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| **Department** | Industrial & Organisational Psychology | |
| **Discipline** | Industrial Psychology | |
| **Research Focus Area** | Systems Psychodynamics | |
| **Supervision Team** | Prof M S May  Prof HA Barnard  Prof AP Flotman  Dr L Tonelli  Prof F Cilliers  Dr C McComb | |
| Institutional repository link: <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/25> | | |
| **Prof M S May (Contact person for this focus area)**  Office: NS Radipere 3-77  Phone: +27124298209  [mayms@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mayms@unisa.ac.za)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3533-4898> | **Academic Profile**  Michelle S. May is full professor in Industrial & Organisational Psychology. Michelle has experience in using the system psychodynamics lens to do research on various topics. She has supervised several postgraduate research projects using this perspective and other fields related to Industrial Psychology | **Capacity**  Up to 1 Master’s  Up to 2 Doctorate |
| **Prof HA Barnard[[1]](#footnote-1)**  Office: NS Radipere 3-109  Phone: +27124294541  [barnaha@unisa.ac.za](mailto:barnaha@unisa.ac.za)  ORCID: 0000-0003-0371-9486 | **Academic Profile**  Antoni Barnard is a full professor in Industrial & Organisational Psychology. Antoni has published and supervised several qualitative postgraduate research projects in this and other fields related to Industrial Psychology. | **Capacity**  Up to 1 Doctorate |
| **Prof AP Flotman**  Office: NS Radipere 3-111  Phone: +27124294879  [flotma@unisa.ac.za](mailto:flotma@unisa.ac.za)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5663-7279> | **Academic Profile**  Aden-Paul Flotman is an Associate Professor in Industrial & Organisational Psychology. Aden-Paul has experience in using the system psychodynamics lens to do research. He has supervised several postgraduate research projects using this perspective and other fields related to Industrial Psychology. | **Capacity**  1 Master’s  1 Doctorate |
| **Dr L Tonelli**  Office: NS Radipere 3-108  Phone: +27124298228  [leyl@unisa.ac.za](mailto:leyl@unisa.ac.za)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6092-6740> | **Academic Profile**  Louise Tonelli is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. Within the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology she has published and presented at several conferences both nationally and internationally. She has published chapters in books specifically focusing on shame as a health resource in cultural contexts and, transforming shame through practical applications in a South African context. Louise is experienced in using the systems psychodynamic approach in research. The Group relations method applied at Group Relations Conferences and qualitative research methods are of particular interest to her. Specifically Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) and Listening Posts (LP). | **Capacity**  1 Master’s  1 Doctorate |
| **Prof F Cilliers**  Phone: +27837098776  [franscilliers1@gmail.com](mailto:franscilliers1@gmail.com)  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6185-6978> | **Academic Profile**  Frans Cilliers is an emeritus professor working on contract in the Department of Industrial & Organisational Psychology. Frans has experience in using the system psychodynamics lens to do research on various organisational and leadership topics. He has supervised several postgraduate research projects using this perspective and other fields related to Industrial Psychology. | **Capacity**  0 |
| **Dr Calum McComb**  [**mccomcb@unisa.ac.za**](mailto:mccomcb@unisa.ac.za)  **Orchid: 0009-0001-3994-4426** | Calum McComb holds a PhD in consulting psychology and works for UNISA as a senior lecturer. Calum has experience in applying systems psychodynamics in practice and in research as a meta-theoretical lens. He researched the systems psychodynamics of voluntary turnover in his PhD. He has presented at both local and international conferences. | **1 Masters**  **Co-supervision 1 Doctorate** |
| **Model of supervision** | Students will be allocated to a supervisor but will be required to work independently within the requirements of higher degree studies. Additionally, students will be guided through online tutoring regarding:   1. Research methodology 2. Doing a literature review 3. How to write a research proposal 4. Ethics in research 5. APA 7th edition Referencing   As part of the qualification, students will be expected to write and present a full research proposal to a panel of academics for approval, and obtain ethics clearance from the institutional ethics committee, before continuing with the actual research project. | |
