen et al., 2016). Also, it seems increasingly unfeasible to curb ongoing occurrences of intentional unfair discrimination, hate speech, and hate crimes that are based on, among other elements, race, nationality, gender, or SOGIE (Breen et al., 2016).

Periodic and brutal upsurges in hate victimization detract from progress made in addressing hate- and bias-motivated behaviors in South Africa in the early years after the advent of democracy in 1994. A case in point, the HCWG reported rapidly spreading violent xenophobic attacks aimed at people from other African countries over June to August 2013, March to May 2015, October 2015, and February 2017 between communities in proximity to one another. These violent attacks were reminiscent of the 2008 countrywide aggressions aimed at nonnationals—so much so that an “early warning” system was established between the Nigerian and South African governments after yet another spate of xenophobic attacks on migrants primarily from other African countries (Al Jazeera, 2017).

As it turns out, these attacks spawned retaliatory incidents in other African countries targeting South African businesses along with many Nigerian citizens boarding a private charter plane to return to their country of origin (Turkewitz, 2019). For almost 2 years, a large group of nonnationals from other African countries illegally occupied a church building in the iconic Green Market square in the center of Cape Town, South Africa, less than 800 meters away from Parliament. Their aim: to capture the imagination of the world regarding how unsafe South Africa is for them and demand third-country repatriation (Stent, 2020).

Another example indicative of difficulties in curbing increased hate victimization is the eruption of racist remarks on social media from December 2015 to February 2016, which was followed by displays of racism and acts of vandalism on South African university campuses (Wessels, 2017). Since then, the names of Penny Sparrow and Vicki Momberg—both white women—have become synonymous with the pervasive anti-Black African racism in the country (Nel & Mitchell, 2019).

Sparrow raised indignation with a provocative Facebook post in 2016 in which she likened Black African beachgoers to monkeys. She was subsequently fined for racist hate speech. Momberg was sentenced to an effective 2 years in prison for *crimen injuria* for her racist lashing out at a Black African police officer who had assisted her after an alleged smash-and-grab incident in 2016 (Momberg v State, 2019).

Importantly, two high-profile hate speech cases dating back to 2008—one antisemitic, and the other involving homophobia—did, however, not result in such swift turning of the wheels of justice. Both had to be argued before the highest court in the land, the Constitutional court, in 2019 and 2020, respectively, which found that the cases indeed constituted hate speech and, in so doing, finally provided clarity regarding the limits of freedom of expression and the definition of hate speech (South African Human Rights Commission [SAHRC] obo South African Jewish Board of Deputies v Masuku and Another, 2022; Qwelane v SAHRC and Another, 2021).

When seeking an understanding of South Africa’s stumbling efforts to contribute to “the building of a more equal society and strengthening the rule of law and democracy” it is, relevant to note two related government-led initiatives that have been developing over time (DoJ&CS, 2019, p. 4). First, there is the near finalization of the earlier mentioned Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill (DoJ&CS, 2018), initiated in 2009, passed by the South African Parliamentary National Assembly and transmitted to the National Council of Provinces for concurrence on 14 March 2023 (https://pmg.org.za/bill/779/?utm_campaign=request-for-comment-from-parliament). Second, the South African government finally released the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (NAP), forthcoming from commitments made, dating back to 2001, during the World Congress against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (DoJ&CS, 2019).

The stated intention of the Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill is to align with the provisions of international conventions; to provide appropriate sentencing; to report and prevent hate crimes and hate speech. The long overdue NAP, collaboratively developed in consultation with the government, Chapter 9 institutions—organizations established to guard democracy like the Public Protectorate and the SAHRC—and civil society, focuses on the promotion of human rights, raising awareness, data collection, prosecution of perpetrators, and psychosocial support for victims.

To maximize an integrated and interdisciplinary response, the HCWG, with the common goal of advocating for interventions combating hate crime in South Africa, was formed in 2009 (<https://hwcg.org.za/>). Along with advocating for legislation that specifically addresses hate crime in South Africa and enactment thereof employing effective policy practices, the HCWG aims to “facilitate the collection of data and research regarding hate [incidents] to contribute to improved prevention and effectiveness of a criminal justice response” (Nel et al., 2013, p. 6). The next section provides an overview of related efforts toward evidence-informed intervention in hate victimization in South Africa.

