



Social Surveys Unit

During 2007 the Social Surveys Unit was primarily concerned with the consolidation of ongoing research projects concerned with childhood and adolescence, the effects of AIDS on food security through changes to household composition, the comparative study of diversity and inequality, social policy, and farm labour markets. The director (Jeremy Seekings) was on sabbatical for the first half of the year.

SSU Research Projects 2007

AIDS, Migration and Food Security

Funder: Rockefeller Brothers Foundation (RBF)

Prof Jeremy Seekings
Dr Rachel Bray
Ariane de Lannoy
David Neves (PLAAS, UWC)

FOCUS: The project explores how the effects of HIV and especially AIDS on food security are mediated through decisions about "who lives where and with whom?", i.e. about which dependent kin live with or are indirectly supported by which breadwinners within extended families.

ACTIVITY AND OUTPUT: The director attended a workshop of RBF-supported projects in Pretoria (March). Six draft research papers on death and illness, household dynamics and AIDS. Three of these are researched by David Neves and colleagues at PLAAS at the University of the Western Cape. Papers to be discussed at workshop in January 2008 and final report to be submitted to funder in February 2008.

Growing Up in the New South Africa

Funder: Various including, Ford Foundation (through ASRU) and Princeton university.

Prof Jeremy Seekings
Dr Rachel Bray
Lauren Kahn
Ariane de Lannoy
Interviews and transcribers
Collaboration with Prof Kathy Newman (princeton)

FOCUS: There is a remarkable absence of research on ordinary children's experiences of childhood and adolescence. The core of this research project entails linking quantitative research (using data from the Cape Area Panel Study, which was initiated and until recently run out of the SSU) with ethnographic research conducted in three neighbourhoods in Southern Cape Town. The SSU joined with Professor Kathy Newman and Nick Ehrmann of Princeton University in a second study linking quantitative and qualitative research. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of CAPS respondents, focusing on issues of schooling, health and expectations.

ACTIVITY AND OUTPUT: During 2007, Rachel and Jeremy concentrated on working diverse materials into a book manuscript. Drafts were discussed at informal workshops in March and August. The book manuscript to be sent to publisher in January 2008. Lauren wrote up research on relationships and sex, while completing her MA thesis in psychology. Ariane completed a series of working papers on aspects of the effects of AIDS on educational decision-making. She also managed the qualitative fieldwork for the joint project with Princeton University.

Comparative Research on Diversity and Inequality

Prof Jeremy Seekings
Jan Schenk

Collaborations with Princeton University, the University of Sao Paulo and Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil) and JNU in Delhi, India.

FOCUS: The SSU is involved in two international collaborative projects with an interest in comparative studies of racial identity, discrimination and income inequality. The first project, with scholars from Belo Horizonte in Brazil, entailed conducting parallel surveys in 2005 (in Cape Town, the 2005 Cape Area Study). The second, with scholars from Princeton, Sao Paulo and Delhi, is still in the design phase of actual fieldwork.

ACTIVITY AND OUTPUT: Jeremy presented papers using data from the 2005 Cape Area Study at conferences at UCLA (February), Princeton (May), Recife, Brazil (May), and Leiden, Netherlands (July). Jan also attended the conference in Recife.

Wages and Employment on Farms

Funder: NRF and others
Dr Beatrice Conradie
Justine Murray

FOCUS: Beatrice's panel study of fruit and wine farms in the Western Cape provides unique insights into the ways that farms are responding to changing markets and public policies. Justin conducted a once-off study of sugar-farmers in KZN.

ACTIVITY AND OUTPUT: Beatrice published several papers using her data. Justin Murray (together with Corne van Walbeek) published a paper on the impact of sectoral determination on employment and wages in the KwaZulu-Natal sugar industry.

Social Policy and Inequality

Prof Jeremy Seekings

FOCUS: Jeremy continued his ongoing research on the past, present and future of social policy in South Africa and elsewhere. Whilst on sabbatical at Yale in the first half of the year he made good progress in his historical research on welfare-state building in the first half of the twentieth century in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Jeremy conducted archival research in Jamaica and London. Jeremy (with Nicoli Nattrass) conducted a major study for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on social policy and poverty in post-apartheid South Africa.

ACTIVITY AND OUTPUT: The first draft of the report for UNRISD was submitted in late 2007. Jeremy attended workshops in Geneva (February) and Campinas, Brazil (July). Jeremy Seekings also presented a paper (co-authored with Nicoli Nattrass) on contemporary welfare reforms in South Africa at the Sanpad conference on Poverty (Durban, June) and a paper on income inequality after apartheid at a conference at Yale (April). In October he attended a conference on the history of the ILO, and presented a paper on the ILO and welfare reform in the global South, in Brussels. Articles on the comparative history of welfare policy in South Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean were published in several journals.