

ERIN TORKELSON

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EDUCATION

- PhD** **University of California, Berkeley, Geography, 2020**
Dissertation: *Taken for Granted: Geographies of Social Welfare in South Africa*
Committee: Gillian Hart (Geography, chair), Michael Watts (Geography), Sharad Chari (Geography), Donald Moore (Anthropology), Michael Burawoy (Sociology).
- MPhil** **Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, Department of English, 2005**
- BA** **Arizona State University, Department of English and Barrett Honors College, 2003**

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of the Western Cape: Department of Geography, Environment Studies and Tourism, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, 2020-2021.

University of the Western Cape: Department of Geography, Environment Studies and Tourism, Contract Lecturer, 2020.

University of California, Berkeley: Department of Geography, Lecturer, Summer Session 2019 & 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

- 2020** “Taken for Granted: Cash Transfers as Debt Transfers.” *World Development* 126:, 104711, 1-11.
ND with Deborah James, Erin Torkelson and David Neves, “Savings, Investment, Borrowing: A South African Perspective on Thrift.” In *Thrift*. Ed. Catherine Alexander and Daniel Sosna. Forthcoming.

Manuscripts Under Review

- ND** “Sophia’s Choice: Moral Economies of Debt and Reparation.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. (Revise and Resubmit)
“Bantustan Banking: Technopolitical Welfare Payments in South Africa.” *Antipode*. (Submitted)

Public Scholarship, Newspaper Articles, Documentary Films, Podcasts

- 2018** with Esley Philander, Colleen Crawford-Cousins, and Johan Abrahams. “Grant Grabs: Social Grants and the Green Card.” *Cutting Edge*. South African Broadcasting Company. 27 March.
2017 with GroundUp Staff. “Social Grants: Has Belamant Answered His Critics?” *Ground Up*. 9 May.
“The World Bank’s Role in SA’s Social Grant Payment System.” *GroundUp*, 23 March.

- Republished by Mail & Guardian, Huffington Post, Daily Maverick, News24, TimesLive.*
 “Sophia’s Choice: Farm Worker has to Decide which Child to Feed.” GroundUp, 15 March.
Republished by Daily Maverick, TimesLive, Independent Online.
 “Deductions from Social Grants: How it All Works.” *Daily Maverick Podcast*, Cliff Central Radio, Johannesburg. Air Date: March 7.
 “Deductions from Social Grants: How it All Works.” GroundUp, 3 March. *Republished by Huffington Post, Business Day, and Independent Online.*
2015 with Michael Watts, Camilla Hawthorne, Brittany Meche and Erin Torkelson. “What we Learn from the Film ‘Concerning Violence’ about Franz Fanon’s Ideas. Africa is a Country, 8 April.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

National Awards

- 2020** Andrew W Mellon, Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of the Western Cape
2017 Charlotte Newcombe Dissertation Completion Award, Woodrow Wilson Foundation
2015 Wenner Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Award, Wenner Gren Anthropology Foundation
2014 Foreign Language and Area Studies Award (isiXhosa), US Department of Education
2006 Fulbright Fellowship, International Institute of Education, US Department of State

Institutional Awards

- 2018** Graduate Division Summer Fellowship, Graduate Division, UC Berkeley
 International Conference Travel Award, Graduate Division, UC Berkeley
2016 Rocca Dissertation Scholarship in African Studies, Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley
2015 John L. Simpson Memorial Research Fellowship, International and Area Studies, UC Berkeley
 Rocca Scholarship in African Studies, Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley
 Summer Language Scholarship, Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley
 Conference Grant, UC Humanities Research Center, University of California
 Conference Grant, Townsend Humanities Center, UC Berkeley
 Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award, Center for Teaching Excellence, UC Berkeley
2014 Graduate Division Summer Fellowship, Graduate Division, UC Berkeley
 Geography Department Summer Fellowship, Geography Department, UC Berkeley
2013 Rocca Pre-Dissertation Award, Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley
2012-18 Geography Department Grant, Geography Department, UC Berkeley

