**Dr Claire-Anne Louise Lester**

**Resumé**

# PERSONAL

**DOB 12/09/1989**

**Nationality South African**

**Employment Equity Category ‘Coloured’ (mixed race) female**

# APPOINTMENTS

Jun 2021­– Lecturer in Sociology, Stellenbosch University Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Nov 2023– Book Review Editor, *The South African Journal of International Affairs*

2016-2017 Research and project officer, Association of European Parliaments with Africa (AWEPA)

2014-2016 Part-time lecturer and teaching assistant, University of Cape Town Department of Political Studies.

# C. TERTIARY QUALIFICATIONS AND ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

2021 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Centre for Humanities in Africa (HUMA), University of Cape Town

2018-2020 PhD (Sociology) from Stellenbosch University on dissertation entitled *Legal Truth and Discourses of Violence in Post-apartheid Commissions of Inquiry: the TRC and Marikana Commission* [first runner up (special mention) in the African Studies Review Best Africa-based dissertation award 2022]. Supervisor: Prof. B Dubbeld, Stellenbosch University

2016 MPhil (Political Studies, Justice and Transformation [interdisciplinary programme in Political Studies and Public Law, with sub-specialization in Human Rights]) *cum laude* from University of Cape Town (UCT) on thesis entitled: *Truth in the Time of Tumult: Tracing the Role of Official 'Truth-seeking' Commissions of Inquiry in South Africa, from Sharpeville to Marikana.* Supervisor: Prof. Andrédu Toit, University of Cape Town

2012 BA Honours (Political Studies, Justice and Transformation, with sub-specialisation in Transitional Justice) Project title: Transitional Justice and Political Adjustments: Coming to terms with Albania’s Transition. Supervisor: Prof. Andrédu Toit

2011 BA degree at Stellenbosch University UCT (triple major in Political Studies, History and English Literature *distinction*. History undergraduate thesis supervisor: Dr. Nigel Penn. *Dissertation awarded with Distinction.*

1. Study exchange Williams College MA, USA

# RECORD OF SELECT SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS & RESEARCH GRANTS

**[Since appointment as lecturer]**

* 2024: DRD Travel Grant, Stellenbosch University (R17 000)
* 2024: Alameda Institute – Group Research Grant Recipient (PI) with Dr N Reddy (New York University, Sociology; Southern Centre for Inequality Studies) and W Shoki (Africa is a Country; Wits) (GBP 22,000/ R510,972)
* 2024-2026: National research Foundation (NRF) Thuthuka Early Career Research Grant (R266,000)
* 2022-2024: NRF Human and Social Dynamics in Development [R430,000] [taken over from Prof D.Francis]
* 2023: Stellenbosch University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Subcomittee A – New staff research grant [R60,000]
* 2022 *African Studies Review*: Best Africa-Based Dissertation Award (Special mention)

**[Prior to lectureship appointment (restricted to past 10 years)]**

* 2021 University of the Western Cape Faculty of Arts, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, ‘Turning the Tide: Consolidating an Academic Pipeline for Staff to Advance Career Pathways at South African Universities’ Post-Doctoral fellowship (Awarded but not accepted).
* 2021 Centre for Curating the Archive, University of Cape Town, Postdoctoral Fellowship (Awarded but not accepted)
* 2020 Fulbright Visiting Researcher Fellowship, Harvard University Department of African and African-American Studies (Awarded, but could not complete due to COVID-19 pandemic).
* 2018-2020 National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Doctoral Scholarship
* 2018-2020 Stellenbosch University Graduate School Doctoral Scholarship
* 2018-19 Social Science Research Council, Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa programme, Proposal development fellowship.
* 2014 & 2015 National Research Foundation, Innovation and Scarce Skills Scholarship
* 2014, 2015, 2016 SSRC/Mellon Predoctoral Research Grant recipient

