

# Sociology NEWSLETTER

## IsiXhosa Intellectual Traditions Digital Archive (IsiXIT)

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Jacques demonstrates his passion and commitment to transforming higher education, facilitation of students' success and epistemological access through creating an IsiXhosa Intellectual Traditions Digital Archive (IsiXIT).

## Silicon Valley's inadvertent Marxism: How post-AGI discourse echoes post- capitalist theory

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Fazila engages with a discourse from Silicon Valley, forcing us to imagine that which is difficult to imagine- a post-artificial general intelligence world.

## Beyond translation: Rethinking language in research

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Likhona reflects on her experience negotiating language use between isiXhosa and English, while conducting research as a fieldworker in an isiXhosa dominant space.



## Key Dates

- 📌 UCT Decolonial Summer School 2026 Theme: Decoloniality & Mothofatso: reparations and pushing back against fast/slow genocide | 12-16 January 2026 | Neville Alexander Building, Middle Campus, UCTDSS26
- 📌 Call for Applications: 2026 African Peacebuilding & Developmental Dynamics Fellowship Awards | Deadline: 16 January 2026 | Time: 11:59 PM EST

# Editor's Note

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As the year draws to a close, it's time to reflect and be grateful for all that we have experienced, learnt and achieved. Just to mention a few important things we celebrate: (i) the successful publication of the four newsletter issues, inclusive of this one. For the first time in our newsletter, we are publishing an article written by an undergraduate student, Natalie Miller, (ii) the launch of our hoodie collection, (iii) the ad hominem promotions of our three colleagues, Professor Frank Matose, Associate Professor Jacques de Wet and Senior Lecturer Dr Tamlynne Meyer and (iv) an outstanding inaugural lecture by Professor Amrita Pande.

This issue opens with an article written by Rufaro, a proud student and colleague in the department celebrating the highlights of Prof Pande's inaugural lecture. The lecture, filled with performance, discussed how new technologies and baby-making converge to become sites of power and social inequality. Sam, also a student and colleague in the department follows with a discussion of a beautiful experience of how she merged her postgraduate studies with community outreach. This served as a coping strategy for the hectic Honours academic life and as an important application of theoretical approaches to the lived experiences of ordinary people.

Jacques demonstrates his passion and commitment to transforming higher education, facilitation of students' success and epistemological access through creating an IsiXhosa Intellectual Traditions Digital Archive (IsiXIT). The fact that IsiXIT is from the 20th century, it is in isiXhosa and is open access, preserves our heritage while bridging barriers to decolonisation of the curriculum. Likhona discusses her experience negotiating language use between isiXhosa and English, while conducting research as a fieldworker in an isiXhosa dominant space. Her experience, in line with Jacques's article shows the importance of giving black people a chance to use their own languages and how that changes the meaningfulness of their lived experiences. Fazila engages with a discourse from Silicon Valley, forcing us to imagine that which is difficult to imagine: a post-artificial general intelligence world. She explains the continuation of capitalism's internal contradictions and how the universal basic income grant is offered as a solution to the labour becoming obsolete.

I first encountered Natalie earlier in the year, at which time she was already thinking about the same issues that her article talks about. She has been counting the last few weeks left on campus before she graduates and focuses on work. When I met with her, she was counting how many courses she was left with, how much would that cost her, and how many more hours of work it would cost to generate her tuition fees. As a migrant worker (with family in another province), I resonate with living on a calendar, each month, and counting down weeks and days before I see my loved ones. She however challenges us to live in the moment.

Refilwe reflects on new beginnings based on her first time as a post graduate student as well as a tutor in the department. Regardless of the ups and downs, Refilwe, in line with Natalie's sentiments now decides to live in the moment where she celebrates the end of a successful academic year.

The journeys of the authors indicate that it has not been easy, but they have triumphed; they have conquered. It is on that same note that I want to say, *noma kunzima, siyaphumelela*. "We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair". Thank you, colleagues and friends, for all your support and being faithful readers of our newsletter.

We move! Siyaqhuba!

