

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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Prof Sethulego Matebesi (Academic Head of Department) and Mathabiso Hoeane (Senior Administrative Officer)

Overview of 2021

Providing relevant and timely solutions to modern-day situations is one of the building blocks for empowering communities. Amidst the higher education sector's challenges in general, UFS Sociology celebrated an ever more strongly shared sense of purpose and directions between the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses in terms of staff and student integration. However, the year was also one of ongoing change. We bid farewell to one of our longest serving staff members, Prof Andre Pelser, Dr Emmanuel Mayeza, and our Administrative Officer, Udene Jordan.

Overall, the events led by the department this year demonstrate the strong commitment to enhancing both the academic and social enterprise. UFS Sociology hosted a highly successful virtual conference of the South African Sociological Association supported by leading national and international scholars. This year also saw the successful launch of the South African Sociology Network (SACN) initiated by the department. The goal of SACN is to promote collaboration between sociology departments in Southern Africa in terms of research, teaching, and staff and student exchange. We have also made great strides in our outreach by launching a Speaker Series and our team's ever-expanding engaged scholarship activities.

As we move forward to another year, UFS Sociology will continue to leverage its capabilities in strengthening South Africa's sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to other social challenges of the 21st Century.

Achievements

Staff Achievements

Prof Katinka de Wet was appointed as the interim co-director of the Initiative for Digital Futures. In October 2021, the initiative was formalised by creating the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures (ICDF). Fifty per cent of Prof de Wet's time is allocated to her work as co-director for the ICDF.



Prof Katinka de Wet

Learning and Teaching

Over the last few years, a major priority has been to improve our engagement with students at all levels. This year, we took advantage of the opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution by giving high priority to teaching and pedagogical development. However, this process also entailed adopting general teaching principles relating to goals concerning the products of learning and goals concerning the learning process. As a result, our engagement with our postgraduate students also improved significantly in terms of participation in our Reading Groups, Speaker Series, and other related academic activities.

Research Projects

The department's staff members have been involved in several sociological research themes.

Prof Katinka de Wet obtained NRF funding (2021-2023) for a project titled "Community Health Workers: Foot Soldiers During Pandemic Times". This project is done in collaboration with Prof M Engelbrecht and Dr G Kigozi from the Centre for Health Systems Research & Development and Prof E Wouters from the University of Antwerp, and Dr R Tweheyo from the University of Makerere. She also obtained funding from the Faculty of Humanities for a Digital Humanities project titled: "*Soft but significant*": *harnessing Humanities and Social Sciences in paving the way to create Oncology Data Lakes*. The project is conducted in collaboration with Dr Susan Brokensha (Department of English), Dr Shirley du Plooy (Department of Anthropology), Dr Philip Aghoghovwia (Department of English) and Mr Herkulaas Combrink (interim co-director of ICDF; Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences).

Prof Jan Coetzee's research project – The book and domination - is situated within *The Narrative Study of Lives*, focusing specifically on books as documents of life. In this regard the researcher creates bookworks (artworks that feature books) that bring sculpted and found objects into a dialogue with old books to reflect on the broader social, cultural and historical structures and refrains of our times. The project follows the publication, *The Book & The Skull*

– an artist’s book in a limited and numbered edition – designed and printed by SUN MeDIA Publishers, and hand-bound by George Wentzel, Cape Town.



Koffiefontein mine closure project

Prof Sethulego Matebesi has been part of a network - *Radical politics beyond or through representative institutions* – funded by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science. It brought together political and social theorists in Denmark and South Africa to strengthen the links between scholars who have only been informally connected, if at all. The purpose of the network activities is to generate cutting edge research. To that end, the network has brought together scholars around a common research question. The network encompasses a funding workshop to create solid applications for further funding, an academic workshop designed to produce solid papers for inclusion in top journals, and an event for a general audience to generate public impact. Prof Matebesi has also been part of the multi-disciplinary research team, Mining & Society, focusing on mining in South Africa. This year, he was the lead researcher for two (Koffiefontein and Rustenburg) of seven case studies focusing on the social aspects of mine closure in South Africa. The National Research Foundation funds this three-year study.