# PUBLICATIONS [Peer reviewed]

## Journal Articles

1. Lester, Claire-Anne. ‘The Marikana Commission of Inquiry: An Ambiguous Experiment with ‘Truth’ and ‘Justice’ *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* [Accepted. Forthcoming]
2. Lester, Claire-Anne (with Michael Nassen Smith) ‘Rethinking Economics for Africa? Critical Reflections on the ‘Decolonisation’ Agenda’. *Review of African Political Economy* [Accepted, forthcoming]
3. Lester, CAL. 2023. “Legalism in the Marikana Commission of Inquiry Report: Veiling “Sociological Causes” of the Massacre” *South African Review of Sociology* 53(2): 170–92[[1]](#footnote-2)
4. Smith, MN and Lester, CAL. 2023. From “dependency” to “decoloniality”? The enduring relevance of materialist political economy and the problems of a “decolonial” alternative. *Social Dynamics[[2]](#footnote-3)*
5. Smith, MN and Lester, CAL. 2022. The Contradictions of black consciousness: from Biko to Rhodes Must Fall. *Social Dynamics* 48(1): 141-169
6. Lester, Claire-Anne. 2020. Commissions of inquiry and the role of law: towards a materialist approach. *Social Dynamics* 46(1): 86-103
7. Lester, Claire-Anne, Carilee Osborne, and Michael Nassen Smith. Falling Rainbows: Anatomy of a False Choice. 2017. *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy*. (64)
8. Lester, Claire-Anne. 2015. Youth dialogue on the TRC: Reflections and possibilities. *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy* (59)
9. Lester, Claire-Anne “Codified Criminality: A Socio-Historical Analysis of Confinement at the Cape of Good Hope.” *Historical Approaches.* Vol. 9 (2011) [Published history thesis]

## Refereed book chapters

1. Lester, Claire-Anne., “Truth, Justice and Power: Commissions of Inquiry and State Capture” in *The Zondo Commission in Socio-Political and Historical Perspective.* Devi Pillay and PeterVale *(Eds.)* Forthcoming 2025
2. Smith, MN and Lester, CAL. 2024. From “Dependency” to “decoloniality”? The enduring relevance of materialist political economy and the problems of a “decolonial” alternative’. In George Hull (ed.) *Intellectual Decolonisation: Critical Perspectives*. New York, Routledge: 196–219 [Republished as an edited volume]
3. Lester, CAL. 2024. Discourses on Political Violence and the Mechanics of Legitimation in Official Commissions of Inquiry in Africa. In Mlambo, O.B and E Chitando, eds. *The Palgrave Handbook of Violence in Africa*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland., pp. 243–64
4. Nyamnjoh, A-N and Lester, CAL. 2019. Global and African Discourses on Citizenship. In Itsuhiro Hazama, Kiyoshi Umeya & Francis B. Nyamnjoh (eds) *Citizenship in Motion: South African and Japanese Scholars in Conversation*.Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group: 39-62

## Book Reviews:

1. Lester, CAL. Ibhawoh, Bonny, Jasper Abembia Ayelazuno, and Sylvia Bawa, eds. ‘Truth Commissions and State Building.’ (McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2023) *Journal of Modern African Studies* (forthcoming)
2. Lester, Claire-Anne. Kerstin Bree Carlsen, ‘The Justice Laboratory’ published in The *South African Journal of International Affairs*. 2024. 31(1).
3. Lester, Claire-Anne. Z Jaffer, “Beauty of the Heart: The Life and Times of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke” *New Agenda Journal of Social and Economic Policy*. No. 69 (2018)
4. Lester, Claire-Anne. 2018 “John Saul and Patrick Bond*South Africa: The Present as History from Mrs Ples to Mandela and Marikana.* Johannesburg: Jacana Media”. In *African Studies Quarterly.* 17 (4)