Editor-in-Chief

Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama 



## When pioneering work births sociological excellence: Professor Pande's Inaugural Lecture

*by Rufaro Moyo*

Using sociological and feminist anthropological approaches, Professor Amrita Pande has built a marvellous academic career examining how assisted reproductive technologies are sites of power and social inequality. You may be tempted to accuse me of bias because she is my supervisor after all, so I will never miss an opportunity to rave about her! But the body of work (extra points if you recognize the pun), the impressive attendance at her inaugural lecture and the numerous accolades she has been awarded alongside full professorship, speaks for itself.

Her lecture was not only a celebration of her professorship, but it was also a presentation of the findings of a career that has explored the intimate domain of reproduction and illustrated its intersections with gendered stratifications, neoliberal globalization, new forms of eugenics and racial capitalism. Her work is pioneering in drawing attention to the power dynamics at play when new technologies and baby-making converge. Just as her research has brought something new to social science scholarship, her lecture did the same.

It detailed the ethnography that resulted in her groundbreaking book, *Wombs in Labour: Transnational Commercial Surrogacy in India*,

-published in 2014 by Columbia University Press. Far from the traditional deliverance of a lecture consisting of merely standing behind a podium, Professor Pande brought performance, using visual and auditory aids in video format alongside a variety of different fabrics to adorn whilst acting out different characters she encountered during her fieldwork. Through artistic performance she allowed us to laugh and be engaged whilst also inviting us to reflect critically on the politics of reproduction and the body as a site of labour (surely by now you catch the puns!).



*Left to right: Refilwe Molefe, Sam Salduker, Professor Amrita Pande and Sana Khan*

Her lecture also discussed the work which informs her upcoming book, a multi-sited exploration of reproductive technologies, introducing insights on racialized hierarchies, travelling whiteness and the racial hybridity employed by intended parents. Taking us through a transcontinental portal of fascinating connections, Professor Pande weaved insights which not only draw attention to -



-social inequities and persisting power relations in the realm of reproduction but also ask us to ponder what futures we can imagine, fear and desire with these technologies. Her lecture and all that surrounds it are manifestations of sociological excellence that should make our department proud.

## Community outreach - An opportunity to create social impact

*by Sam Salduker*

I used to find postgraduate life frustratingly disconnected- there was a chasm between the hours I funnelled into research and the tangible results they garnered. So many of us pursue social science in an effort to uplift our communities, only to be disillusioned by the jungle of theory that must be macheted through. If this resonates with you, consider community outreach!

Last year, I began working with [The Zoe Project](#) (TZP): a Cape Town-based non-profit organisation (NPO) that provides antenatal assistance to mothers from under-resourced communities. Care work is intensely physical, and entirely at odds with the cerebral nature of student life. I observed a significant language barrier between TZP volunteers and mothers: many of the latter are recent migrants from neighbouring countries who only speak Chichewa, Swahili, French or Shona.

Others, particularly local Xhosa- and Kaaps-speaking women, have some grasp of English but struggle to express nuance. This drove me to build [Mother Tongues](#): a web-based application to mitigate mother-carer language discordance.



*Sam Salduker*

This project pushed me to pick up new technical skills, collaborate with peers in the department (thanks to Tamzyn Boonzaaier and Phila Mkwetshana for translating!), and gain project management experience. Most importantly it allowed me to merge research and practical intervention. I have stepped into the South Africa's burgeoning digital health landscape and begun to understand -



how theory and praxis work in tandem. My current Honours thesis evaluates the impact of this app in relation to decolonial sociolinguistics, reproductive justice, and Feminist Science and Technology Studies (STS).

Had I not begun volunteering, I would not have had this opportunity to engage practically with these fields. If the postgraduate routine inspires a similar restlessness in you, consider reaching out to an NPO-you never know where it might lead you.

## IsiXhosa Intellectual Traditions Digital Archive (IsiXIT)

*(English text written by Jacques de Wet. IsiXhosa ngokubhalwa nguJacques de Wet noAmandla Ngwendu)*

The IsiXhosa Intellectual Traditions Digital Archive (IsiXIT) is a collection of isiXhosa newspapers and books from the turn of the 20th Century. The IsiXIT archive is accessible online

at: <https://ibali.uct.ac.za/s/isixit/page/welcome>.

