

John Mathias

Curriculum Vitae

July 2017

EDUCATION

- 2017 Ph.D., Joint Doctoral Program in Social Work and Anthropology
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Dissertation Title: *Contentious Ethics: Creativity and Persuasion among
Environmental Justice Organizers in South India*
Co-Chairs: David Tucker (Social Work), Webb Keane (Anthropology)
- 2011 Certificate in Advanced Malayalam Language
American Institute of Indian Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, India
- 2010 Masters in Social Work
Practice Method: Community Organizing
Practice Area: Community and Social Systems
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
- 2002 Bachelor of Arts
Double Major in Creative Writing (with highest honors) and Social Science
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Community Organizing and Social Change
Civic Engagement and Civil Society
Social Movements
Qualitative Analysis of Ethics in Social Work Teaching and Practice
Cross-cultural Analysis of Social Work Practice
Environmental Social Work

TEACHING INTERESTS

Macro Practice
Human Behavior and the Social Environment
Human Rights, Social and Environmental Justice, Diversity, and Race
Decision Case Teaching, Critical Thinking, and Applied Ethics
International Social Work, Cultural Difference, and Development
Research Methods, including Community-Based and Participatory Methods

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

Austin, M. J., Anthony, E., Tolleson Knee, R., & **Mathias, J.** (2016). Revisiting the Relationship Between Micro and Macro Social Work Practice: A Springboard for Discussion in Our Academic and Practice Communities. *Families in Society*

Mathias, J. (2015). Thinking Like a Social Worker: Examining the Meaning of Critical Thinking in Social Work. *Journal of Social Work Education, 51*(3), 457-474.

Mathias, J. (2010). Of Contract and Camaraderie: Thoughts on What Relationships in the Field Could Be. *Collaborative Anthropologies, 3*, 110-120.

Book Chapters

Powers, M. C. F., Willet, J., **Mathias, J.**, & Hayward, A. (forthcoming) Green Social Work for Environmental Justice: Implications for International Social Workers. In Dominelli, L., Hok Bun, K. U., & Nikku, B. J. (Eds.) *The Green Social Work Reader*.

Book Reviews

Mathias, J. (2010). Review of the book *Shorelines: Space and rights in South India*. *Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 52*: 480-481.

Other Publications

Mathias, J., & Albanese, J. (2012). Pidichadakkalagal Aavashya-pedunnathenthuthu? [What are the Occupy protestors' demands?] *Keraleeyam, 10*(11), 64-65.

Manuscripts in Progress

Mathias, J. (revise and resubmit). Scales of Value: Insiders and Outsiders in Environmental Organizing in South India. *Social Service Review*

AWARDS AND HONORS

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| 2016 | Doctoral Student Award , Association for Community Organization and Social Administration, for meritorious scholarship in macro social work. |
| 2016 | Best Qualitative Synthesis Article Award for Volume 51, Journal of Social Work Education. |
| 2011 | Rosemary Sarri Scholarship , University of Michigan School of Social Work, for research advancing training in the field of community organizing. \$3000 |

- 2009 **Irene and William Gambrill Fellowship**, University of Michigan School of Social Work, for integration of practice, research, and ethical issues in social work. \$1,500
- 2006-2009 **Rackham Regents' Fellowship**, University of Michigan, for graduate education. \$49,700 plus tuition
- 2002 **James Robertson Award for Excellence in Creative Writing**, University of Michigan Residential College, for bachelor's thesis. \$500

FUNDING - EXTERNAL

- 2012-2014 **Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship**, U.S. Department of Education, for twelve months of research in India. \$34,399
- 2012 **Fulbright IIE Fellowship**, U.S. Department of State, for dissertation research (*declined due to acceptance of Fulbright-Hays funding*).
- 2012 **Junior Researcher Fellowship**, American Institute of Indian Studies, for dissertation research (*declined due to acceptance of Fulbright-Hays funding*).
- 2010-2011 **Language Training Fellowship**, American Institute of Indian Studies, for expenses of attending the Academic Year Program in Malayalam. \$13,000
- 2010 **Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship**, U.S. Department of Education, for Malayalam study in India. (*declined due to acceptance of funding from the American Institute of Indian Studies*).
- 2008 **Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship**, U.S. Department of Education, for Malayalam study in India. \$6500
- 2002 **James Robertson Award for Excellence in Creative Writing**, University of Michigan Residential College, for bachelor's thesis. \$500