| **Application procedure** | Apply for a space in this focus area using the **formal UNISA online application procedure** outlined on <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default>.  Remember you must first apply for a **student number**. | |
| **Selection criteria: Master’s/Doctorate** | Refer to the UNISA application website for general M&D qualification admission criteria. In addition to the admission criteria contained in the *my*Choice brochure, applicants are required to prepare:  **Masters students:** a research outline (max 5 pages) describing the following:   1. A proposed topic and motivation for the study 2. Research problem and objectives 3. A brief review of relevant literature 4. Research design: Motivation for a quantitative or qualitative study 5. Ethics considerations and access to the research context 6. List of references (use APA 7th edition referencing guidelines)   **Doctorate students:**a research outline (max 20 pages) describing the following:   1. A proposed topic and motivation for the study 2. Problem statement and research aims 3. A brief review of relevant literature 4. Research design: Motivation for:    1. a qualitative/ mixed-method choice of study    2. Research participants: Population and sampling strategy    3. Measuring instruments    4. Research procedure    5. Qualitative data analysis 5. Ethics and access to research context 6. Envisaged contribution of the study 7. List of references (use APA 7th edition referencing guidelines)   🖝 To prepare your research outline as required above, **GO TO** the IO Psychology departmental website to **download a research outline guide**:     * **Masters students**: [Apply: Department of IO Psychology/Masters-degrees](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-bureau,-centres-&-institutes/School-of-Management-Sciences/Department-of-Industrial-and-Organisational-Psychology/Masters-degrees) * **Doctorate students:** [Apply: Department of IO Psychology/Doctoral-degrees](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-bureau,-centres-&-institutes/School-of-Management-Sciences/Department-of-Industrial-and-Organisational-Psychology/Doctoral-degrees)   🖝 On the front page indicate the relevant Research Focus Area (RFA) that you are applying for. It must be clear **HOW** your proposed study aligns with the topic and methodological focus of this RFA. | |
| **Selection procedure** | In addition to minimum academic requirements, the following criteria will be applied to assess your research outline:   1. **Relevance to the Research focus area.** 2. **Academic merit of the research topic**: Quality in terms of originality and impact of the topic’s reach and significance toward adults in the African/South African-located work context. Applicants must justify the research problem (in practice and in terms of existing research gaps) and the contribution of the study to advance knowledge in the field. 3. Demonstrate clarity about the **core constructs** and a fair knowledge base of the most recent research. 4. Evidence of **critical thinking**: The candidate’s skills and abilities in analysing, applying, and evaluating information. 5. **Academic writing skills:** The extent to which the research outline convey coherent and well-developed arguments that are supported with relevant evidence; the logically sequence of paragraphs; the use of appropriate diction and sentence structures, and the use of correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and syntax. 6. **Access** to the research context and research participants. | |
| **Documents to support application** | * **Academic Record** * **Proposed research outline** (max 5 pages [masters] or max 20 pages [PhD]) * **One-page** abbreviated **CV** including:   + Academic qualification   + Work experience   + Contact details   + Personal motivation for the study   + Previous research, if any | |