EXPERT SUBMISSIONS

- 2020** with the Black Sash, “Debt and the Post Office Payment System,” South African National Credit Regulator, Pretoria, RSA, 6 March.
2019 with the Black Sash, “From Private to Public Welfare,” South African Social Security Agency, Johannesburg, RSA, 15 July.
2018 with the Black Sash, “Is Recourse Possible?,” Panel of Experts, South African Constitutional Court Johannesburg, RSA, 16 March.
 with the Black Sash, “The Techno-optimism of Cash Transfer: Financial Technologies in Welfare,” The Banking Association of South Africa, Cape Town, RSA, 28 February.
2017 with the Black Sash, “Debt and Net1’s Payment System,” South African Social Security Agency and National Treasury, Cape Town, RSA, 15 September.
 with the Black Sash, “Black Sash Monitoring Report,” South African Social Security Agency,

- Johannesburg, RSA, 15 September.
- 2012** with the Pardee Centre, Denver University, “African Futures and South African Presents,” South African Departments of International Relations and Cooperation, Trade and Industry, and Defense Pretoria, RSA, 14 February.
- with the Pardee Centre, Denver University, “African Futures,” African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and UN Habitat, Pretoria, RSA, 13 February.
- with Hennie van Vuuren, “African Futures and Cape Town’s Presents,” Western Cape Department of Economic Development, Cape Town, RSA, 26 July.
- 2011** “Effective Responses to Organized Crime in Southern Africa,” Kenyan Office of the Presidency Mombasa, Kenya, 29 August - 2 September.
- 2009** with the Development Action Group, “The N2 Gateway Project,” South African Parliament, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Cape Town, RSA, 27 October.
- 2008** with the Namibian Slum Dwellers Federation, “Namibia’s Country-Wide Slum Upgrading,” UN Commission on Sustainable Development, New York, USA, 5 - 16 May.

RECENT INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2020** “Bantustan Banking: The Deep Structures of Racial Financial Capitalism,” Department of Anthropology, University of Cape Town, Cape Town RSA (postponed coronavirus).
- 2019** “Collateral Damage: Cash Transfer and Debt Transfer in South Africa,” South African Labor and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town, Cape Town RSA, 20 November.
- “Poverty Finance: Techno-Finance for the Poor from Apartheid to the Present,” Department of Geography, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, RSA, 19 September.
- “Household Debt and Dispossession through Social Welfare,” Rethinking Economics for Africa Festival, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, RSA, 6 September.
- 2017** “Living the Lottery: Social Grants and the Politics of Development Discourse,” Institute for Poverty Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, RSA, 16 June.
- “Sophia’s Choice: Do Social Grants (Really) Work?” Social Grants and Intergenerational Relations Conference, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, RSA, 10 April.

CONFERENCES AND PANELS ORGANIZED

- 2020** Conference organizer with Deborah James, “Life in Debt: Social Grants as Collateral in South Africa,” Black Sash, Cape Town, RSA, 26 August.
- 2019** Panel organizer with Stephen McIsaac and Meredith Palmer, “Health as Fix: Geographies of the Biopolitical in Settler and Post Colonies,” Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Washington DC, USA, 4 April.
- 2015** Conference organizer with Camilla Hawthorne, Andrea Marston, Meredith Palmer, and Brittany Meche, “Race, Space, Violence,” University of California Graduate Student Conference, Omni Commons, Oakland, USA, 3-5 June.

RECENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2020** “Sophia’s Choice: Moral Economies of Race and Racism in South Africa’s Welfare Program,” Association of American Geographers, Denver CO, USA (panel canceled coronavirus).
- 2019** “Collateral Damages: South Africa’s Techno-spatial Fix,” Association of American Geographers, Washington DC, USA, 4 April.

- 2018 “Life on an Instalment Plan: Debt, Social Grants and South Africa,” Africa in the World, American Anthropology Association and African Studies Association, Johannesburg, RSA, 26 May.
- 2016 “isiXhosa Articulations of Home: Thinking Alongside Gillian Hart,” Association of American Geographers, San Francisco, California, USA, 1 April.