We are in process of creating a substantial open-source digital and textual database of these early isiXhosa texts for researchers and the general public to access. Our aim is to both increase access to these important historical materials and to advance research by making source materials “research ready” and removing barriers to access for a wide community of researchers. The value of the IsiXIT archive gained considerable urgency after the devastating fire at the University of Cape Town in 2021. The fire damaged multiple buildings and destroyed many primary African collections, which were housed in the African Studies library.

The archive currently includes the newspapers *Isigidimi sama-Xosa* (published from 1870 to 1888) and *Imvo Zabantsundu* (published from 1884 to 1899) as well as -

I-IsiXhosa Intellectual Traditions Digital Archive (IsiXIT) yingqokelela yamaphephandaba neencwadi zesiXhosa ezapapashwa kwiminyaka engapha kwekhulu eyadlulayo. Uvimba IsiXIT ufumaneka ku:

<https://ibali.uct.ac.za/s/isixit/page/welcome>

Sikwinkqubo yokwenza iopen-source digital and textual database ezokubanazo ezizibhalo zesiXhosa zakudala sisenzela abaphandi noluntu jikelele ukuze bazifumane. Injongo yethu kukwandisa ukufikelela kwezingqokelela yezibhalo ukwenza uphando oluqhubeka phambili olwenza amaxwebhu “alungele uphando” nokususa izithintelo ukuvumela ukufumaneka ngokubanzi kuluntu lwabaphandi. Ixabiso lweIsiXIT lizuze ukungxamiseka emva komlilokazi owenzeka eYunivesithi yaseKapa ngo2021. Umlilo lowo watshabalalisa izakhiwo ezinintsi nengqokelela yezibhalo zeAfrika, ezazihleli kumzi weencwadi eyayibizwa iAfrican Studies.

Lo vimba wogcino-ncwadi uquka amaphephandaba *Isigidimi sama-Xosa* (apapashwa ukususela ngo 1870 uyokutsho ngo 1888) ne*Imvo Zabantsundu* (eyapapashwa ukususela ngo1884 -

-the books *Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini* first published in 1906 (Rubusana, 1911) and *Ityala Lamawele* first published in 1914 (Mqhayi, 1931). Other sources, including newspapers such as *Indaba* (1862-1865), and *Izwi Labantu* (1897-1909) will be incorporated into the project over time.

The archive allows users to search, browse image files, and download MS Word text files of these early isiXhosa newspapers and books as well as metadata about each publication and its content.

Produced in the eastern part of the Cape Colony (today's Eastern Cape), these texts capture the intellectual work of an emerging group of isiXhosa thinkers, activists, political leaders, and their wider public as they developed new knowledge orientated to understanding and engaging with colonialism and their changing social world from an African perspective. The isiXhosa newspapers were a central source of social and increasingly political reporting. They also make visible debates and dialogues of a wider public sphere through the printing of letters to the editor sent in by readers, which provide key insights on the development of African social and political discussion and theorising at that time.

-uyokutsho ngo 1899) kwakunye neencwadi u*Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini* eyaqala ukupapashwa ngo1906 (nguRubusana ngo1911) ne*Ityala Lamawele* eyaqala ukupapashwa ngo1914 (nguMqhayi ngo1931). Amanye amaxwebu aquka amaphephandaba afana ne*Indaba* (1862-1865) ne*Izwi Labantu* (1897-1909) ziyakongezwa kumsebenzi exesheni.

Lo vimba wogcino-ncwadi uvumela ukuba abantu bakhangele izinto, bajonge iifayile zemifanekiso, ukufikelela kwiifayile ezibhaliweyo zeMS Word yalamaphephandaba esiXhosa angexesha laphambili neencwadi kwakunye ne-metadata engo papasho ngalunye nesiqulatho.