| **Research scope** | **The Systems Psychodynamic research agenda focuses on addressing methodological, practice and literature gaps in the following areas:**  **Exploring organisational contexts and topics from a systems psychodynamic perspective**  Systems psychodynamics (SP) allows for the study and interpretation of collective, interdependent unconscious and conscious individual, group, intergroup and inter-organisational processes resulting from the interconnection between different groups and subgroups within a social system (Czander & Eisold, 2003; Neumann, 1999). It affords us the opportunity to attend to unconscious phenomena within/amongst people, the organisational context (tasks, structures, boundaries) and the complex interaction between the two (Amado, 1995; Nutkevich, 1998).  The systems psychodynamic consultancy stance is based upon five basic assumptions as the cornerstones for studying relationships in systems (Hirschhorn, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), namely dependency, fight / flight, pairing (Bion, 2003), me-ness (Turquet, 1985) and we-ness (Lawrence, 1999). Its primary task is formulated as pushing the boundaries of awareness to better understand the deeper and covert meaning of organisational behaviour. This is operationalised through a developmentally focussed, psycho-educational process for the understanding of the deep, covert (unconscious) and dynamic behaviour in the organisational system, such as the challenges of management and leadership (Armstrong, 2005; Lawrence, 2000), boundaries, roles and role configurations, structure, organisational design, work culture and group processes (Czander, 1993; Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle & Pooley, 2004).  **Using the systems psychodynamic lens in research**  The systems psychodynamic perspective enables the researcher to explore various pertinent constructs in Industrial and Organisational psychology from a depth perspective. These constructs include, but is not limited to:   * Leaders/Leadership * Managers/Management * Coaching * Diversity/Transformation * Intercultural competence * Positive organisational behaviour | |
| **Reading:**  **Subject Field** | **This is a selection of articles and books in this research focus area that you can access online on Google Scholar. ‎Further reading over and above these is essential:**  Allcorn, S., & Stein, H.F. (2015). *The dysfunctional workplace. Theory, stories and practice*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.  Armstrong, D. (2005). *Organisation in the mind. Psychoanalysis, group relations and organisational consultancy*. London: Karnac.  Armstrong D, & Rustin, M. (2015). *Social defences against anxiety.* London: Karnac.  Arundale, J. (2017). *Identity, narcissism, and the other. Object relations and their obstacles*. London: Karnac  Bion, W.R. (1961). *Experiences in groups*. London: Tavistock.  Bion, W.R. (2003). *Learning from experience*. London: Karnac.  Brunner, L.D., Nutkevitch, A. & Sher, M. (2006). *Group relations conferences. Reviewing and exploring theory, design, role-taking and application*. London: Karnac.  Cilliers, F., (2018). ‘The experienced impact of systems psychodynamic leadership coaching amongst professionals in a financial services organisation’, South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences 21(1), a2091. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v21i1.2091>  Cilliers, F. & Koortzen, P. (2005). Conflict in groups. The CIBART model. *HR Future*, October, 52-53.  Colman, A.D. & Bexton, W.H. (1975). *Group relations reader 1*. Jupiter: The A.K. Rice Institute.  Colman, A.D. & Geller, M.H. (1985). *Group relations reader 2*. Jupiter: The A.K. Rice Institute.  Cardona, F. (2020). *Work matters. Consulting to leaders and organisations in the Tavistock tradition*. London: Routledge.  Cytrynbaum, S. & Noumair, A. (2004). *Group dynamics, organizational irrationality, and social complexity: Group relations reader 3*. Jupiter: A.K. Rice.  Czander, W.M. (1993). *The psychodynamics of work and organizations*. New York: Guilford.  De Board, R. (1978). *The psychoanalysis of organisations: A psychoanalytic approach to behaviour in groups and organisations*. London: Routledge.  Diamond, M. A. (2016). *Discovering organizational identity: Dynamics of relational attachment*. Missouri, MO: University of Missouri Press.  Fraher, A. (2004). *A history of group study and psychodynamic organisations*. London: Free Association.  French, R., & Simpson, P. (2015). *Attention, cooperation, purpose. An approach to working in groups using insights from Wilfred Bion.* London: Karnac.  Freud, S. (1921). *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. Complete works of Sigmund Freud*. London: Hogarth.  Gould, L.J., Stapley, L.F. & Stein, M. (2001). *The systems psychodynamics of organisations*. London: Karnac.  Gould, L.J., Stapley, L.F. & Stein, M. (2004). *Experiential learning in organisations. Applications of the Tavistock group relations approach*. London: Karnac.  Hirschhorn, L. (1993). *The workplace within: Psychodynamics of organizational life*. Cambridge: MIT.  Hirschhorn, L. (1997). *Reworking authority. Leading and following in the post-modern organisation*. London: MIT.  