MATTHEW COETZEE

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Sociology
University of Notre Dame
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EDUCATION

2027 **Ph.D., Sociology, University of Notre Dame**; Minor: Screen Cultures; expected May 2027.
Dissertation: *Rupture and Repair: Community Responses to State Failure and Racial Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa*.
Advisors: Ann Mische and Terence E. McDonnell.

2023 **M.A., Sociology, University of Notre Dame**.
Thesis: *Disruptive Events, Adhocracies, and Symbolic Boundaries in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Democratic Resilience on the Fly in July 2021*.
Advisors: Ann Mische and Lyn Spillman.

2021 **M.Sc., Public Policy and Management, SOAS University of London**.

2018 **B.A., Sociology and African Studies, Yale University**; distinction in both majors.
Sociology thesis: *Social Networks and Structural Diversity at College: African Student Networks, Identity and Integration*. Advisor: Grace Kao.
African Studies thesis: *Robben Island: Perspectives on Dark Tourism and the Search for Authenticity*. Advisor: Philip Smith.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Cultural sociology; social theory; philosophy of social science, ontology, and epistemology; civil repair; collective memory; organizational sociology; collective violence, vigilantism, and social control; social movements and collective behavior; conflict, crisis, and state capacity; global and comparative sociology; qualitative, digital, and visual methods.

PUBLICATIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Books

2027 Smith, Christian, Matthew Coetzee, and Bridget Ritz. *Occulture: The New Face of American Spirituality*. New York: Oxford University Press. Forthcoming January 2027.

Journal Articles

Published Articles

2026 Coetzee, Matthew. "Meaning-in-Action: A Theory of Symbolic Causality." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*.

2026 Coetzee, Matthew. "Recurating Robben Island: Cultural Objects, Digital Memory, and the Entropic Afterlives of National Heritage." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*.

Accepted

2026 Coetzee, Matthew. "Civil Liminality: Rupture, Reconstruction, and the Boundaries of Repair in the Civil Sphere." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*.

Revise and Resubmit

Coetzee, Matthew. "Actionable Pasts: Collective Memory and Social Action During South Africa's July 2021 Unrest." *Cultural Sociology*

Under Review

Coetzee, Matthew. "The Work of Restraint: Organizational Reversibility in Collective Violence." *American Journal of Sociology*

Coetzee, Matthew. "Unequal Theoretical Jurisdiction: Ubuntu and Relationally Generated Agency." *British Journal of Sociology*

Chapters in Edited Volumes

2027 Coetzee, Matthew, Erika Summers-Effler, and Justin Van Ness. "Customs, Frameworks, and Strategies for Social Change." In *Interpreting Protest and Social Movements*, edited by Guya Accornero and James M. Jasper. Bristol University Press. Forthcoming February 2027.

Accepted Coetzee, Matthew. "Informal Bureaucratic Ordering: Sacred Wounds, Sacred Obligations, and Crisis Governance During South Africa's July Unrest." In an edited volume on African governance, edited by Jaimie Bleck, Bernard Forjwuor, Lamin Keita, and Erin McDonnell.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Coetzee, Matthew, and Junhui Cai. "Building Barricades or Belonging: Moral-Organizational Translation in Emergent Crisis Governance."

Coetzee, Matthew and Caitlin Fitzgerald. “Beauty and Re-Enchantment: How Aesthetic Experience Facilitates Transcendence for Religious, Spiritual, and Non-religious People.”

Summers-Effler, Erika, Matthew Coetzee, Stephanie Israel, and Simone Polillo. "Nuance, Transposability, and Creativity: How Perception Produces the Potential for Social Change."

Summers-Effler, Erika, and Matthew Coetzee. "Targeting and Orienting: A Framework for Analyzing Social Change Efforts."

Book Project in Preparation

Coetzee, Matthew. *Seeing Crisis: Perceptual Apertures and the Making of Violence, Restraint, and Repair*.

TEACHING

Instructor of Record, University of Notre Dame — *Spring 2027*

SOC 34790 *Introduction to Sociology*

Co-Instructor, University of Notre Dame

SOC 34090 *Foundations of Sociological Theory*

THEO 33938 *Confronting Social Issues*

Teaching Assistant, University of Notre Dame

Kinship: Encountering Poverty and the Catholic Social Tradition; Research on American Cultural Change and Secularization I-III; Marriage and the Family.

Responsibilities included grading, written feedback, student consultation, discussion facilitation, classroom support, research supervision, and course administration. In the American Cultural Change and Secularization sequence, mentored students conducting collaborative empirical research on religion, spirituality, secularization, and cultural change.

Invited Guest Lecturer, Amherst College — *Fall 2026*

Media and Society. "Recurating Robben Island: Meaning, Framing, and Public Memory," Invited undergraduate guest lecture and discussion on the social production of meaning, museum framing, public monuments, and social media analysis.