IN THE NEWS

- 2020 Rees, Malcolm. “The Human Cost of the Unsecured Lending Explosion.” *GroundUp*, 13 February 2020.
- 2019 Gentilini, Ugo. “Social Protection Papers of the Year.” *World Bank Blogs*. 19 December 2020.
- 2017 Webb, Chris. “The Roots of the Current Crisis in South Africa.” *Africa is a Country*. 14 March 2017.

POLICY BRIEFS

- 2020 with Deborah James and David Neves. “Life in Debt: Social Grants as Collateral in South Africa,” *Black Sash Policy Brief*, Cape Town, RSA: Black Sash.
- “Scoping Study on Corruption and Covid in South Africa,” *Open Secrets Policy Brief*, Cape Town, RSA: Open Secrets.
- 2019 “Debt and Cash Transfers: Port Elizabeth, Limehill, Botshabelo, Delft.” *Black Sash Policy Brief*, Cape Town, RSA: Black Sash.
- 2017 “EasyPay Card Recourse: Port Elizabeth, Limehill, Delft.” *Black Sash Policy Brief*, Cape Town, RSA: Black Sash.
- “Five Country Survey of Social Grant Payment Arrangements.” *Black Sash Policy Brief*, Cape Town, RSA: Black Sash.
- 2012 with Mark Eshbaugh, Greg Maly, and Jonathan Moyer. “Putting the Breaks on Road Traffic Fatalities in Africa,” *African Futures Brief No 3*, Pretoria, RSA: The Institute for Security Studies.
- 2011 with Keith Gehring, Patrick McLennan, Jonathan Moyer, and Hopolang Selebalo. “Knowledge Empowers Africa: The benefits of increased investment in education,” *African Futures Brief No 2*. Pretoria, RSA: The Institute for Security Studies.
- with Eric Firnhaber, Patrick McLennan, Jonathan Moyer “Taps & Toilets: How access can radically improve Africa’s future,” *African Futures Brief No 1*, 25 August. Pretoria, RSA: The Institute for Security Studies.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Considering Affordability for End Users,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(12), 1 May. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Land Use for Sustainable Housing,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(11), 1 April. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Good Design and Construction,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(10), 1 March. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Housing Typologies,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(9), 1 February. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Tenure Options,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(8), 1 January. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable People,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(7), 1 December. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- 2010 with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Community Participation and Leadership,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(6), 1 November. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. “Considering Livelihoods,” *Urban Land Matters*, 1(5), 1 October. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.

- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. "An Integrated Approach to Development," *Urban Land Matters*, 1(4), 1 September. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. "Good Location," *Urban Land Matters*, 1(3), 1 August. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. "South African Housing Policy," *Urban Land Matters*, 1(2), 1 July. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- with Tonkin, Anzabeth. "Sustainable Urban Development," *Urban Land Matters*, 1(1), 1 June. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- "Netreg Housing Project: Remaking City and Vernacular Economy According to Communal Needs and Desires," *Inclusive Housing Case Studies*. Cape Town, RSA: Development Action Group.
- 2006** with Ndashe, Sibongile. *Know Your Relationship Rights*, Cape Town, RSA: Women's Legal Centre.
- with Ndashe, Sibongile. *Know Your Inheritance Rights*, Cape Town, RSA: Women's Legal Centre.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer

Global Environmental Politics, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, Summer 2020
Critical Geographies of Nature and Land, Department of Geography, University of the Western Cape, Fall 2020
Nature, Culture, Power, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, Summer 2019

Graduate Student Instructor

Introduction to Geography, Jake Kosek, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, Fall 2017
Development Theory and Practice, Gill Hart, Global Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2013, 2014
Introduction to Development, Michael Watts, Global Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Fall 2013
South Africa Study Abroad, Social Justice & Transformation, Arizona State University, Summer 2006/07

High School Teacher

English as a Second Language & *Freshman English Literature*, McClintock High School, Tempe Union High School District, Arizona, 2004-2005.