THE HCWG HATE AND BIAS MONITORING INITIATIVE

At the time of the formation of the HCWG in 2009, there was no means of obtaining comprehensive data to understand the extent of the victimization on a local or national level, and there were no existing systems to effectively collect or assess data on hate incidents (Breen et al., 2016; Breen & Nel, 2011; Nel & Judge, 2008). These deficiencies were largely due to the absence of hate crime legislation — to which the HCWG hoped to contribute. Neither was there a hate crime-related recording category available for the police, as remains the case today. Faced with a paucity of data, the Department of Psychology of the University of South Africa (Unisa), as a founder member, and on behalf of the HCWG, developed and piloted the Hate and Bias Crime Monitoring Form hereafter, “the Monitoring Form” (Hate & Bias Crime Monitoring Form – Hate Crimes Working Group. (n.d.-b)). This process occurred between 2010 and 2013 and was accomplished in collaboration with local and international experts to determine the nature and impact of hate incidents on individual victims and communities (Breen et al., 2016; Nel et al., 2013). Both authors, under the patronage of Unisa, were instrumental in the design, data gathering, training, data capture, and

final presentation of the research report. Unisa also provided ethics clearance for the monitoring form as well as the study, which was implemented with administrative support by PsySSA as a subsequent lead of the HCWG research subcommittee.

The Monitoring Form, as a research tool, is a customized self-report questionnaire, rather than a standardized (or psychometric) instrument that consists mostly of closed-ended questions, with a few open-ended questions for obtaining clarifications on responses provided (Marais et al., 2022). Its development was based on an international body of research and designed as a means of collating information on hate victimization committed across sectors of vulnerabilities. Consulting with various stakeholders, including CSOs, governmental structures, academic institutions, and individuals working in a private capacity served not only to take them along but also to legitimize the efforts of the HCWG in this regard (Mitchell & Nel, 2017; Nel et al., 2013).

Hate victimization case information was gathered using the Monitoring Form (see a completed example of the form [here](#)) and supported by a User Guide, including a glossary (see Nel et al., 2013 available at hcwg.org.za). Participating organizations and individuals were requested to complete the Monitoring Form on behalf of victims of hate with whom they were newly brought into contact or retrospectively (that is, capturing information from existing case files). The range of data sources could include an interview(s) with either the victim(s), a witness, and/or a third party, such as a service provider(s); media and/or research report(s); case file(s); and/or a combination of the above-mentioned data sources (Nel et al., 2013).

Rather than focusing on sector-specific incidents, for instance, those that are race-based or xenophobic in nature, or on hate incidents per se, the monitoring project presented a more inclusive depiction of the types and effects of hate victimization in South Africa. As extensively outlined in the *User Guide* (Nel et al., 2013), the Monitoring Form includes a General Information section that documents information about the participating organization or individual completing the form; an indication of linkages to other cases; the selected data source(s); and the target of the hate victimization, followed by seven sections.

Section 1: biographical details of the victim at the time of the incident. Separate forms are completed for each victim if more than one person was victimized.

Section 2: current incident details; including information about the effects of the incident on the victim and the perception of the hate incident, which provides important contextual information about the hate incident.

Section 3: description of the characteristics of the offender(s) – or perceptions thereof – including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Section 4: information relating to the police's response to the incident. This includes behavior during and after the incident.

Section 5 has several aims. It questions whether a case has been entered into the criminal justice system after being reported to the police; gauges case progression through the court system; and determines the outcome of the case, if any.

It is worth noting that not all hate incidents are deemed by South African law to be criminal acts requiring police intervention. At the time the research was conducted newer criminal cases had not yet proceeded to the point of entry into the criminal justice system. Some older criminal cases, such as those completed from existing case files, may well have progressed far enough to allow for the completion of sections 4 and 5 and provide information valuable in emphasizing the need for legislative changes.

Section 6: healthcare sector response to the incident to gather instances of secondary victimization that may highlight ways in which both the police and the healthcare sector's response to hate incidents could be improved.

Section 7: victims' previous experience of incidents of hate victimization. This serves to elucidate patterns of victimization that may be useful in designing effective interventions informed by an understanding of repeat victimization.