FUNDING – INTERNAL

- 2016 **International Research Grant**, Global Social Work Learning Community. \$3000
- 2015 **Library Data Grant**, University of Michigan, to attain survey data from the Government of India. \$800
- 2012 **Rackham Research Grant**, University of Michigan, for dissertation research. \$3000

- 2009 **Department of Anthropology Research Grant**, University of Michigan, for preliminary research in India. *\$4000*
- 2007 **International Institute Individual Fellowship**, University of Michigan, for social work field placement in India. *\$2000*
- 2007 **Center for International and Comparative Studies Summer Research Fellowship**, University of Michigan, for social work field placement in India. *\$1000*

INVITED TALKS

- 2015 Cross-purposes: Lessons from a Failed Environmental Organizing Collaboration in South India. Loyola University Chicago. December 9.
- 2015 Cross-purposes: Lessons from a Failed Environmental Organizing Collaboration in South India. University of Chicago. December 7.
- 2015 Cross-purposes: Lessons from a Failed Environmental Organizing Collaboration in Kerala, India. Wayne State University. November 13.
- 2014 Keralathile Janakiya Samarangalilulla Mulyaparamaaya Preranakal [Moral Persuasion in Kerala's People's Struggles]. Kerala Varma College. Thrissur, India.
- 2014 Alternative Media and Civil Society Activism in Kerala, India. Center for Development Studies. Thiruvananthapuram, India.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Panels Organized

- 2017 (accepted) Anthropological Research in Social Work: Contributions, Challenges, Future Directions. Society for Social Work Research Annual Meeting. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2016 (accepted) Identifying Ethics: Encounters with a Shapeshifter. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting. Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- 2016 (accepted) Ethics Through a Macro Lens: Community Practice Perspectives on Social Work Values. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. Atlanta, Georgia.

- 2016 Green Social Work: Ethical Challenges and Innovations in Environmental Justice Organizing. Society for Social Work Research Annual Meeting. Washington, DC.
- 2015 Activist Ethics: Pushing the Anthropology of Morality into the Crossroads of Politics and Religion. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting. Denver, Colorado.
- 2009 Model D: The Ford Foundation and Democracy in India. The 38th Annual Conference on South Asia. Madison, Wisconsin.

Peer-reviewed Presentations

- 2017 (accepted) Raising Changemakers: Parenting Dilemmas among Environmental Organizers in Kerala, India. Society for Social Work Research Annual Meeting. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2016 (accepted) Sticky Ethics: Feeling for Morality. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting. Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- 2016 (accepted) The Smell of Injustice: Evidence and Ethics in Environmental Organizing. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. Atlanta, Georgia.
- 2016 (accepted) Insiders and Outsiders in International Environmental Social Work. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. Atlanta, Georgia.
- 2016 Common Goal or Common Cause? An Ethical Challenge for Collaborations in Environmental Social Work. Society for Social Work Research Annual Meeting. Washington, DC.
- 2015 Standing Fast: Ethical Consistency and Social Isolation. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting. Denver, Colorado.
- 2015 There and Back Again: Taking American Social Work Students on Ethnographic Journeys. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. Denver, Colorado.
- 2015 From VapoRub to Tea: Bad Habits and Radical Social Change. Michigan Linguistic Anthropology Conference. Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- 2014 Printing People's Struggle: Magazines and Movements in Kerala, India. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting. Washington, DC.

- 2014 Printing People's Struggle: Alternative Media and Civil Society Activism in India. Biannual conference of International Society for Third-Sector Research. Münster, Germany.
- 2009 Second-Best Supporting Actor: Ideology and Happenstance in the Scripting of Ford as Neo-Imperial Agent. The 38th Annual Conference on South Asia. Madison, Wisconsin.

Other Presentations

- 2011 Does Reasoning Matter in Democratic Politics? Lessons and Questions from Preliminary Research in Kerala. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- 2010 Detroit, Michigan: Social and Economic Challenges and Community Organizing Efforts. University of Kerala. Thiruvananthapuram, India.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses and Study Abroad

- 2016 **Instructor**
Social Change Theories (611)
University of Michigan School of Social Work
Master's course on theories about how to bring about social change. Employed decision case method teaching to connect theory and practice.
- 2013 **Facilitator and Guide**
University of Michigan Global Social Work Study Tour
Week-long tour of women's empowerment initiatives in India for doctoral students in the University of Michigan School of Social Work.
- 2012, Winter & 2010, Winter **Graduate Student Instructor**
Introduction to Anthropology (101)
University of Michigan
Emphasis on the study and theorization of cultural difference and on race as a social and political construct.
- 2011, Fall **Graduate Student Instructor**
Anthropology of Religion (246)
University of Michigan
Emphasis on diversity in ethical values, including conceptions of social justice.
- 2009, Fall **Graduate Student Instructor**
Culture, Thought, and Meaning (330)
University of Michigan

Introduction to social theory for upper-level undergraduates. Received training in teaching writing in conjunction with this writing-intensive course.