Yenziwe kwindawo yaseMpuma yeKapa (namhlanje eyaziwa njenge Mpuma Koloni), ezizibhalo zibonisa umsebenzi wengqondo lweqela lwabacingi besiXhosa abafikayo, abantu abafak'isandla ngakumbi kwipolitiki, abakhokheli bepolitiki, noluntu ngokubanzi bephuhlisa ulwazi olutsha olujoliswe ekuqondeni nasekuzibandakanyeni kwinkqubo yobukoloni, nokutshintsha kwentlalo yoluntu ngokombono waseAfrika. Amaphephandaba esiXhosa ngawona ayengumthombo ongundoqo, ekunikeneni iingxelo ngentlalo yoluntu kunye nepolitiki. Babonakalisa iingxoxo neencoko zabantu ngokubanzi ngokushicelela iileta eziya kumhleli ezivela kubafundi bephephandaba, into enika iingcinga ngenkqubela phambili kwiintetho zepolitiki kwakunye nentlalo yoluntu yamaAfrika nenkcazo eyingcingane ngalaxesha.

The idea of building the IsiXIT archive originated in Jacques de Wet's IsiXhosa Sociological Concepts Research Group, which is housed in the Department of Sociology. The main aim of the research group is to use isiXhosa texts from the 1800s onward in order to investigate comparatively, across different periods, the social construction of the meanings of selected sociological concepts such as impucuko (modernity/modernization), uphuhliso (development) and inkqubela phambi (progress), umsebenzi (work) and imfundo (education). Accessing early isiXhosa texts for this research, especially newspapers, was a major problem. Early isiXhosa newspapers are mainly dispersed across library archives in the Eastern and Western Cape with limited access. Some of these newspapers are available online in overseas digital archives, but they are behind paywalls and many of the scanned digital images are of an extremely poor quality. We needed to have these all materials in one place and in "research ready" format. Talking to other researchers with similar interests, we soon discovered that there was a shared need for an open access digital archive to house early isiXhosa texts in a researchable format.

The major challenges we have had to overcome include: 1.) locating and scanning these texts, 2.) converting image files (TIF or JPEG) into MS Word text files using optical character recognition software, 3.) "cleaning" the converted text files for errors (e.g. incorrect or

Ingcinga yokwakha uvimba wogcino-ncwadi i-IsiXIT yavela kwiqela lophando luka Jacques de Wet lwesiXhosa eliphanda iingcamango zentlalo, ehlala kwiSebe leNzululwazi ngoLuntu (okanye iSosiyojoli). Eyona njongo yeliqela labaphandi kukusebenzisa izibhalo zesiXhosa ezisuka kwiminyaka ye1800 ukunyuka ukwenzele kuphandwe ngokuthelekiswa, kumaxesha ahlukileyo embali, ukwakhiwa kweentsingiselo zeengcamango ezithile zenzululwazi yoluntu esiXhoseni nje ngempucuko (modernity/modernization), uphuhliso (development) nekqubela phambili (progress), umsebenzi (work) nemfundo (education). Ukwazi ukufikelela kwizibhalo zesiXhosa koluphando, ngakumbi amaphephandaba yaba yingxaki enkulu. Amaphephandaba esiXhosa ahleli kwindawo ngendawo kwizindlu zencwadi eMpuma naseNtshona Koloni, kumxinwa ukufumaneka. Amanye alamaphephandaba ayafumaneka kwi inthanethi kwindawo yokulondoloza izibhalo ezibalulekileyo, kodwa afumaneka ngemali, kwaye imifanekiso yonakalisiwe. Siye sadinga ukuba sibenazo zonke ezizixhobo kwindawo enye, zibe ngendlela "yokulungela uphando". Sithe sakukuthethana nabanye abaphandi abanomdla ofanayo, safumana ukuba kukho isidingo se-open access digital archive ukuhlalisa izibhalo zesiXhosa zamandulo ngefomathi ezinokuphandwa ngayo.