The consent form outlines that the Monitoring Form is intended to be used for *monitoring* purposes and not for *reporting* hate incidents to any authorities, not the police, criminal justice officials, or statutory bodies. It was designed for use by trained representatives of organizations working to support such incidents. Monitoring hate incidents require active engagement, mentoring, and management. Relatively large, well-structured, and well-funded CSOs and centers embedded in academic institutions were able to address the needs of their constituents on multiple levels—including legal and/or socioeconomic assistance or advice, and only sometimes counseling. But—smaller participating organizations were not always able to provide meaningful victim support and found it difficult to contribute any case information for the data-gathering drive. The complicating factors are outlined in Mitchell and Nel (2017), as well as Nel et al. (2022).

The HCWG research team offered several organizational training workshops to participating communities, organizations, and their staff to enable the use of the Monitoring Form. To increase community awareness of hate incidents and their concomitant risks, several interactive information-sharing workshops were conducted with constituents of organizations. Details of the training, how the form was administered, and protocols in place to ensure appropriate administration of the form can be reviewed in the User Guide (Nel et al., 2013) and Nel et al. (2022). More than 150 members of staff and individual volunteers, representing at least 85 organizations, including the PsySSA Student Division, were trained in the use of the Monitoring Form over the 5-year period during which the longitudinal study was undertaken, namely 2013–2017. During this time related awareness and advocacy campaigns were offered by a few of the larger, well-funded organizations of the HCWG. This work, creating awareness about hate incidents, and developing community capacity toward the prevention of and response to hate incidents became an integral part of the organizations’ collective work. Community awareness also served to enhance data collection during field visits to the selected provinces; it was conducted by a core research team consisting of experienced research psychologists who were supported by the PsySSA Student Division, in particular.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The 5-year longitudinal study (Mitchell & Nel, 2017; Nel et al., 2013) on the nature and impact of hate victimization—including hate speech, hate crime, and intentional unfair discrimination—established that there is a pattern of hate incidents directed at non-nationals, SOGIE, and members of specific religious groups. Conducted in five of the nine provinces of South Africa, the study documented a total of 1,060 cases in this period. Of these, 945 were retained for quantitative analyses after data cleaning. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. Although it was not a prevalence study, vulnerabilities for hate victimization related to nonnationality (45%), SOGIE (28%), and religion (14%), appear to be accurately reflected (see Table 1) when compared with

PREJUDICE BASED ON:	FREQUENCY (%)
Nationality	45
Sexual orientation	17
Religion	14
Gender identity or expression	11
Race	9
Occupation (including sex work)	6
Ethnicity	2
Disability	1
Witchcraft	1
Gender	1
Other (Sex, Inter-racial marriage, Past disclosed criminal record, Albinism, etc.)	0.5

Table 1 Grounds of Vulnerability for Hate Victimization.
 Note: Adapted from *The hate and bias crimes monitoring form project: January 2013 to September 2017* by Mitchell & Nel, 2017, p. 14.

anecdotal evidence and media reporting in South Africa over many years. For specific reasons stipulated in the report (Mitchell & Nel, 2017), vulnerabilities related to race (9%) may be underrepresented in the research. Such reasons may include the lack of a specific CSO with a focus on race-related matters, in general, but also in terms of representation in the HCWG, specifically.

The convenience sampling employed in the research (Mitchell & Nel, 2017) is therefore crucial to emphasize. Another finding highlighted limited reporting by victims of hate incidents and insufficient recording in South Africa of hate incidents by the government, in general (Mitchell & Nel, 2017; Nel & Mitchell, 2019). In this study, only one-third of cases were reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS), which is not unusual, because hate crimes are underreported to the police (Herek et al., 2002). Compounding this difficulty is the lack of recording categories in police reporting mechanisms in South Africa. Also, not all hate- and bias-motivated incidents, such as intentional unfair discrimination, are criminal in nature (Note, Table 2 provides frequencies at which specific hate crimes were recorded in the HCWG monitoring study). Importantly, at the time of the research, and still today, hate speech is not reported to the police due to it not (yet) being an established crime category, but should the Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill be passed into an Act, this is set to change.