Guest Lectures and Workshops

- 2015 **Guest Lecturer**
University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
Class on “Insiders and Outsiders in International Social Work” for a course on international social work practice.
- 2015 **Guest Lecturer**
University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Class on “Ethics in Organizing” for a course on community organizing.
- 2015 **Guest Lecturer**
Wayne State University School of Social Work, Detroit, Michigan
Class on “Steps in Policy Analysis” for a course on social welfare policy in the United States.
- 2015 **Guest Lecturer**
Wayne State University School of Social Work, Detroit, Michigan
Class on “Communities and Social Capital” for a foundation macro practice course.
- 2014 **Instructor**
Sameeksha Research Center, Kerala, India
Two-day workshop with community organizers on the initial results of my dissertation research and the uses of social science in organizing.
- 2014 **Instructor**
Tata Institute of Social Sciences M.S.W. Program, Kerala, India
One-day workshop on research design, with an emphasis on qualitative methods.
- 2011, 2013 **Instructor**
Center for Research Education and Social Transformation, Kerala, India
One-day workshop on anthropological theory and ethnographic fieldwork.

Instructional Training Received

- 2016 **Case Method Training Institute.** University of South Carolina, Columbia
Three-day, intensive training in using decision cases in social work education.

- 2015 **Using Case Method to Develop Critical Thinking in Field Instructors.**
Field Director Development Institute, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
Half-day workshop on teaching with decision cases.
- 2010 **Advanced Training for Writing in the Disciplines.** Sweetland Writing
Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
A course on teaching undergraduate-level writing assignments in the social
sciences.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Ethnography

- 2016-*present* **Islamic and Ecocentric Values in Lakshadweep, India** (pilot phase)
Builds on dissertation fieldwork with secular and Muslim environmentalists in
Kerala. Funding secured for ethnographic fieldwork in the spring of 2017.
- 2012-2014 **Two Approaches to Community Organizing in “People’s Struggles” in
Kerala, India** (*Dissertation research, 15 months*)
Participant observation (4200 hours) and interviews (n=195) among
community organizers, their families and friends, members of the communities
in which they organized, and those they sought to win as allies for their cause.
Conducted media analysis, conversation analysis, and archival research.
- 2010-2011 **NGOs and Environmental Justice Organizing in Kerala, India** (*Research
internship, 12 months*)
Participant observation (750 hours) in NGOs and civil society organizations,
interviews with environmental justice organizers (n=23), discourse analysis of
environmental magazines. Supervisor: Prof. Webb Keane, Department of
Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- 2007 **Fishworker Livelihood and Coastal Policy in Kerala, India** (*Preliminary
dissertation research, 4 months*)
Participant observation (500 hours) and policy analysis at Malabar Coastal
Institute for Training Research and Action.

Mixed Methods

- 2015-present **Moral Policy and Public Health: Motives and Impacts of Alcohol Prohibition
in Kerala, India** (*pilot phase*)
Collaborative project with Deena Thomas, PhD and Jorge Delva, PhD.
Ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted in 2014, with return visit
planned for 2017. Quantitative analysis of alcohol consumption data from the
National Family Health Survey (USAID) and the National Sample Survey
(Government of India).

Community-Based and Participatory Research

- 2010 **U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, Michigan**
Research coordinator for collaborative ethnographic evaluation. Recruited researchers and facilitated collaboration with local organizers in Detroit. Principal Investigator: Prof. Jackie Smith, University of Notre Dame.
- 2008-2009 **Detroit Environmental Justice Initiative**
Research assistant in charge of coordinating community-based participatory evaluation and process documentation of community air quality monitoring project. Supervisor: Prof. Michael Spencer, School of Social Work, University of Michigan.
- 2007 **Washtenaw County Worker's Center**
Project manager for community-based participatory research project on impacts of immigrant labor on native-born, low-wage workers. Coordinated recruitment of volunteers and collection of survey data. Supervisor: Prof. Ian Robinson, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan.

