

Jonathan Donald Jenner

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst, May 2020 (expected)
Major Fields: Political Economy, Economic History
M.A. in Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst, September 2018
Major Fields: Political Economy, Development
B.A. in Economics, Earlham College, May 2010
Major Fields: Economics; Peace & Global Studies

Primary Fields

- Political Economy (with distinction)
- Economic History
- Development Economics

Dissertation

Title: Three Essays on Socio-Institutional Ecosystems & Trajectories of Economic Development

Committee: Dr. Mwangi wa Gĩthĩnji, UMass Economics;
Dr. Vamsi Vakulabharanam, UMass Economics;
Dr. Johan Mathew, Rutgers History

- Essay One lays out a theoretical view of how socio-institutional arrangements affect economic outcomes using an inter-disciplinary approach to understand the dialectical development of socio-institutional constellations and economic phenomena.
- Essay Two explores the divergent trajectories of labor in colonial Kenya and Tanganyika owing to different institutional regimes of the two British colonies. Built from quantitative and qualitative primary archival documents, this essay shows how the Great Depression revealed and congealed divergent developmental trajectories.
- Essay Three examines the question of the paucity and uneven geographical distribution of worker cooperatives in the United States and identifies elements of socio-institutional ecosystems which allow worker cooperatives to flourish, using spatial econometrics and qualitative control analysis.

Research Experience

Research Assistant, UMass Amherst, Fall '19

- Assisted Dr. Leonce Ndikumana with project to examine the history and efficacy of Development Banks in East Africa.

Archival Researcher, Fall '17-Spring'18

- Spent 3 months doing original archival research in the National Archives of the UK (London), Kenya (Nairobi), and Tanzania (Dar es Salaam) gathering quantitative and qualitative data for my dissertation essay on East Africa.

Research Interests

- Comparative political economy
- Dialectical dynamism between institutional arrangements and economic outcomes
- Historical roots of contemporary development problematics
- Regional foci: East Africa, North America

Awards

John Kenneth Galbraith Award; UMass Economics; for outstanding dissertation research; December 2018
 Phi Beta Kappa; Earlham College (Delta of Indiana); for academic excellence; May 2010
 Earlham College Honors, for academic excellence, May 2010
 Claude Stinneford Award; Earlham Economics; for outstanding performance; May 2010
 Departmental Honors; Earlham Peace and Global Studies; for academic excellence, May 2010
 Earlham College Peace and Global Studies Faculty Award; for academic promise, May 2008

Grants and Fellowships

UMass Dean's Fellowship; for dissertation writing; June– August 2019 (\$4,000)
 Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) Fellowship; for progress towards dissertation; January - May 2019 (\$10,560)
 Critical Language Scholarship Alumni Project Award; for interview project with Congolese refugees; “Congo to Massachusetts – Stories of Movement & Resettlement,” www.congotomassachusetts.com; December 2018-March 2019 (\$1,250)
 UMass Amherst Dissertation Fieldwork Grant; for archival fieldwork in East Africa; October 2017-January 2018 (\$3,800)
 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages Charles Mark Scholarship; for archival fieldwork in East Africa; October 2017 – January 2018 (\$2,000)
 US State Department Critical Language Scholarship in Arusha, Tanzania; for studying Swahili; June – August 2017 (\$7,000 value)
 Mellon-Sawyer World Studies Interdisciplinary Project Dissertation Fellowship; for progress towards writing dissertation; September 2016 – May 2017 (\$17,850)
 Mellon-Sawyer World Studies PhD Fellowship; for participation in World Studies Interdisciplinary Project roundtables; September 2015 – May 2016 (\$1,000)
 UMass Economics Summer Research Fellowship; for summer research on worker cooperatives; June – August 2015 (\$2,000)
 Thomas J. Watson Fellowship; for yearlong study of worker cooperatives in Argentina, Spain, Italy, Tanzania, and India; July 2010 – August 2011 (\$25,000)
 Plymouth Congregational Church Peace Studies Fellowship; for promise in Peace Studies (\$1,000)
 Freeman Foundation Grand for Study in Asia; for study of Indian immigration to Singapore; June – July 2008 (\$20,000)