TYPE OF CRIME	FREQUENCY (%)
Robbery/theft	30
Damage to property	27
Assault	14
Threatened with weapon	12
Assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm	11
Murder	4
Rape	4
Attempted murder	4
Sexual assault	2
Extortion/blackmail	1
Police brutality	1
Arson	0.8

Table 2 Types of hate crime – Frequencies at which hate crimes were recorded in the HCWG monitoring study. Note. Adapted from *The hate and bias crimes monitoring form project: January 2013 to September 2017* by Mitchell & Nel, 2017, p. 13.

The frequency at which *intentional unfair discrimination* was recorded was 36%; and the frequencies at which *hate speech-related incidents* were recorded are reflected in Table 3.

The research report of the HCWG study (Mitchell & Nel, 2017) also notes that because hate incidents are intended to inflict harm upon the victim’s identity, they are almost always accompanied by hate speech. The use of denigrating words and insults directed at the victim(s) in 68% of the 945 cases clearly exposes the underlying prejudice that motivated the incidents. In some cases, defamatory remarks preceded the incident up to a few months before the attack took place (Mitchell & Nel, 2017). Indeed, confirming the findings of Breen et al. (2016), the study also observed sudden spikes in attacks motivated by xenophobic sentiments against African persons who were not born in South Africa, after remarks made publicly by prominent political figures, including the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini.

TYPE OF INCIDENT	FREQUENCY (%)
Intimidation	34
Hate speech	24
Harassment	22
Defamation of character/harm to dignity	11

Table 3 Hate speech-related incidents. Note: Adapted from *The hate and bias crimes monitoring form project: January 2013 to September 2017* by Mitchell & Nel, 2017, p. 13.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH SKILL AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing our understanding of the nature and impact of hate victimization in South Africa required quality data from a broader range of contributors to enable us to identify and define relevant courses of action. Therefore, capacity building remains essential in organizations that provide services and support to (potential) victims of hate- and bias-motivated attacks, to allow monitoring and reporting on such incidents.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY RHETORIC IN SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE AND THE SOCIAL LICENSING OF HATE VICTIMIZATION

Ubiquitous and overt intolerance in communities creates conditions that encourage prejudicial treatment of those who are perceived as nonconforming to community expectations (Mitchell & Nel, 2017; Nel & Judge, 2008; Nel & Mitchell, 2019). Over time, this symbolic violence leads to more overt expressions of hatred and provides social licensing to hate crime (Pieterse et al., 2018). Preventive measures to interrupt this rhetoric of bigotry are urgently needed.

THE IMPACT OF HATE VICTIMIZATION AND THE RELEVANT SUPPORT PROVIDED TO VICTIMS

Hate victimization is devastating to surviving victims, and the effects of these incidents are often not considered carefully enough (Ignaski, 2001; Marais et al., 2022; McDevitt et al., 2001). Organizations concerned with providing psychosocial interventions and other services to these victims are restricted in their response capacity, by their limited access to resources and constraints in their expertise. An inter-organizational integration of skills and resources will be necessary to design and develop a more complete response to hate in South Africa and the world.

DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC STRUCTURES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSES

The HCWG report (Mitchell & Nel, 2017) revealed that some healthcare providers, schoolteachers (and principals), and police officers intentionally discriminate against persons they are meant to serve based on grounds such as sexual orientation and nationality. Too often, the hate motivation underlying victimization is almost entirely disregarded in court proceedings, which accentuates the need for hate crime legislation to achieve justice for these victims and to hold authority figures accountable.

Despite the limited scope, these findings confirm the prevalence of hatred and hate victimization in South Africa. Steinberg et al. (2003) concluded that it is obligatory that mental health professionals not only develop interventions for communities and individuals affected by hate crimes but also detect and treat perpetrators. They further concluded that “bias-motivated crimes will only decrease with the design and implementation of effective measures and strategies that stop the hate before it is manifested in a criminal act” (p. 986).

Given the data and the ominous escalation of hate victimization not only in South Africa but seemingly globally, can and will psychology, as a discipline, a science, and a profession, keep its fingers on the pulse of the global and national society at large? Is the voice of psychology, and specifically organized psychology, silent, missing altogether, or merely ineffective in its contribution to prevent hate victimization?

Possible areas and approaches that may yield additional results are outlined elsewhere (see Nel et al., 2022). However, organized psychology, in particular, can respond on an organizational level in the following ways to prevent and interrupt hate victimization besides addressing victims' need for essential services, including psychosocial assistance.