Additional Teaching Experience

2020-2021 **Instructor, English and Humanities, NTK Academic Group, Hong Kong**. Taught international secondary students and developed published materials in academic writing, literary analysis, and standardized-test preparation.

2018-2020 **Yale-China Fellow and English Instructor, Yali High School, Changsha, China**. Developed new educational initiatives with local partners; taught English and humanities; co-directed a bilingual production of *Into the Woods*; and mentored students applying to U.S. universities.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

External Grants and Fellowships

2025-2026 **Harry Frank Guggenheim Emerging Scholar Award**, Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Project: "Rupture and Repair: Community Responses to State Failure and Racial Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa." ($25,000)

2025-Present **Pre-Doctoral Fellow, Center for Cultural Sociology, Yale University**.

2018-2020 **Yale-China Fellowship, Yale-China Association**. Two-year teaching and public-service fellowship. ($15,000)

University and Institute Grants and Fellowships

2026-2027 **Graduate Student Working Group Grant**, **Franco Family Institute for Liberal Arts and the Public** Good. Critical Realism Working Group. Co-Organizer with Caitlin Fitzgerald. ($5,000)

2026 **Large Social Science Research Grant, Franco Family Institute for Liberal Arts and the Public Good**. Co-PI with Muna Adem. Project: "When Is Catastrophic Harm Publicly Recognized? Immigration Enforcement and (Non)Eventfulness in the Twin Cities and Chicago." ($20,232)

2026 **Graduate Research Grant, Franco Family Institute for Liberal Arts and the Public Good**. Project: "When Is Catastrophic Harm Publicly Recognized? Immigration Enforcement and (Non)Eventfulness." ($5,000)

2025-2026 **Wilsey Distinguished Graduate Fellowship, Institute for Ethics and the Common Good**. ($44,000)

2024 **Technology and the Common Good Research Grant, College of Arts and Letters, University of Notre Dame**. Project: "Technology and the Common Good amidst Disruptive Events." ($4,300)

2022 **Kellogg Institute Graduate Research Grant, University of Notre Dame**. Project: "Disruptive Events, Adhocracies, and Symbolic Boundaries in Post-Apartheid South Africa." ($3,750)

2021-2026 **Kellogg Institute Ph.D. Fellowship for the Study of Democracy and Development**, University of Notre Dame. ($6,000 annually)

2021-Present **Sorin Fellow, de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture**.

Awards and Honors

2025 **John J. Kane Award**, Most Outstanding Graduate Student in Sociology, University of Notre Dame.

2025, 2024 **Becker Award**, Best Graduate Research Paper in Sociology, University of Notre Dame.

2018 **R. F. Thompson Award for Outstanding Research in African Studies**, Yale University.

2018 **Rhodes Scholarship Finalist, Southern Africa**, Rhodes Trust.

ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

2026-Present **Co-Principal Investigator, with Professor Muna Adem, University of Notre Dame**. *"When Is Catastrophic Harm Publicly Recognized? Immigration Enforcement and (Non)Eventfulness in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago."*

- Co-leading a comparative qualitative and digital study of how residents, organizations, faith communities, businesses, activists, and public institutions interpret and respond to immigration enforcement.
- Conducting comparative qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork across Minneapolis–St. Paul and Chicago, with more than 70 in-depth interviews completed; collecting and analyzing over 1,000 digital media posts from Instagram and X/Twitter; collaborating with Green Card Voices on oral histories; and supervising undergraduate research assistants in interviewing, digital coding, and archival research.

2026-Present **Qualitative Researcher**, *"Can Beauty Save the World?": An International, Interdisciplinary Study*. The Catholic University of America. Principal Investigator: Professor Brandon Vaidyanathan.

- Contributing to a John Templeton Foundation-funded international study examining how experiences of beauty shape spirituality, meaning, belonging, and human flourishing.
- Collaborate on the qualitative analysis of 100 in-depth interviews conducted in the United States and United Kingdom, investigating how aesthetic experiences shape personal meaning and social life

RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

2026-Present **Lab Affiliate**, African Governance Innovations Lab (AGIL), Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame.