## Opinion Editorials/ Popular Articles

### International Publications

1. Lester, CAL. “[All Rise: Can Courts of law deliver justice](https://newint.org/issues/2024/south-africa-30-years-later)?” in *The New Internationalist[[3]](#footnote-4): South Africa 30 years later*. March-April 2024 [Commissioned article][[4]](#footnote-5)
2. Lester, CAL. “[The Myth of the Apolitical Commission](https://africasacountry.com/2023/09/the-myth-of-the-apolitical-commission)” 20 September 2023. *Africa is a Country*
3. Lester, CAL and Fogel, B. 19 July 2022. ‘[What does it have to do with Marikana](https://africasacountry.com/2022/07/what-does-it-have-to-do-with-marikana)?’ *Africa is a Country* [Commissioned as a 10 year Marikana commemoration special series]
4. Lester, CAL and Osborne, C. 29 December 2021. ‘[Desmond Tutu Never Sold out the Liberation Struggle](https://jacobin.com/2021/12/desmond-tutu-never-sold-out-the-liberation-struggle#:~:text=The%20late%20anti%2Dapartheid%20leader,structural%20reforms%20in%20South%20Africa.)’. *Jacobin*
5. Smith MN and Lester, CAL. 2019. “[Looking Leftward at the South African Elections](https://jacobinmag.com/2019/05/south-africa-elections)”. *Jacobin*
6. Lester, CAL. 6 April, 2020. “[Who will watch the watchmen?](https://africasacountry.com/2020/04/who-will-watch-the-watchmen)” *Africa is A Country*

### Local newspapers/publications

1. Lester, Claire-Anne. “[Ten Years on – the possibility of holding Ramaphosa personally liable for the Marikana Tragedy](https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-08-15-10-years-on-the-possibility-of-personal-liability-for-ramaphosa-for-marikana/)” 15 August 2022. *The Daily Maverick*.
2. Lester, Claire-Anne. 2021. ‘The Hidden Rivers of Konstansie’s Heritage’, *Amandla*. No. 79/80
3. Lester, Claire-Anne. 1 July 2020. “[The Rapid Reopening of the economy does not empower women](https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-07-01-the-rapid-reopening-of-the-economy-does-not-empower-women/#gsc.tab=0)”. *Daily Maverick*
4. Lester, Claire-Anne. “[More than District Six: The Legacy of Forced Removals in South Africa](https://theprogressivecorner.com/2018/07/19/more-than-district-6-the-legacy-of-forced-removals-in-south-africa-a-long-read/)”. July 2018. *The Progressive Corner.*
5. Lester, Claire (with Daniel Sher). 2018. “[Three Streaming Basic Education: Cure or Crutch](https://theprogressivecorner.com/2018/04/30/three-streaming-basic-education-cure-or-crutch/)?” *The Progressive Corner.*
6. Lester, Claire-Anne. “[Truth in the Time of Tumult](https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/25342/thesis_hum_2017_lester_claire_anne.pdf?sequence=1): Tracing the Role of Official ‘Truth-seeking’ Commissions of Inquiry in South Africa, from Sharpeville to Marikana”. (MPhil diss. University of Cape Town)
7. Lester, Claire-Anne. “[Awakening Memories that are Far from Dead](https://www.southernmail.co.za/news/awakening-memories-8097568)”. *Southern Mail*. 8 March 2017.
8. Lester, Claire-Anne; Sher, Daniel and Motsepe, Tsepo. 2016 “[Streaming Basic Education: New System, Same Failures](http://city-press.news24.com/Voices/education-new-system-same-failures-20160609)”, *City Press*
9. Contributor. 2016. “[Of Loose Papers and Vague Allegations: A Social Audit Report on the Safety and Sanitation Crisis in Western Cape Schools](https://equaleducation.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Western-Cape-Schools-Safety-and-Sanitation-Social-Audit-Report.pdf)”. Equal Education
10. Chingwete, Anyway and Claire-Anne Lester, “[Political Freedom and Interest have yet to translate into Mandela’s Vision of participatory democracy in Africa](https://media.africaportal.org/documents/ab_r6_dispatchno39.pdf)” *Afrobarometer* Dispatch No. 39 (July 2015)

### **Editor of Online Special Issue**

Lester, CAL, Shoki, W; Fogel, B and Jacobs, S. (Eds). “Marikana 10 years on”, August 2022. [Africa is a Country](https://africasacountry.com/series/marikana-provocations). [A series of essays and a one-day symposium funded by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung’s Southern Africa regional Office and the Open Society Foundation]

This project was to mark 10 years since the Marikana massacre. It is conceptualised and initiated by me. I connected with NYU PhD candidate and journalist Benjamin Fogel, and the international blog ‘Africa is a Country’ started by Prof Sean Jacobs (The New School, NY). Together, we drafted a funding proposal for the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, which was successful in securing funding for the project. The project consisted of a symposium, and collection of edited popular articles. The editors identified researchers to commission articles, and those same writers were some of those who presented at the symposium.