Dr Emmanuel Mayeza’s research on coming out, relationships and sex: a study among LGBTIQ youth in South Africa explores how some LGBTIQ youth in a South African rural university campus construct and experience coming out, relationships and sex/uality. The research uses in-depth individual interviews with the sampled minority group of students to explore how they construct and negotiate their social identities within a largely conservative and heteronormative rural community. This study pays particular attention to the identified students’ processes and challenges of ‘coming out’ to their parents and to others, and/or reasons for remaining in the ‘closet’, their relationships dynamics, and sex-related matters as part of their social lives including their knowledge or experiences around sex education. Another project with Deevia Bhana as Principal Investigator and other external collaborators - Stop the violence: Girls and boys in and around schools - investigates gender violence in schools. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, it does so with boys and girls in a diverse sample of schools in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. It draws from a multi-faceted approach to power that goes beyond girls as victims and boys as perpetrators of violence, although recognising the deeply gendered environment where girls are often victims

Prof Andre Pelsler, Dr Divane Nzima, and Prof Sethulego Matebesi led the sociological part of the research project titled, *Distribution and incidence of insect pests and diseases of sorghum in South Africa*, funded by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the Sorghum Trust. The social dimension of this three-year project led by ARC-Grain Crops and the Department of Plant Science: Plant Pathology includes a survey of commercial and emerging sorghum producers focusing on the perception of insects, disease incidence and constraints to sorghum production.

Nombulelo Shange is in the final stages of her research on table mountain doctors. This exploratory research has observed and documented Sackcloth people's healing practices and cultural identity. The study hopes to explore how Sackcloth people think and live their lives while focusing on their perceptions of healing. The objective is not to decide if these ideas are accurate or not true. The notion of truth is socially contrasted and based on the cultural subjectivity of the people who believe in that truth. The research will present what the Sackcloth people consider to be their truth regarding cultural identity and healing, revitalising African indigenous knowledge: A struggle for land, cultural rights and acceptance.

Nontombi Velelo and Cebekhulu Sokhela's research on emergency remote teaching aims to provide a critical reflection and analysis of how we re-imagined e-tutorial support at the departmental level in one module and its consequences. The study pays attention to the perceptions of e-tutors and students as teaching and learning took place remotely. To improve teaching practices, they assessed the online tutorial system's impact on student learning and e-tutors' ability to facilitate e-tutorials. They also intend to evaluate the effect of student support intervention implemented amidst the COVID-19 crisis at the departmental level in a large class module with 500 students. Nontombi is also in the final stages of her study, a narrative inquiry into the lived experiences of Black African men about masculinity and fatherhood. Masculinity and fatherhood are not only indicated by an individual's physical or psychological attributes but also by what is socially constructed as appropriate and desirable.

Research Outputs

ARTICLES

Mayeza, E. & Bhana, D. 2021. Boys and bullying in primary school: Young masculinities and the negotiation of power. *South African Journal of Education* 41(1): 1-8.

Mayeza, E. 2021. South African LGBTPQ youth: The perceptions and realities of coming out and parental reactions. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 17(3): 293-303.

Tanya, P & Pelser AJ. 2021. *Towards an "age-friendly hospital": Older persons' perceptions of an age-friendly hospital environment in Nigeria*, *Cogent Medicine* 7(1).

Phadi, M. 2021. The multiple consciousness of blackness: race and class in South Africa. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* (105): 52-73.

Posel, D. & Gilbert, S. 2021. Israel, apartheid and a modern Jewish dilemma. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 20(1): 1-21.

Posel, D. & Gilbert, S. 2021. The holocaust, apartheid and contemporary Jewish perspectives on victimhood. *Journal of Jewish Identities* 14(2): 155-170.

Posel, D et al. 2021. Response to Marcia Milazzo's review of *Conspicuous Consumption in Africa*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44(13): 2414-2419.

CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES

Matebesi, S. 2021. Mining, environmental and human security challenges in South Africa. In: A. Swain A, J. Öjendal & A. Jägerskog (Eds). *Handbook of Security and the Environment*. London: Stanford Publishers. pp. 103-114.

Matebesi, S. 2021. Yearning for basic municipal services: the trajectories of community protests in the Eastern Cape. In: M. Makiwane, N Gumede & W. Zembe-Mkabile (Eds). *Reflections from the margins: Complexities, transitions and development challenges: The case of the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa*. Stellenbosch: Sun Media. pp. 99-118.

Matebesi, S. 2021. Transitional justice in South Africa. I: S. Peters, M. Molope & T. Louis (Eds). *Dealing with the past. Transregional perspectives and experiences from Africa, Latin America and Europe*. pp. 45-60.