Huffington, C., Armstrong, A., Halton, W., Hoyle, L. & Pooley, J. (2004). *Working below the surface. The emotional life of contemporary organisations*. London: Karnac.  Layton, L., & Leavy-Sperounis, M. (2020). *Towards a social psychoanalysis. Culture, character, and normative unconscious processes*. London: Routledge.  Menzies, I.E.P. (1993). *The functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety*. London: The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations.  Miller, E.J. (1993). *From Dependency to Autonomy: Studies in Organisation and Change*. London: Free Association Books.  Obholzer, A. & Roberts, V.Z. (1994). *The unconscious at work*. London: Routledge.  Petriglieri, G. A Psychodynamic Perspective on Identity as Fabrication. In *The Oxford Handbook of Identities in Organizations*; Oxford University Press, 2020; pp. 168–184 ISBN 9780198827115  Petriglieri, G. (2020).F\*\*k Science!? An invitation to humanize organisation theory. *Organization Theory*, 1, 1–18, DOI: 10.1177/2631787719897663  Petriglieri, G. & Stein, M. (2012).The Unwanted Self: Projective Identification in Leaders’ Identity Work.*Organization Studies*, 33(9) 1217–1235. DOI: 10.1177/0170840612448158  Segal, H. (2006). *Introduction to the work of Melanie Klein*. London: Karnac.  Sievers, B. (2009). *Psychoanalytic studies of organizations. Contributions from the International Society for the Psychoanalytical Study of Organizations (ISPSO)*. London: Karnac.  Stapley, L.F. (2006). *Individuals, groups and organisations beneath the surface*. London: Karnac.  Stein, M. & Pinto, J. (2011). The Dark Side of Groups: A ''Gang at Work'' in Enron*Group & Organization Management,* 36 (692), DOI: 10.1177/1059601111423533  Vantilborgh, T., Hofmans, J. & Judge, T.A. (2018). The time has come to study dynamics at work. *Organisational Behaviour*, ***39*,** 1045–1049, DOI: 10.1002/job.2327. | |
| **Reading:**  **Research Methodology** | **This is a selection of articles on relevant methodology in this research focus area that you can access online on Google Scholar. ‎Further reading over and above these is essential:**  Churchill, S. D. (2018). Explorations in teaching the phenomenological method: Challenging psychology students to “grasp at meaning” in human science research. Qualitative Psychology, 5(2), 207.  Clarke, S., & Hoggett, P. (2009). Researching beneath the surface. Psycho-social research methods in practice. London: Karnac.  Long, S. (2013). *Socioanalytic methods. Discovering the hidden in organisations and social systems*. London: Karnac.  Long, S. (2016). *Transforming experiences in organisations A framework for organisational research and consultancy*. London: Karnac.  Long, S. (2018). *Transforming experience in Organisations: a framework for Organisational research and consultancy*. Routledge.  Mouton, J. (2011). How to succeed in your masters and doctoral studies a South African guide and resource book. Van Schaik: Pretoria  Schafer, R. (2003). *Insight and interpretation. The essential tools of psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac.  Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2018). *Research methods for business. A skill-building approach* (7th edn.). New York: Wiley. | |
| **Resources: s-a-p scholar community** | South African Journal of Industrial Psychology: [www.sajip.co.za](http://www.sajip.co.za)  South African Journal of Human Resources Management: [www.sajhrm.co.za](http://www.sajhrm.co.za)  Society of Industrial and Organisational Psychology South Africa (SIOPSA): [www.siopsa.org.za](http://www.siopsa.org.za)  SIOPSA Interest group: Systems Psychodynamics: [www.siopsa.org.za](http://www.siopsa.org.za) | |
| **Potential M&D research focus areas or research projects**  To be directed by sound literature review as well as availability of research context, participants and data. | | |
| **Unit of Analysis** | **Research Focus** | |
| **Individual, Group & Organisation Phenomena** | Exploring leadership from a systems psychodynamics perspective | |
| Exploring any relevant psychology constructs from a systems psychodynamic perspective | |
| Systems psychodynamics and coaching | |
| Systems psychodynamics and positive organisational behaviour | |
| Exploring diversity psychodynamics | |

1. Please note that consulting the research focus area leader is no assurance that your application will be approved. If, however, your application is approved, it is also not a guarantee that he/she will be allocated as your supervisor. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)