Owona mceli-mngeni ekwakufuneka siwoyise uquka: 1.) Ukufumanisa nokukopa ngokwedijithali ezizibhalo, 2.) Ukuguqula umfanekiso (TIF okanye JPEG) ukuba zibenguMS Word ngokusebenzisa isoftware ethile, 3.) "ukulungisa" lamaphepha -



-blurred characters, incorrect words, missing words, incorrect formatting), 4.) suitable researcher training, 5.) building the digital archive and finding a suitable web host, and, of course, 6.) funding.

We have received generous support from the Mellon Foundation, the WITS Institute for Social and Economic Research and UCT's Digital Library Services.

Our research team includes: Amandla Ngwendu (African Languages, UCT), Jonathan Schoots (Sociology, WITS), Jacques de Wet (Sociology, UCT), Zimingtonapakade Sigenu (Master's student, 2019-2020), Sipile Nqiyama (Master's student), Siphenkosi Hlangu (Master's student), Likhona Qazisa (Master's student), Pilisa Plamana (Master's student) and Sinovuyo Xhongo (BA graduate).

The immediate goal of the IsiXIT archive is to make early isiXhosa texts available and "research-ready" for contemporary study. However, the added value of this archive and the associated research lies in its contribution to emerging African social sciences. We are inspired by the isiXhosa writings of the African intellectual S.E.K. Mqhayi, and by the work of the social scientist Neville Alexander on multilingualism and decolonising academia. They have shown us that if we are going to decolonise social sciences and contribute meaningfully to the making of an African -

-aguqulweyo ukubona iimpazamo (umz. amagama angengawo okanye engabonakaliyo, amagama angekhoyo, okanye into ezibukeka zingafani), 4.) Ukufundiswa kwabaphandi ngokufanelekileyo, 5.) Ukwakha digital archive nokufumana indawo elungele ukuba igcinwe kuyo, nangakumbi ke, 6.) Ukufumana imali.

Sifumene inkxaso ngezandla ezishushu evela kwiMellon Foundation, WITS Institute for Social and Economic Research kwakunye ne Digital Library Services yaseUCT.

Iqela lethu labaphandi liquka uAmandla Ngwendu (wakwi African Languages, eUCT), uJonathan Schoots (wakwi Sociology eWITS), uJacques de Wet (wakwi Sociology eUCT) uZimingtonaphakade Sigenu (umfundi weMaster's 2019-2020), uSipile Nqiyama (umfundi weMaster's), uSiphenkosi Hlangu (umfundi weMaster's), uLikhona Qazisa (umfundi weMaster's), uPilisa Plamana (umfundi weMaster's) noSinovuyo Xhongo (onesidanga seBA).

Okwangoku injongo yeIsiXIT kukwenza izibhalo zesiXhosa zakudala zifumaneke "zilungele ukusetyenziswa" kwimfundo yelo xesha. Nangona kunjalo, into eyongeza kwixabiso lwalovimba wokulondoloza izibhalo ezibalulekileyo kunye nophando olusondeleyo, ilele kwigalelo lwawo kwinzululwazi yoluntu lwaseAfrika esakhulayo. Sifumana iphembelelo kwimibhalo yesiXhosa yeenkcuba-buchopho zaseAfrika u-S.E.K. Mqhayi, nakwimisebenzi yenzululwazi yoluntu uNeville Alexander ongeelwimi kunye nokukhulula imfundo kumatyathanga obukoloniyali. Basibonise -

sociology then we need to engage with these and other African texts. For Jacques and his team this work requires grappling with the the socially constructed meanings of African sociological concepts as they are conveyed through these texts and in relation to historical texts.