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

- 2016-present **Overall Project Coordinator, Association for India's Development (Ann Arbor Chapter)**
- Coordinate grant distribution and evaluation for grassroots development projects in India.
- 2012-2014 **Participant Observer, Chalakudy Action Council and Statewide Solidarity Committee**
- Participated in all legally-allowed aspects of organizing an environmental justice campaign in rural India.
 - Supervised by licensed macro social worker Prof. Lawrence Root via regular online teleconferencing.
- 2010-2012 **Community Facilitator, Field Street House Intentional Community**
- Co-founded an intentional community in Detroit focused on social justice and interfaith dialogue.
- 2010-2011 **Evaluation Consultant, Keraleeyam Magazine**
- Conducted a systematic evaluation of this social justice magazine's readership and impact, culminating in a forty-page report to its editors and board members. This magazine is a hub of organizing activity in Kerala, India, and eventually it became a central site of my dissertation fieldwork.
- 2007 **Social Work Intern - Malabar Coastal Institute for Training, Research, and Action**
- Contributed to research and editing of English-language news articles, policy statements, and research reports.
 - Assisted in coordination of conferences, trainings, and meetings.

- 2004-2006 **Education Coordinator - The Ann Arbor Teen Center**
- Organized and led after-school education programs for high school-aged teens in Ann Arbor, Michigan.
 - Designed and implemented new programs in tutoring, mentoring, and standardized test preparation that were used by hundreds of local students.
 - Recruited and coordinated volunteer mentors and tutors.
 - Led a week-long service-learning trip to Cleveland, Ohio.
 - Conducted outreach targeting low-income and underserved populations.
- 2000-2006 **Organizer, Videographer - Association for India's Development (AID)**
(AID is a volunteer organization made up mostly of U.S. graduate students of Indian origin, which seeks to support grassroots development projects in India)
- Researched and assisted in coordinating grants for projects in education, microfinance, and public health.
 - Produced a 30-minute educational video on AID's work.
 - Organized awareness-raising and direct action events
- 2003-2005 **Local Coordinator – International Coalition for Justice in Bhopal, India**
- Organized awareness-raising and direct action events to attain reparations for victims of an industrial disaster at a US-owned factory in India.
- 2002-2003 **Intern - Video/Action**
(Video/Action is a nonprofit in Washington, D.C. that produces documentaries and training videos in collaboration with nonprofits and advocacy groups)
- Assisted in production and post-production of videos on cosmetology for cancer survivors.
- 2001-2002 **Documentary Filmmaker/Community Activist - LISTEN: a documentary on homelessness in Ann Arbor**
- Produced film featuring stories from homeless residents
 - Conducted public dialogues between homeless and non-homeless residents.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2016-present **Anthropology and Social Work Special Interest Group**, Society for Social Work Research, *Chair*
- 2016-present **Journal of Community Practice**, peer reviewer
- 2016-present **Anthropology and Social Work Workgroup** (an international network of scholars who combine anthropology and social work), *Chair*

- 2016-present **Global Social Work Discussion Group**, University of Michigan School of Social Work, *Coordinator*
- 2015-2016 **Office of Global Activities Advisory Committee**, University of Michigan School of Social Work, *Doctoral Student Advisor*
- 2015-2016 **Community Organizing Learning Community**, University of Michigan School of Social Work, *Member*
- 2015-2016 **Workgroup on Bridging Micro and Macro Social Work**, Association for Community Organization and Social Administration, *Member*
- 2014-2015 **Evidence of Ethics in Action Interdisciplinary Workgroup**, University of Michigan, *Coordinator*
Bi-weekly workgroup for developing research methods for the study of ethics as a part of everyday life.
- 2011 **Doctoral Research Brownbag Presentations**, University Of Michigan School of Social Work, *Coordinator*
- 2007-2010 **Ethnography as Activism Interdisciplinary Workgroup**, University of Michigan, *Coordinator*
Bi-weekly workgroup for exploring ethical and political issues in ethnographic research with a focus on action and participatory research methods.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Anthropological Association
American Ethnological Society
Association for Community Organization and Social Administration
Association for Political and Legal Anthropology
Council on Social Work Education
International Society for Third Sector Research
National Association of Social Workers
Society for Social Work and Research

LANGUAGES

Malayalam –fluency in conversation, advanced proficiency in reading and writing

French – basic reading proficiency