Marikana 10 years on essay titles:

* Framing essay: Lester, CAL and Fogel, B. 19 July 2022. ‘[What does it have to do with Marikana](https://africasacountry.com/2022/07/what-does-it-have-to-do-with-marikana)?’
* Naicker, C . ‘The Afterlives of Marikana’:
* Z, Stuurman. ‘Confronting Police Power’
* Munchi, N. ‘Where do trade unions go from here?’
* Kalla, S. ‘Dreaming of the Green blanket’
* Sinwell, L and Smith, NR, ‘the Killing Collective’

# EXHIBITIONS

2021 *Hidden Rivers: the Untold Story of the people of Konstansie. Venue - Groot Constantia Wine Estate*

I conceptualised, coordinated and curated the exhibition, with support from the Centre for Curating the Archive (UCT), and in collaboration with Iziko. The exhibition highlighted the under-represented narrative of the community forcibly removed from Constantia under apartheid forced removals.

The exhibition was referenced in several publications:

* IOL ‘Exhibition and Archive Showing Constantia’s Forced Removals’: <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/pics-exhibition-and-archive-showing-constantias-forced-removals-launched-3168a43b-9fbd-4dfb-8612-cd8c933c4d54>
* Iziko website feature: ‘Hidden Rivers, the untold story of the people of Constantia’ <https://www.iziko.org.za/news/hidden-rivers-untold-story-people-konstansie/>
* On the website for UCT’s Centre for Curating the Archive: <https://humanities.uct.ac.za/cca/articles/2021-09-01-hidden-rivers-untold-story-people-konstansie-opens-friday-3-september>
* In the Constantiaberg Bulletin, ‘New Exhibition Explores Forced Removals in Constantia. https://www.constantiabergbulletin.co.za/news/exhibition-explores-forced-removals-in-constantia-159e2777-282f-47bc-bcbc-9f7a96795389

This exhibition has also been the subject of a peer reviewed journal article: Tullett, W., Leemans, I., Hsu, H., Weismann, S., Bembibre, C., Kiechle, M.A., Jethro, D., Chen, A., Huang, X., Otero-Pailos, J. and Bradley, M., 2022. Smell, history, and heritage. *The American Historical Review*, 127(1), pp.261-309.

2023 [Urban Land Justice Gathering](https://nu.org.za/urban-land-justice-gathering/). District Six Homecoming Centre (21-25 September 2023)

# LECTURING EXPERIENCE

**July 2021- Present** Lecturer Sociology, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University.

* Convener and lecturer for 3rd year module *Sociological Theory*
* Lecturer for 3rd year module on social science *Research methods*
* Honours Convenor.

**March 2020** Guest Lecturer *Sociological Theory* (3rd year) Course, Stellenbosch University, Convenor: Dr. Bernard Dubbeld.

**2018 & 2019** Teaching Assistant for graduate (Honours) social theory course, *Is Capital Colourless?* and *Approaching the State*. Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Convenor: Dr. Bernard Dubbeld.

**May – July 2019** Course convener and lecturer, *Contemporary South African Politics and Society.* Washington and Lee University, Virginia, USA. This entailed designing and lecturing the course for American university students

*Key responsibilities (teaching):*

* Preparing and delivering lectures;
* Preparing tutorial classes and translating course material into clear, digestible content for students.