IsiXhosa speakers have also alerted us to another advantage of drawing on the IsiXIT archive to explain the meanings of African sociological concepts and incorporate African languages in the evolution of social sciences on the continent (and elsewhere). It is a matter of identity affirmation. Jacques recalls how one of his isiXhosa-speaking students articulated the ability of the archive and associated research to change her view of Sociology in relation to identity. She said that when she first studied Sociology, she could not find herself in the discipline; she saw it as something foreign. In time and after working on the IsiXIT Digital Archive and reading the research outputs, her view changed: the archive, the-IsiXhosa Sociological Concepts research outputs and related sociology lectures have helped her locate herself in the discipline. She began to see Sociology as “something that is ours”. This insightful observation reminds us of the value of the IsiXIT Digital Archive as a source for decolonising our curricula. When Sociology and other social sciences are no longer foreign, and students can identify with them, and academia as a whole, then we are likely to see new -

-ukuba siza kuwaqhawula amatyathanga obukoloni ali kwizifundo zeNzululwazi yezeNtlalo kwaye sibenegalelo elibonakalayo ekwakhiweni kweNzululwazi yoLuntu yaseAfrika, sidinga ukubandakanya le mibhalo kunye neminye imibhalo ebhalwe ngamaAfrika. KuJacques neqela lakhe lomsebenzi udinga ukujongana nokwakhiwa ngokwentlalo kweentsingiselo zeengcamango zenzululwazi yoluntu lwaseAfrika ngokuba zinikelwe kwezizibhalo kunxulumano kwingqikelelo yembali.

Abantu abathetha isiXhosa baphaphamise ukuba inzuzo yokusebenzisa IsiXIT ukucacisa iintsingiselo zeengcamango zenzululwazi yoluntu yaseAfrika, kwakunye nokubandakanya iilwimi zaseAfrika kukudaleka kwenzululwazi yoluntu kwilizwekazi (nakwezinye iindawo). Inokwenza nesiqinisekiso sokuba ungubani. UJacques ukhumbula ukuba omnye wabafundi bakhe abathetha isiXhosa wacacisa ukwazi kwakhe nge-archive nophando oluyingqungileyo olwathi lwatshintsha izimvo zakhe ngenzululwazi yoluntu ngonxulumene nokokuba ungubani. Uthi yena ukuqala kwakhe ukufunda inzululwazi yoluntu ebengakwazi ukuzifumana kulendlela yokufundisa, wayibona ingathi yinto engaqhelekanga evela phesheya. Exesheni nasekubeni egqibile ukusebenza kwi-IsiXIT Digital Archive nokufunda iziphumo zophando, umbono wakhe watshintsha. Uvimba wogcino-ncwadi, iziphumo zophando zeengcamango zezifundo zentlalo zimncedile ekuziboneni kwezizifundo. Waqalisa wabona inzululwazi yoluntu “njengento eyeyethu”. Okukuqonda ngokuqwalaseleyo kusikhumbuza -

contextually relevant innovative research that pushes the frontiers of knowledge - both locally and globally.

ukubaluleka kweIsiXIT Digital Archive njengomthombo wokuphelisa ubukolonyali kwiikharithulam zethu. Xa izifundo zentlalo nezinye izifundo zenzulwazi yoluntu zingezizo izifundo ezingaqhelekanga, abafundi bayakwazi ukuzifanisa kuzo, kunye nemfundo ngokubanzi, kulapho sibona uphando oluyilelwe kwisimosentlalo, olwenza inguquko ethyala imida yolwazi - ekuhlaleni nakwihlabathi jikelele.

## Beyond translation: Rethinking language in research

*by Likhona Qazisa*

In the last two weeks of August 2025, I assisted Psychology Honours students with data collection for a study on bullying and learners' well-being. The research was conducted in two Gugulethu schools, where IsiXhosa is the dominant language, and one school in Heideveld, where Afrikaans is spoken predominantly. My role involved explaining the survey process and translating and reading the survey questions to IsiXhosa learners. This experience was both exciting and eye-opening.

What struck me most was how few learners chose to complete the survey in English. I had expected otherwise, shaped by my own background, where English was positioned as the language of intelligence and success. One exchange stood out to me: a learner teased another, saying, “*uza ba dom ungayazi English xa umdala*” (you’ll be dumb and not know English when you grow up), to which the other replied, “*okusalayo ndifuna isiXhosa*”-

-(regardless, I want IsiXhosa). That moment signalled something powerful, a generational shift where English no longer defines intellect, and learners embrace their mother tongue with pride in academic spaces.