Seminars and Presentations

Five College African Studies Seminar, 6 December 2019 (forthcoming)
 Paper Presented: “The Great Depression and Labor Force Divergence in Colonial Kenya and Tanganyika”
 New School-UMass Seminar, 3 November 2019
 Paper Presented: “East African labor formations and the Great Depression: A socio-institutional approach”
 UMass Amherst, World Studies Interdisciplinary Project, 21 September 2018
 Paper presented: “Socio-Institutional Space and Wage Labor in Colonial East Africa”
 University of Zimbabwe, Young Scholars Initiative Africa Convening, 16 August 2018
 Paper presented: “The Great Depression, Workers, & Peasants British East Africa”
 UMass Amherst, Critical Agrarian Studies & Political Economy Workshop, 17 October 2017
 Paper presented: “Social Relations and the Organization of Production”
 Amherst College, Center for Popular Economics Summer Institute, 30 July to 5 August 2017
 Lead Organizer “Building Solidarity in an Age of Division: The Political Economy of Trade, Migration, and Climate Change”

University of Leeds, Leeds Festival of Workplace Democracy, 4 May 2017
 Paper presented: “Correlates of Worker Management: Evidence from the United States using GIS analysis”

Pioneer Valley Workers Center, Northampton, Massachusetts, 12 March 2017
 Presenter: “Neoliberalism & Immigration in the United States since 1980”

UMass Amherst, Economics Graduate Research Seminar, 16 November 2016
 Paper presented: “Between Rigid Causality & Overdetermination: Challenges to modelling and testing socio-institutional limits of worker-ownership”

Center for Popular Economics, Amherst Massachusetts, 16 September–4 December 2016
 Lead Organizer, “Reel Economics: A Political Economy Film Festival”

American Social Science Association Annual Conference, Cooperative Panel, January 2016
 Paper presented: “On the Relative Absence of Worker Ownership/Management: A Taxonomy”

Teaching Experience

Instructor in the Department of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2016-19

Courses

Introduction to Political Economy (Fall '19) ECON 105;
 Labor and Economics, through Film (Fall '18) ECON 197 *self-designed course;
 Introduction to Microeconomics (Fall '17) ECON 103;
 Marxian Economics (Summer '17) ECON 305;
 Political Economy of the Environment (Summer '16) ECON 308

Teaching Assistant in the Department of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2013-2018

Courses

Intro to Macroeconomics (Spring '18, Fall '15, Spring '14) ECON 104;
 Intro to Microeconomics (Spring '18, Fall '15) ECON 103;
 Intermediate Macroeconomics (Spring '16) ECON 204;
 Intro to Political Economy (Fall '14, Fall '15) ECON 105;
 Writing in Economics (Spring '14) ECON 397
 Labor in the American Economy (Spring '13) ECON 331

Guest Lecturer for the Department of Economics

Courses

Economics of Cooperative Enterprises (Spring '15)
 Political Economy of Post-Independence Africa (Spring '17)
 Introduction to Microeconomics (Fall '19)

Instructor at the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, 2018-2019

Courses

Swahili IV (Spring '19);
 Swahili III (Spring '19);
 Swahili II (Fall '18);
 Swahili I (Fall '18)

Teaching Honors

UMass Economics Department Teaching Award, May 2015

Work History

Resident Director, Critical Language Scholarship, May – August 2018; Arusha, Tanzania

- Oversaw academic program and well-being of 28 undergraduate and graduate students studying Swahili on scholarship.
- Incorporated elements of East African history, economics, and culture into language instruction, particularly through film and trip planning.

Assistant Coordinator, Immigrant Protection Project of the ACLU, September 2017 – March 2018; Northampton, Massachusetts

- Assisted all parts of ACLU's Immigrant Protection Project, including legal intake, translating and leading visits to ICE detention, researching components of immigration law and following up with clients and legal team.
- Managed a volunteer team to do legal intake and started a volunteer team to translate documents to English for USCIS immigration cases.

