

## Statement of Research & Scholarship Interests for Anthony J. DeMattee

My research uses a comparative approach to study the politics and organizations of the state-society relationship in countries around the world, with a regional focus on East Africa, the Caribbean, and North America. I will continue to study these topics as I pursue related research projects in comparative public administration and public policy, and civil society organizations (CSOs) as political actors. My training is interdisciplinary both in theory and methods, and I steeped in the Bloomington School of Institutional Analysis and Development developed by Vincent and Elinor Ostrom. My modal research question involves the institutions that structure the behavior of political and non-state actors. I have developed my methodological toolkit to answer a variety of different research questions. My recent and ongoing projects embrace site-intensive methods such as interviews and archival work, machine learning and computational text analysis, small-N/within-case process tracing, data simulation, and mainline statistical techniques.

My dissertation, "Regulating Freedom: Policies that Help and Hinder Civil Society Organizations," is a comparative study of the evolution, intention, and perception of the laws that regulate CSOs, or what I refer to as CSO regulatory regimes. It engages a line of research that scholars and practitioners refer to as the "closing space" phenomena, wherein governments around the world pass and enforce laws that crack down on CSOs within their borders. More broadly, my work makes original contributions to the policy process and policy diffusion literatures, governance research, understudied topics in comparative public administration, and issues increasingly relevant to civil society, nonprofit management, international development, and human rights.

A single research question unifies my dissertation: how do states regulate civil society? To answer this broad question, I engage three interrelated sub-questions understudied in the "closing space" research program: what legal institutions do states have, why do they vary over time, and how are they implemented? These questions are relevant because most analyses portray CSO regulatory regimes as categorically restrictive devices that emerged in the late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century. Institutional theories tell us that such legal institutions rarely emerge from nothingness and that combinations of preexisting institutions at multiple levels—e.g., constitutions and ordinary laws—shape institutional development. Policy diffusion scholars, meanwhile, argue incremental policy change is not only historically constrained and that separate processes of policy diffusion affect institutional development. Finally, we know laws do not implement themselves, and implementation is a function of government enforcement and societal compliance.

My work advances theory and practice and challenges much of the received wisdom on this topic. First, I find that these legal institutions are neither new nor categorically restrictive. My holistic examination of 285 laws shows regulatory regimes contain restrictive and permissive elements embodied in treaties, constitutions, and preexisting laws. And while my historical analysis shows these institutions are products of history, my directed-dyad year event history analysis identifies strong evidence that regulatory regimes change due to international factors, particularly learning and emulation diffusion processes. Thus, while existing literature focuses on domestic explanations for how states regulate CSOs, my work shows these legal institutions are as much a product of history and international influence as they are local circumstances. Finally, my comparative study of four Kenyan regulators reveals significant within-country variation in enforcement and that many CSOs not only support these laws but contribute to their formation and development.

The significance of my research is not that it undermines the seriousness of the crackdown on CSOs, but that it shows the topic has more dimensions than many analysts acknowledge. Limiting the freedom of association is an immediate injustice and a long-term threat to democracy. To study it correctly, scholars

and practitioners should pay increased attention to three theoretically relevant dimensions. History is the first. CSO regulatory regimes are products of history, which means analyzing the adoption of new laws as "lawmaking in the wild" is incongruent with legal realities. Moreover, scholars need to consider the entire legal framework and not merely select individual laws or provisions and presume they represent the whole regulatory architecture past and present. Together, these insights reframe this research program as the "*changing space*" phenomenon. Policy diffusion is the second dimension. Governments change policies for many reasons, and policy diffusion through learning and emulation are two. Diffusion occurs horizontally between geographical neighbors but also vertically as low- and middle-income countries selectively adopt policies enacted by the Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council. Finally, my work reminds analysts that rules-in-form do not equal rules-in-use because politics influences both enforcement and compliance. This challenges analysts to move beyond legal texts to also incorporate bottom-up analyses of regulators and non-state actors.

My other research projects include four articles under review, which are in addition to my dissertation and book chapters appearing in *Informing Public Policy* (Roman & Littlefield 2019) and prepared for *The Cambridge Handbook of Commons Research Innovations* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2020). The first article, submitted to *The Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, uses institutional theories to study the original dataset I created by applying a 58-part coding protocol to a legal corpus of 285 laws enacted 1872-2019. In it, I explain how preexisting institutions and policy diffusion affect the institutional development of CSO regulatory regimes in East Africa. In the second, submitted to *Third World Quarterly*, I combine theories of behavioral economics with primary data to analyze reasons for wage differentials across public, private, and nonprofit employers in the low-information environment of Haiti following the 2011 earthquake. The third, an R&R at *the Journal of Development Studies*, uses machine learning and computational text analysis of political discourse and the changing use of development 'buzzwords' by the World Bank, NGOs, and academics over 25 years. The fourth is under review at *Multivariate Behavioral Research*. It is a methodological article that simulates nested data to compare Type I error rates and power among common survival modeling strategies

My research pipeline builds on these projects while continuing to engage the politics and organizations of the state-society relationship in countries around the world. Two upcoming projects capitalize on archival data collected during my dissertation fieldwork. One uses intergovernmental memos from Kenya's National Intelligence Service and parliamentary debate to rigorously study the enforcement of Kenya's regulatory regime as the country transitioned from single-party to multiparty democracy in the 1990s and later passed a highly progressive constitution in 2010. Another project focuses on Kenya's judiciary to analyze how judicial decisions alter CSO regulatory regimes. This project may expand thanks to my ongoing relationship with fieldwork contacts who can provide access to the people and data of Kenya's Judiciary Training Institute and in its Office of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. A third project puts forth a theory of briefcase nongovernmental organizations (BNGOs) using in-depth interviews collected with these phony humanitarians during dissertation fieldwork. BNGOs are relevant to my study of regulatory regimes because they outmaneuver regulators, fraud donors, and harm citizens. A fourth and fifth project returns to Haiti and additional primary data collected in 2016. Both build on my *Third World Quarterly* article using in-depth interviews to generate hypotheses tested with a survey of public, for-profit, and nonprofit managers; the second combines 2011 and 2016 data to rigorously study decision-making in low information environments. There are several other projects that I look forward to discussing and pursuing with the faculty colleagues and graduate students.