Shange, N. 2021. Fighting for relevance: The disregard of African knowledge in historic and contemporary South African Institutions. In: N. Mthembu. *Ethical Research Approaches to Indigenous Knowledge Education*. Hershey: IGI Global. pp. 1-23.

CONFERENCE PAPER

Ackermann, L. 2021. *UNDER-employment: the overlooked conceptual tool for understanding labour underutilisation in South Africa*. Paper delivered at the South African Sociological Conference, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Ackermann, L. 2021. *What COVID forced me to (un)learn about student assessment*. Paper presented at the HELTASA 2021 (un) Conference (Online). 6-10 December 2021.

Maviza, L., Moyo, L. & **Nzima, D.** 2021. *'Missing Masculinities': Transnational fathering experiences in migrant families*. Paper delivered at the South African Sociological Conference, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Goodrick, W.F. 2021. *Transitioning from a global to a local energy justice approach for understanding justice issues associated with unconventional gas extraction in the Karoo, South Africa*. Paper delivered at the South African Sociological Conference, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Combrink, H.M.V.E. & **De Wet, K.** 2021. *Future centred sociological research methodology for postgraduate sociology students: digital augmentation of current practices*. Paper delivered at the South African Sociological Conference, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Combrink, H.M.V.E. & **De Wet, K.** 2021. *Social listening and big data mining: understanding vaccine hesitancy in South Africa to enhance risk communication*. Paper delivered at the South African Sociological Conference, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Matebesi, S. 2021. *Social media and grassroots activism in a village with multiple tribal authorities in Limpopo, South Africa*. Paper delivered at the 26th Annual Conference of the South African Sociological Association, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Nzima, D. & Gumindega, G. 2021. **'Jecharism': A theory of sabotage in political power contestations in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe**. Paper delivered at the 26th Annual Conference of the South African Sociological Association, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Phadi, M. 2021. *From the Vault: The Bureau of African Affairs (BAA) and South Africa's Liberation Struggle - beyond the ANC & PAC* Paper delivered at the 26th Annual Conference of the South African Sociological Association, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Velelo, N. 2021. *Masculinity and fatherhood: A narrative study of black South African Men living in Mangaung*. Paper delivered at the 26th Annual Conference of the South African Sociological Association, University of the Free State (Online). 27-30 June 2021.

Engaged Scholarship

The department is actively involved in engaged scholarship and produced a number of media articles, opinion pieces, etc. including:

- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Flagging electoral support for ANC in metros is a swirling storm for 2024 poll. Available at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/opinion/flagging-electoral-support-for-anc-in-metros-is-a-swirling-storm-for-2024-poll-c608970b-72d2-4ad0-9bb3-4d75643e413b>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. This is a new progressive era for municipalities. Available at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/this-is-a-new-progressive-era-for-municipalities-558c4821-b847-4a3b-b3a3-6e8092ee69b7>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. A bruising contest for Mangaung Metro. Available at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/a-bruising-contest-for-the-wilting-mangaung-metro-e25cc007-d39d-4014-83e5-901a6d639d82>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Municipal transformation depends on voters, so what to do? Available at <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times-daily/opinion-and-analysis/2021-10-27-sethulego-matebesi-municipal-transformation-depends-on-voters-so-what-to-do/>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Better participation in elections remain a concern. Available at <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/daily-dispatch/20211029/281711207863586>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. People need to be convinced their vote counts: Local elections a chance for citizens to participate. Available at <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2021-10-28-people-need-to-be-convinced-their-vote-counts/>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Taming the monsters of poverty and inequality needs more than coercion Available at <https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/fridaybriefing/sethulego-matebesi-taming-the-monsters-of-poverty-inequality-needs-more-than-political-coercion-20210715>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Elections 2021 - It is a non-stop rollercoaster ride. Available at <https://www.news24.com/news24/columnists/guestcolumn/analysis-sethulego-matebesi-elections-2021-it-is-a-non-stop-rollercoaster-ride-20210910>
- **Matebesi, S.** The Nkandla drama: From tea parties to threats to constitutionalism. *City Press*, 07 July. <https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/the-nkandla-drama-from-tea-parties-to-threats-to-constitutionalism-20210707>
- **Matebesi SZ.** 2021. The puzzle of student protests: An unresolved battle. *News24*, 20 March. <https://www.news24.com/news24/columnists/guestcolumn/analysis-the-puzzle-of-student-protests-an-unresolved-battle-20210319>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Swinging pendulum of trust in public protector. *SowetanLive*, 17 March. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2021-03-17-swinging-pendulum-of-trust-in-public-protector/>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. How will the ANC handle the public protector's impeachment. Available at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/how-will-the-anc-handle-the-public-protectors-impeachment-28fe8ec2-f45c-4909-a3d3-4f6d468aea1e>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Public Protector's future depends on ravenous political trade-offs between 2 ANC factions. Available at <https://www.news24.com/news24/columnists/guestcolumn/opinion-public-protectors-future-depends-on-ravenous-political-trade-offs-between-2-anc-factions-20210311>

- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. Municipalities need to embrace grassroots activism to regain trust. Available at <https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/fridaybriefing/analysis-municipalities-need-to-embrace-grassroots-activism-to-regain-trust-20210218>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. SONA 2021: A dream deferred, yet again. Available at <https://www.news24.com/news24/Columnists/GuestColumn/opinion-sona-2021-a-dream-deferred-yet-again-20210216>
- **Matebesi, S.** 2021. SONA 2021: A dream deferred, yet again. *Timeslive*, 15 February. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times-daily/opinion-and-analysis/2021-02-15-sona-2021--a-dream-deferred-yet-again/>
- **Mayeza, E, & Bhana D.** 2021. Why girls continue to experience violence at South African schools. Available at <https://theconversation.com/why-girls-continue-to-experience-violence-at-south-african-schools-157470>
- **Shange, N.T.** Nkutha, M. & Madioppe, M. 2021: UFS participates in the drafting of the 2021 African Governance Report. Available at <https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/newarchive/campus-news/2021/january/ufs-participates-in-the-drafting-of-the-2021-african-governance-report>
- **Shange, N.T.** 2021. Overcoming Covid-19 with the strength and resilience of Sharpeville. Available at <https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/overcoming-covid-19-with-the-strength-and-resilience-of-sharpeville-20210319>.



Local Government Elections - 2021

National and International Collaboration

Prof Katinka de Wet was part of the Free State Department of Health's COVID response team under the Risk Communication and Community Engagement group within the Department of Health. This cooperation also included an online survey design in determining possible reasons for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among Health Care Workers. She was also part of a project (2021-2022) on developing regional innovation through the creation of clusters. The project is funded by the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena (Germany), and a variety of UFS staff is part of the project.

Prof Matebesi initiated the Southern African Sociology Network (SASN) of sociology departments of universities in Southern Africa consisting of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The primary goal of SASN – launched on 25 November 2021 - is to enhance collaboration between the universities in respect of postgraduate supervision, student and staff exchange, cross-country research projects, and the promotion of the discipline.

Prof Posel has been an active member of the Advisory Board of the M.S. Merian-R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies, 'Metamorphoses of the Political" Comparative Perspectives on the Long Twentieth Century, under the auspices of the Max Weber Stiftung India. She is also a member of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Board, based in Cape Town.

Dr Phadi has been elected as a council member of the South African Sociological Association.

Postgraduate Students

In 2021, the department had eight students registered at PhD and six master's levels. Two honours students (Itumeleng Kalane and Tshogofatso Nkatlholang) completed their studies and will graduate in 2022. In addition, two of our master's students graduated in 2021 – Jano Coetzee and Laurie Nada.

Staff (2021)

Head of Department: Prof SZ Matebesi

Academic Staff

Ms L Ackermann	Lecturer
Prof K de Wet	Associate Professor
Dr W Goodrick	Junior Lecturer
Prof SZ Matebesi	Associate Professor/Academic Head of Department
Dr H Ndhlovu	Senior Lecturer
Mr KD Nena	Lecturer
Dr D Nzima	Senior Lecturer/Subject Head (Qwaqwa Campus)
Dr MM Phadi	Senior Lecturer
Prof D Posel	Research Professor
Ms NT Shange	Junior Lecturer
Ms NL Velelo	Junior Lecturer and Programme Director BSocSc

Support Staff

Ms M Hoeane	Administrative Officer
Ms N Matsoso	Administrative Officer
Mr M Mbhele	Teaching Assistant
Mr D Jonker	Teaching Assistant

Affiliated Staff

Prof JK Coetzee	Research Fellow
Prof A Membretti	Research Fellow
Prof A Pelser	Research Fellow
Dr N Redelinghuys	Research Fellow
Dr PL Tanyi	Research Fellow