TEACHING AREAS

Lower Division

Introduction to Geography
 Introduction to Global Studies
 Introduction to African Studies
 Geographies of Justice
 Economic Geographies
 Globalization

Upper Division

Postcolonial and Decolonial Geographies
 Geographies of Race and Racism
 Gender, Race and Development
 Development in History and Theory
 Poverty Finance
 Nature, Culture, and Power

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

- 2020** Open Secrets Funded Fieldwork, RSA (1 month)
Produced “Scoping Study on Opportunities for Corruption and Covid.”
- 2019** London School of Economics (LSE) Funded Fieldwork, RSA (3 months)
Researched debt and social grants under the Post Office payment system in 9 cities for the Black Sash with Deborah James and David Neves.
- 2017-18** Intermittent Fieldwork, Black Sash, Cape Town, RSA (6 months)
Researched debt and the EasyPay card in 4 cities for the Black Sash and National Credit Regulator.
- 2016-17** John L Simpson Funded Dissertation Fieldwork, Black Sash, Cape Town, RSA (14 months)
Researched deductions from social grants in 4 cities for the Black Sash and Constitutional Court; researched social welfare as collateral in five countries; participated in quarterly surveys at social grant distribution points.
- 2015-16** Wenner Gren Funded Dissertation Fieldwork, Siyakhathala, Cape Town, Cala, RSA (12 months)
Conducted over one hundred interviews on household budgeting practices, livelihood strategies and social grant payments.
- 2014** Rocca Funded Pre-Dissertation Research, Cape Town and Cala, RSA (3 months)
Researched the politics of home making between the urban township of Khayelitsha and the rural village of Cala; studied intermediate Xhosa.
- 2013** FLAS Funded Pre-Dissertation Research, Cape Town and Cala, RSA (3 months)
Researched the politics of home making between the urban township of Khayelitsha and the rural village of Cala; studied beginning Xhosa.

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2010-12** Researcher, Corruption & Governance Program, Institute for Security Studies, Cape Town, RSA
Managed multi-country research project on urban areas governed by gangs and sustained by criminal economies (CIDA funded); managed multi-country futures modeling project on development in Africa; contributed to research projects on economic crime, environmental crime, and corporate tax evasion.
- 2009-10** Researcher, Land & Housing Program, Development Action Group, Cape Town, RSA
Researched and wrote submissions to Parliament on the N2 Gateway Housing project; researched and wrote case studies on medium density urban development projects; wrote and designed twelve periodicals on medium density urban upgrading to undo apartheid spatial planning.
- 2006-08** Researcher, Urban Poverty Program, Shack Dwellers International, Cape Town, RSA
Researched and reported on housing policy and social movements in Kenya, Namibia, Malawi, Philippines, India and Sri Lanka; built and mentored grassroots research team to collect data on tenure security and housing projects in 20 countries.
- 2005-06** Researcher, Legal Education Program, Women’s Legal Centre, Cape Town, RSA
Wrote popular education materials on women’s inheritance and marriage rights.

SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Reviewer

Society and Space (2019 – present); *World Development* (2020 – present); *African Geographical Review* (2020 – present).

Departmental Service

Graduate Student Representative to Faculty, Berkeley (2017 – 2018)

Graduate Student Representative for Colloquium Speaker Series, Berkeley (2014 – 2015)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Member, American Association of Geographers, USA

Member, African Studies Association, USA

Member, Graduate Group on Gender and Difference, Berkeley

Member, Radical Geographers Working Group, Berkeley

Member, UAW Local 2865, Graduate Student Union, Berkeley

REFERENCES

USA

Gillian Hart

Professor of Geography

505 McCone Hall #4470

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley, CA 94702

Michael Watts

Professor of Geography

505 McCone Hall #4470

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Donald Moore

Associate Professor of Anthropology

232 Kroeber Hall

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Berkeley, CA 94702

Sharad Chari

Professor of Geography

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Berkeley, CA 94702

Michael Burawoy

Professor of Sociology

University of California, Berkeley

410 Barrows Hall

Berkeley, CA 94702

RSA

Shirley Brooks

Professor of Geography

Robert Sobukwe Road

University of the Western Cape

Bellville, 7535

Bradley Rink

Senior Lecturer

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