However, the research tools told a different story. The IsiXhosa version of the survey had errors, awkward phrasing, and overly formal language which is typically not used in daily conversations. These issues reminded me that language inclusion in research cannot be achieved by translation alone. Researchers often outsource translation to non-researchers, risking cultural and contextual misinterpretations. When language is treated as secondary, data quality is sabotaged.

This experience reaffirmed that language carries more than words; it holds meaning, culture, and identity. Research in multilingual settings needs to recognise and honour that richness. Including native speakers in all stages, from design to analysis, is not optional; it is essential for ethical, accurate, and contextually grounded scholarship.



# Silicon Valley's inadvertent Marxism: How post-AGI discourse echoes post-capitalist theory

*by Fazila Farouk*

The emergence of ChatGPT and similar generative artificial intelligence (AI) models has catalysed discussions about a “post-AGI world” (Artificial General Intelligence), presaging a future where artificial general intelligence renders human labour increasingly obsolete. Remarkably, this discourse originates from Silicon Valley's upper echelons. Two things stand out about this post-AGI conversation.

Firstly, the spectacle of venture capitalists contemplating capitalism's structural dissolution represents a notable ideological shift. Rather than invoking familiar explanations like “skills mismatches” for technological displacement, [some Silicon Valley insiders now acknowledge automation's systemic threat to wage-based economies](#). Their central question about how humans will sustain themselves when labour ceases to generate economic value, signals a recognition of capitalism's potential internal contradictions.

Secondly, post-AGI discourse exhibits striking parallels to post-capitalist liberation theory, particularly the work of neo-Marxist scholars Herbert Marcuse and André Gorz. Both theorists anticipated technological unemployment as automation's inevitable consequence, pursued under capitalism's efficiency imperatives.

Marcuse's theory of technological rationality illuminates AI's contemporary deployment. His critique challenges efficiency's supposedly neutral objectivity, revealing how technological solutions often mask political choices. The United States' [Department of Government Efficiency \(DOGE\)](#), which was headed by Elon Musk from January to May 2025, exemplifies technological rationality by reimagining governance as mechanical optimisation rather than social stewardship.



*Fazila Farouk*

Gorz, meanwhile, offered programmatic responses to labour's obsolescence. He envisioned jobless economic expansion as enabling multiple post-capitalist arrangements, with universal basic income (UBI) as a cornerstone policy. Ironically, despite its radical theoretical origins, UBI now enjoys endorsement from Silicon Valley elites including Musk, Sam Altman, Mark Zuckerberg and Larry Page.

This convergence between tech capitalism and post-capitalist theory merits sociological scrutiny. Are Silicon Valley leaders genuinely embracing systemic transformation or attempting to manage capitalism's contradictions while preserving existing power structures? The answer may determine whether post-AGI discourse produces genuine liberation or merely capitalism's latest evolutionary adaptation.

## Counting isn't just 1, 2, 3

*by Natalie Miller*

I counted. I counted the weeks beforehand. How many times I would have to stop at Pick n Pay to buy a water voucher, how many assignments were due, how many work deadlines I had and how many more times I would still have to take the bus. The number was surprisingly minimal. The number represented the number of weeks I had left on campus. To you, it could represent the amount of time before your next holiday, promotion or seeing a long-distance partner.

For the past two years, I have been stuck in this forward motion. Yet, it is funny to be *stuck* whilst moving forward. Always pushing forward, counting all my daily instances, how many times I felt good and how many times I felt bad. Often focusing on the bad, unfortunately.

By counting, I think I ruined my academic experience. My poison of choice? Technology. I assembled my life into a 6-inch screen, on an app called "iPhone Calendar" and that was it. My life in tiny little blocks, presumptuously planned -

-ahead. Nothing was getting in my way.

But when I counted all my days left on campus, I started to get sad that the number was minimal.

That is when my perspective shifted. Only 11 weeks left? I only get to experience these moments 11 more times. Surely not! I have a whole life I still want to experience here. And yet, it will come to an end.

The point?