INVITED TALKS

2026 "Civil Rupture and Civil Repair(s)." Invited talk, Center for Cultural Sociology Spring Conference, "The Quickening," Yale University, New Haven, CT.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026	African Governance Innovations Lab (AGIL), *London Contributors' Meeting*, July 23–25, London, United Kingdom. Contributing author.
2026	"Beauty and Re-enchantment: How Aesthetic Experience Facilitates Transcendence for Religious, Spiritual, and Non-religious People." Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting.
2026	"Building Barricades or Belonging: Moral-Organizational Translation in Emergent Crisis Governance." Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.
2026	"Meaning as Cause: Critical Realism, Ubuntu, and Theorizing from the Global South." American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.
2026	"Targeting and Orienting: A Framework for Analyzing Social Change Efforts." With Erika Summers-Effler. American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.
2026	"Meaning as Mechanism: A Critical Realist Account of Culture and Action." Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.
2026	"Ethical Adhocracies: Collective Memory and Moral Organization of Crisis Response." European Business Ethics Network, Rennes School of Business, Rennes, France.
2025	"Contingent Memory Activation: Crisis Responses in Post-Apartheid South Africa." American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
2025	"Contingent Memory Activation and Civil Repair: Collective Memory and Crisis Response." CBSM: On the Many Impacts of Social Movements, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL.
2025	"Eventful Sociology and Civil Sphere Theory: Resisting Unrest in Post-Apartheid South Africa." Civil Sphere Theory Working Group, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria.
2025	"Rupture, Repair, and the Civil Sphere: Moral Solidarity and Dynamics of Perception." Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
2025	"Contingent Memory Activation and Civil Repair: Collective Memory and Crisis Response." Democracy, Autocracy, and Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis, San Diego, CA.
2024	"Adhocracies, Collective Memory, and Cohesion Amidst Civil Unrest in Post-Apartheid South Africa." American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada.
2023	"Has Christianity Become Obsolete? Shifts in Deep Culture and Young Adult Indifference." University of Notre Dame Rome Global Gateway, Rome, Italy.
2021	"Founding Moments and Civil Repair." With Lyn Spillman and Isaac Kimmel. Civil Sphere Theory Working Group, University of Trento, Trento, Italy.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND MENTORSHIP

2022-2024 **Project Manager, Christian Smith, University of Notre Dame**. Research for *Why Religion Went Obsolete: The Demise of Traditional Faith in America*, Oxford University Press, winner of the 2026 PROSE Award in Theology and Religious Studies.

Managed six undergraduate researchers conducting and coding more than 200 in-depth interviews; led thematic analysis of religious life histories; and compiled appendices and evidence for the book manuscript.

2021-2022 **Graduate Research Assistant, Lyn Spillman, University of Notre Dame**. Research on the 1619 Project and America 250 initiatives for "Founding Moments and Civil Repair."

2019-2021 **Pre-Doctoral Research Assistant, Andrew Junker, Chinese University of Hong Kong**. Research on protest dramaturgy and movement dynamics during Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill protests.

MEDIA AND PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

2026 Coetzee, Matthew. "Rupture, Repair, and the Civil Sphere: Moral Solidarity and Dynamics of Perception in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *SAGE Video Sociology Collection*. Invited academic video for university teaching and library use. Available online: SAGE Video

SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To the Profession

2026 Reviewer, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Theory & Social Inquiry.*

2026-Present **Graduate Student Representative, Sociology of Culture Section, American Sociological Association**.

2026-Present **Editor, Winter Newsletter, Sociology of Culture Section, American Sociological Association.**

To the University and Community

2026-2027 **Co-Founder and Co-Organizer, Critical Realism Working Group, University of Notre Dame.**

2025-2026 **Graduate Student Council, Academic Affairs, University of Notre Dame**.

2024-2025 **Coordinator, Ethnography Workshop, University of Notre Dame**.

2024 **Founding Member, Friends at Midnight, Catholic LGBTQ+ Faith Group**.

2024 **Graduate Student Volunteer, Open Search Committee, University of Notre Dame**.

2023-Present **Volunteer Coordinator, St. Augustine's Church Soup Kitchen, South Bend, IN**.

2017-2018 **Associate Fellow, Yale Young African Scholars Program, Rwanda and Zimbabwe**. Facilitated college-preparation seminars and year-long mentorship for high-achieving, low-income students from more than 30 African countries.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Academy of Management; American Sociological Association (Culture; Theory; Social Movements and Collective Behavior; Global and Transnational Sociology; Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity); Social Science History Association; Civil Sphere Theory Working Group; Center for Cultural Sociology, Yale University; Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

METHODS AND LANGUAGES

Methods Qualitative interviewing; thematic coding; comparative case analysis; comparative-historical methods; visual and digital content analysis; survey design; social network analysis; abductive and grounded-theory approaches.

Software R; Stata; ArcGIS; Gephi; ATLAS.ti; MAXQDA; NVivo.

Languages English (native); Afrikaans (working proficiency); isiZulu (conversational); Mandarin (conversational).

REFERENCES

Ann Mische
Associate Professor of Sociology and Peace Studies
University of Notre Dame
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Terence E. McDonnell
Henkels Family College Professor of Sociology and Department Chair
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Lyn Spillman
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