**Teaching Assistant,** University of Cape Town

* *Politics of the Global South* (Convened by Dr. Lauren Paramoer)
* *International Political Economy* (Convened by Dr. Lauren Paramoer)
* *Democratic Theory and Practice (*Convened by Prof Robert Mattes)
* *Conflict in World Politics (*Convened by Prof Annette Seegers)
* *Comparative Politics (*Convened by Prof Anthony Butler)

# SUPERVISION

***Masters***

Completed: 1

Expected graduation in 2024: 2

Currently Supervising: 2

***Honours***

Completed: 4

Expected graduation in 2024: 2

# RECENT CONFERENCE/ SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS/ RESEARCH COLLOQUIA

**2024**

* 28-29 November 2024. Human Rights and Constitutional Accountability Conference to mark 30th Anniversary of Democracy. Stellenbosch University Law Faculty. Paper Accepted: ‘Balancing Powers, Prejudice and Human Rights: Progressive Legalism in the Khampepe Commission of Inquiry into the Usindiso Building Fire Tragedy’.
* 1-3 November 2024 (forthcoming). 2024 Inter-generational Conference, South Africa. Mellon Mays Graduate Initiatives Programme: Paper accepted: ‘Transforming Higher Education: Reflections on my journey of MMUF, from UCT to Stellenbosch University’
* 23-25 October 2024 (forthcoming). NRF Next Generation Symposium.
* 9-11 October 2024: Beyond Apocalypse: Rethinking Capitalism, Democracy and Crisis in South Africa,a conference to mark thirty years of democracy in South Africa [I am one of the partner organisers of this conference, with the grant funding from the Alameda Institute, in collaboration with the Wits Institute for Economic Research (Wiser) and The Innovation Foundation for Democracy (Fidemo). I will also chair a session and present paper: ‘Winning and Losing in South Africa’s legal system’.
* July 2024. South African Sociological Association Annual Congress. Stellenbosch University. Paper: “Balancing Powers, Prejudice and Human Rights: *Progressive Legalism* in the Khampepe Commission of Inquiry into the Usindiso Building Fire Tragedy – preliminary research notes”.
* June 2024. Institute for Global Law and Policy (IGLP) Harvard Law School, and Stellenbosch University Law School. Global Scholars Programme.

**2023**

* August 2023: Indexing Transformation – Social Dynamics Special Issue Launch: “Decolonisation or Decoloniality? Critical reflections on the Decoloniality School”. Stellenbosch University Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology.
* September 2023: International Initiative for the Promotion of Political Economy conference, University of Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain. Paper: “Corporate Accountability and Transitional Justice: Applying a Political Settlements Approach to the South African TRC”
* June, 2023: South African Sociological Association Annual Conference. University of Zululand. Paper Title: “*Rethinking Legal Ideology through the Marikana Commission of Inquiry: Official Discourse, Class Domination and Contestatory Narratives*”.
* March 28-29, 2023. Presenter at: “Decolonized Narratives in Political Economy: Alternative Perspectives from the Global South. A Two-Day Workshop at Hamburg Institute for Advanced Study and University of Hamburg.

Paper: Michael Nassen Smith and Claire-Anne Lester.“*From 'Dependency' to 'Decoloniality'? The Enduring Relevance of Political Economy Approaches and the Problems of a 'Decolonial' Alternative*”

**2022**

* October 2022. Presenter at: Truth Commissions: Issues of Access and Ownership McMaster University Hamilton, ON, Canada. Paper title: “*Post-Apartheid Experiments with Corporate Truth and Justice: A Comparative study on the TRC and Marikana Commission’s approach to corporate violence in the mining sector*.”
* October 2022: Stellenbosch Teaching and Learning Conference presenter: Paper: ‘Applying a Scaffolding Approach in Holistic Skills Development’
* September 2022: Conference Presenter, Title: *Stumbling through heritage re-membering: the Constantia Heritage and Education Project*. at Museums and Museologies in South Africa: A laboratory of transformation. District Six Homecoming Centre, Cape Town
* August 2022. Keynote Address: “*From Mandela to Marikana: Stumbling through transformation, in defense of academic Activism*”, Stellenbosch University. Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology Graduate Student Conference.
* August 2022: Organiser of “Marikana 10 Years on: A symposium on the Legacy of Marikana”, held in partnership with Africa is a Country and University of Johannesburg Centre for Social Change. Constitution Hill. Johannesburg, South Africa. [Symposium proceedings](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSfc-LKLemU&t=17740s).
* July 2022. The 27th South African Sociological Association Annual Conference: Reimagining the Present and the Future.
	+ Plenary Speaker: Marikana Massacre 10th Anniversary: Reflections on the undying lessons
	+ Paper presentation: ‘Legal Discourse and the Political Economy of mining struggles: reading the Marikana Commission of Inquiry’