Things end. Therefore, you should not spend your days counting. Neither should you plan your life on a mobile calendar app. You should spend them living, instead. You should not be so focussed on moving forward that you forget to stand still. Even if where you are standing feels odd, like you are 10 years too old to be there - like me pursuing an undergraduate degree at 28. Enjoy the process.

## New beginnings of an Honours student

*by Refilwe Moléfe*

Just like any other student, when I received my acceptance letter from the Department of Sociology, I was overwhelmed with joy and fear concurrently. My head was buzzing with new possibilities, fear of failure, and adjusting to a new space. We kicked off the 2025 academic year, and I was excited to be connected with the Honours cohort as a young woman from Durban. Being acquainted with new people from different cultures, backgrounds, and languages made it easier for me to quickly -

adapt in this space and build meaningful relationships. Moreover, the joy to witness and share the concept of Ubuntu amongst my fellow peers was noteworthy - sharing common goals, shared academic stress (the real “umgowo”), and hope for a better future. Honours is a very short, intense, and demanding qualification that has overall enhanced my critical thinking and communication skills. It has also advanced my knowledge in Sociology. One exciting aspect in Sociology has been conducting research. I found myself drawn to learning about the rural-urban migration of women and the complexities of hostel spaces because my maternal grandmother was a migrant from the rural areas. She was the first in my family to pave a way for a better life, and with the sacrifices she made, I could experience a better life. The fieldwork in Durban was coupled with excitement and nerves, but I ensured that I incorporated the research skills and knowledge I had learned in class. I constantly had back-and-forth calls with my supervisor whenever I felt challenged in the process of my data collection. The research journey was fulfilling because I got to understand the struggles of rural-urban migrant women, and their stories broadened my knowledge of their livelihoods. Another new and exciting opportunity that came this year was being selected as a first-time tutor in the Sociology Department. I really enjoyed tutoring because I got to engage with students from different backgrounds, transfer knowledge, and learn from them. As we approach the end of this academic year, I reflect on the doors I have entered, the friends I have gained, the stories I have shared and heard, and I celebrate my hard -

work, my first time being a tutor in the department, and the new possibilities that await me.



LET'S  
CELEBRATE  
you

- **Frank Matose** - promoted from Associate Professor to Professor
- **Jacques De Wet** - promoted from Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor
- **Tamlynne Meyer** - promoted from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer





## List of Contributors



- **Sam Salduker** is completing her Honours in Development Studies. She is particularly interested in medical anthropology, digital health, and African sociolinguistics.
- **Dr Fazila Farouk** is an economic sociologist. Her PhD study (2024) examined [the intersection of automation, unemployment and inequality in South Africa](#).
- **UJacques de Wet** ufundisa kwiSociology kwaye ungumgcini we-IsiXIT Digital Archive. **Jacques de Wet** teaches in Sociology and is the curator of IsiXIT Digital Archive.
- **UAmandla Ngwendu** ufundisa kwisebe leeLwimi zaseAfrika kwaye ungumphicothi-zincwadi we-IsiXIT. **Amandla Ngwendu** teaches in the African Languages department and is the quality auditor for IsiXIT.
- **Natalie Miller** is a Sociology student who is still discovering her voice related to social issues and has a particularly keen interest in creating equity, opportunity and clarity for social change in the workplace.
- **Refilwe Molefe** is a Bachelor of Social Science Honours student in the Department of Sociology and Academic Tutor for Sociology. Her research investigates the adaptation and adjustment processes of women in hostels in Durban.

- **Rufaro Moyo** is a Doctoral candidate in the Sociology Department, University of Cape Town. She is a sessional lecturer in the department, and her research focuses on the function of race in child adoption in South Africa.
- **Likhona Qazisa** is an MPhil candidate in the Sociology department and a Research Assistant in the Centre of Social Science Research, University of Cape Town. Her research interests centre on how language shapes research and knowledge production, sustainable development and parenting.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

UCT decolonial summer school 2026  
Theme: Decoloniality & Mothofatso: reparations and pushing back against fast/slow genocide **12-16 January 2026**  
Neville Alexander Building, Middle Campus, UCTDSS26