- Public ownership of off-setting the perpetuation of institutionalized bias and declared remedies. Featured on the front page of the March 2022 publication of the APA, *Monitor on Psychology* (<https://www.apa.org/monitor>), is the organization's recent apology and recommended remedies for harms caused by historical racism in the organization and the field of psychology. Although it has taken the APA 130 years and the field of psychology even longer to acknowledge its role in related institutionalized bias—the first apology of its kind since the association was formed—this is how organized psychology can lead the way.
- Overt denunciation of (inter)national rhetoric of intolerance, particularly by those in positions of authority.
- Work to intensify collaboration between psychological organizations, government, academia, and CSOs that focus on the prevention of hate victimization.
- Development and distribution of guidelines to support civil society, to advise and assist local government structures (such as municipalities and police services), and to effectively manage communities during the escalation of hate victimization.
- Real-time, electronic data capture to identify areas where hate victimizations have been perpetrated in the past and are likely to recur. These settings may be where intolerance is causing sufficiently volatile conflict to increase the likelihood of hate victimizations being perpetrated.

RECOMMENDATIONS: HOPE IS NOT A STRATEGY. FEAR IS NOT AN OPTION

Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination rather than isolated interventions of individuals, groups, or organizations (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The elephant in the room is the odd premise that, through research findings, the strategy for the prevention of hate victimization will hopefully emerge. Let us agree with economist, scholar, and dean of the Business School at Webster University in St. Louis, Dr. Akande (2009), who wrote in an open letter to President Obama that “Hope is not a strategy.” In fact, in the face of hate victimization, we can go one step further and quote director James Cameron in his address at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Administrator’s Symposium in 2004 regarding his search for the Titanic. Cameron said, “I stood in front of a whiteboard and put up on the whiteboard three slogans. The slogans were there: ‘Luck is not a factor’, ‘Hope is not a strategy’, ‘Fear is not an option’” (SpaceRef editor, 2004, para. 36). The same is true when it comes to actively pursuing the prevention of hate victimization.

Hate crimes require a response at a community and societal level. There is a need to direct essential services—including psychosocial assistance—to victims because not all vulnerable sectors are adept at dealing with hate crimes. Topics of concern include identifying hate crime hotspots and interrupting any local rhetoric of intolerance. Hotspots are areas where hate crimes have been perpetrated in the past and are likely to recur, as well as areas where intolerance is causing sufficiently explosive conflict to increase the likelihood of hate crimes being perpetrated. Preventing perpetrators from becoming repeat offenders, dealing with youth and first-time offenders by developing nonpunitive forms of retribution in cases where no physical harm has come to the victim, and offering nonviolent solutions for resolving problems between community members are central to reducing hate victimization. The integration of organizations with expertise that operates across vulnerable sectors will benefit individual organizations in developing guidelines for responding to hate victimization and will improve communication and understanding across sectors. Guidelines such as these may help civil society to effectively assist and advise local government structures (such as municipalities and police services) to manage communities during outbreaks of hate crimes.

Organized psychology, nationally and internationally, will serve our global society well by contributing to the improved prevention and interruption of hate incidents, as well as by disrupting the pervasive rhetoric of bigotry and intolerance that drives hate-based incidents and crimes. If organized psychology is to be successful at uniting several psychological branches, disciplines, and internal divisions around a common agenda, psychological organizations will need to contribute

to ensuring the successful interruption and prevention of future violent hate- and bias-motivated actions and hate victimizations. Such disruption will require not only fearless investigation and inspection of psychology's inner workings but also the will to work systematically and strategically to eradicate bias-motivated behaviors as their perpetrators rear their heads in the communities that psychology serves. To always have the well-being of humans, communities, and society as psychology's focus and to lead the way in preventing hate-motivated actions to shape the world we live in will ultimately also illustrate the relevance of the discipline.

FUNDING INFORMATION

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (grant numbers 03029, 2012; 03162, 2013; 03270, 2014; 03397, 2015; and 03559, 2016/7) and the Humanist Institute for Cooperation for Developing Countries.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

van Wyk, H., & Nel, J. A. (2023). The Role of Organized Psychology in Inspiring Hope and Preventing Hate Victimization: Recommendations from a South African Hate and Bias Monitoring Initiative. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 18(1), 16–30. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.230>

Published: 26 April 2023

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