**2020-2021**

* May 2021: Presented Paper ‘Legitimist Discourses on Violence in the Marikana Commission Report’. Department of Sociology, University of the Western Cape
* July-August 2020: Presenter, Intangible Cultural Heritage Course, University of Cape Town. Convened by Naomi Roux and Deidre Prins-Solani
* March 2020: Presenter at Stellenbosch University’s *Indexing Transformation* Seminar Series. Cape Town, South Africa. Paper: “Competing Discourses on Violence in the TRC’s Business Sector Hearings”.

**GUEST LECTURES**

* 1 October (forthcoming): Guest lecture, University of Cape Town, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law. “Truth and Justice vs Collective Bargaining Law: the Case of Marikana”.
* May 2024: “Mining Violence in the Athropocene.” Stanford University
* February 2024: “Transitional Justice and the Land Question: the Case of Constantia” Lutheran College, USA
* May 2023: “Forced Displacement and Land Justice in South Africa” guest lecture presented to James Madison University, USA, study abroad students.

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMITTEES**

* **South African Sociological Association**
	+ Council member (June 2023-present)
	+ Working group leader, Political Sociology and Law
* **Law and Political Economy (**[**LPE**](https://lpeproject.org/)**) Project** Southern Africa leader (Yale University)
* **Research Affiliate of the** [**Alameda Institute**](https://alameda.institute/)**,** an international institute for collective research in contemporary social struggles.
* 2017- Present Founded the *Constantia Heritage and Education Project*, a community-based NPO conducting oral history with survivors of forced removals in the Constantia Valley. This is an ongoing initiative towards the creation of a subaltern historical archive and public education.

**SELECT PODCASTS AND RADIO INTERVIEWS**

* “[The Story of Dispossession through the lens of Constantia](https://soundcloud.com/ndifunaukwazi1/the-story-of-dispossession-through-the-lens-of-constantia)” with Ndifuna Ukwazi.
* “Life and Politics in South Africa” with Michael Nassen Smith and Claire-Anne Lester, *Oats For Breakfast, an eco-socialist podcast* ([Part 1](https://soundcloud.com/user-108536943/episode-37a-life-and-politics-in-south-africa-w-michael-smith-and-claire-anne-lester)) and ([Part 2](https://soundcloud.com/user-108536943/episode-37b-life-and-politics-in-south-africa-w-michael-smith-and-claire-anne-lester))
* “HBO’s Watchmen and the and the mainstreaming of anti-racism” *Oats For Breakfast, an eco-socialist podcast* ([Part 1](https://soundcloud.com/user-108536943)) and (Part 2)

**REFERENCES**

Professor Dennis Francis, University of Glasgow: Dennis.Francis@glasgow.ac.uk

Professor David Cooper. UCT Emeritus: David.cooper@uct.ac.za

Prof. Bernard Dubbeld. Stellenbosch University

1. Article assigned as part of UCT course ‘Collective Labour Law’ (CML5613S) taught in 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Article assigned on course syllabus for Kings College London Masters course: Decolonising Economics [6YYD0034]. Week 2 (Core readings) ‘Challenging Eurocentricism in Economics’ taught in 2023 and 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The New Internationalist is an international award-winning journalistic magazine operating from the UK since 1973. https://newint.org/about [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ‘Commissioned article’ means that the editor(s) approached me to write the piece based on my recognized expertise on the matter. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)