Organizational Involvement

Circle of Care Co-Leader for Congolese Refugees in Northampton & English-Swahili Translator,
Welcome Home Refugee Resettlement Program
Co-coordinator, Western Massachusetts Asylum Support Network

Languages

Spanish - fluent

Swahili - fluent

Certified 'Advanced – High' in Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) by AFCT
Certificate of Specialization – Economic Development – Advanced Swahili from Five
College Center for the Study of World Languages

References

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Dr. Léonce Ndikumana
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Dissertation Summary

Three Essays on Socio-Institutional Ecosystems & Trajectories of Economic Development

My dissertation centers the social and the institutional in our understanding of economic phenomena. I treat the socio-institutional context of a situation as a primary unit of analysis to understand the economic phenomena of that situation, while also appreciating the ways in which economic phenomena shape the socio-institutional ecosystems they inhabit. The first of three essays outlines a theoretical basis for this approach. I follow with two case studies which focus on socio-institutional ecosystems and economic phenomena: first an examination of the trajectories of labor force development in colonial Kenya and Tanganyika and then understanding the geographical unevenness and distribution of worker cooperatives in the United States.

Essay 1: Socio-Institutional Space & Economic Phenomena: A Theoretical Treatment

My first essay lays the theoretical groundwork to understand how socio-institutional ecosystems affect the outcomes of particular economic phenomena, and how this can be analyzed in a meaningful way. I borrow theoretical frames from other disciplines involved in the study of economies, in particular from economic geographers and economic sociologists who postulate economic processes are co-constituted and dialectically enmeshed in socio-institutional ecosystems. Unlike institutional economics, I don't seek to explain the origin of either particular institutions or economic phenomena, but rather seek to focus on the interactions and feedback loops of the two. As such, I articulate general modes of analysis which can then be applied to specific co-formations of socio-institutional ecosystems and economic phenomena.

Essay 2: The Socio-Institutional Ecosystems of Wage Labor through the Great Depression in Colonial Kenya & Tanganyika

My second essay explores how the practices of labor diverged in the Depression era East Africa, because of differences in the socio-institutional regimes of Kenya and Tanganyika. Kenya and Tanganyika had some fundamental similarities, being British-ruled economies of agricultural export with European settlers trying to occasion a sufficient wage labor force. Still, some key differences in their legal and institutional architecture led them down different paths which reinforced its trajectory. The Kenyan authorities created an institutional regime which tightly held a workforce in place by delimiting other options, while the Tanganyikan authorities could not, and thus there was a more porous boundary between wage labor, subsistence agriculture, and peasant cash cropping in Tanganyika. The Great Depression – an external shock of drastic commodity price drops – both revealed key differences in the labor forces of the two countries and then congealed those differences, causing further divergence in the developmental trajectories of both states.

Essay 3: How do Socio-Institutional Ecosystems Affect the Prevalence of Democratic Workplaces? An Analysis of Worker Cooperative Constellations in the US

My third essay looks at how socio-institutional ecosystems in the United States affect the prevalence of worker cooperatives. The ~600 worker cooperatives in the United States are intensely bunched, geographically. Hypothesizing that this bunching has to do with the relative supportiveness of different socio-institutional ecosystems for worker-owned and managed firms, this essay identifies the factors which are confluent with the robust presence of worker cooperatives. Using Nelson & Rae's algorithmic commuting megaregions of the USA as a stand-in for delineated ecosystems, I analyze spatial data on ideology, economic indicators, demography, legal distinctions, and support institutions to identify those which are supportive of worker ownership. More, fuzzy-set econometric modelling using Qualitative Control Analysis helps to identify combinatory sequences of factors which support worker cooperatives. This provides insight into the features, and combinatory features, of American socio-institutional ecosystems conducive to the growth of worker-ownership and management.