

**Brandon Marc Finn**

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**Website:** <http://www.urbantheorylab.net/people/brandon-finn/>

**AREAS OF RESEARCH/TEACHING:**

Urban theory; African urbanization; informality; links between resource extraction and urbanization; democratic governance; youth employment; ethnography and history

**EDUCATION:**

**PhD, Urban Planning** 2016 – Present

Graduate School of Design

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

- Dissertation: “Copperbelt urbanization and informal mining in global perspective”
- Committee: Dr Neil Brenner (chair), Dr Jean Comaroff, Dr Sven Beckert, Dr Diane Davis

**MSc, Urban Studies** 2015-2016

Department of Urban Studies

University College London, UK

- Dissertation: “Quietly chasing Kigali: young men and the intolerance of informality in Rwanda’s capital city”
- Advisor: Dr Tatiana Thieme

**BSocSci (Hons)** 2010-2014

Environmental and Geographical Science

University of Cape Town, South Africa

- Dissertation: “Straining and innovating: young men working through waitthood in Freetown, Sierra Leone”
- Advisor: Dr Sophie Oldfield

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Academic Researcher** 2014-2015

African Centre for Cities – focusing on urban infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa

**PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS:**

1. **Finn, B** (under review; first revision). Contested continuums: civil and political society in contemporary South Africa. *Politics and Space*.
2. **Finn, B.** (2018) Quietly Chasing Kigali: young men and the intolerance of informality in Rwanda’s capital city. *Urban Forum*, 29 (2), 205-218.
3. **Finn, B,** Oldfield S. (2015) Straining: Young Men Working through Waitthood in Freetown, Sierra Leone. *Africa Spectrum*, 50 (3), 49-69.

**REPORTS:**

1. African Centre for Cities. (2015) *Urban infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa: harnessing land values, housing and transport*. Cape Town. African Centre for Cities. [http://www.africancentreforcities.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Full-DFID-Report\\_Web.1.1.pdf](http://www.africancentreforcities.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Full-DFID-Report_Web.1.1.pdf)

**AWARDS:**

Professional Development Fund 2019

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University	
Weatherhead Affiliate Fellowship Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University	2018-2019
Distinguished African Student Fellowship Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University	2016-2018
Kathryn Davis Fellowship for Peace Middlebury College	2017
Laurie Dippenaar Scholarship FirstRand Foundation	2015-2016
Oppenheimer Scholarship Oppenheimer Foundation	2015-2016
Abe Bailly Scholarship for South African Students Goodenough College, London	2015-2016
Winner of the Global Development Network Essay Competition Essay titled: "Urban Africa in 2025"	2014

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

<b>Instructor</b> Commodities, Cities, and States in Global Perspective Special Concentration, Harvard College	Spring 2019
<b>Teaching Fellow</b> The Nature of Difference: Theories and Practices of Landscape Architecture History and Theory of Urban Interventions Graduate School of Design Harvard University	Spring 2019 Fall 2018
Geographic Thought Contemporary Urban Challenges in the Southern African City Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences University of Cape Town	Spring 2014 Fall 2014

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:**

1. *Resource Cities in the Copperbelt and the Making of the Electric, Uranium, and Digital Ages*. Frontiers of Accumulation – International Conference. University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark, 13-14 May 2019 (forthcoming).
2. *Extractive African Urbanization: Copperbelt Cities and Informal Mining in Global Perspective*. American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, USA, 3-7 April 2019 (forthcoming).
3. *Extractive Urbanization and Global Urban Change*. Cambridge Talks: PhD Colloquium. Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, USA, 31 March 2019 (forthcoming).

4. *Lubumbashi: Global City*. Colonial Cities in Global Perspective. Global History Network Annual Meeting, St Louis, Senegal, 7-9 December 2018.
5. *Quietly Chasing Kigali: Young Men and the Intolerance of Informality in Rwanda's Capital City*. American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, USA, 5-9 April 2017.
6. *The Africa Land and Infrastructure City Scan: A Profile of 31 Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Urban Infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa, Department of International Development, Cape Town, South Africa, 20 July 2015.
7. *Straining and Innovating: Young Men at Work in Freetown, Sierra Leone*. Urban Geography Commission, Dublin, Ireland, 9-16 August 2015.

#### **WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS:**

1. *Contested Continuums: Civil and Political Society in Contemporary South Africa*. Urban Theory Lab, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, USA, 7 November 2018.

#### **NON PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS:**

1. Finn, B (2017). *A New Middle Ground: Rethinking Formalisation in Cities*. Emerge85. 5 July 2017. <https://emerge85.io/Insights/a-new-middle-ground-rethinking-formalisation-in-cities/>
2. Finn, B (2017). *How Anti-Urban Bias Fuels Informal Settlements and Poverty*. Emerge85. 17 August 2017. <https://emerge85.io/Insights/how-anti-urban-bias-fuels-informal-settlements-and-poverty/>
3. Finn, B (2017). *Rwandan Government tightens its oppressive reins*. Daily Maverick. 27 January 2017. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-01-27-op-ed-rwandan-government-tightens-its-oppressive-reins/>
4. Finn, B (2017). *Activism and Rwanda's Development Model*. Daily Maverick. 27 April 2017. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-04-27-op-ed-activism-and-rwandas-development-model-diane-rwigara-takes-a-stand/>
5. Finn, B (2014). *The Sand Miners of Sierra Leone: Working and Waiting*. UrbanAfrica. 14 August 2014. <https://www.urbanafrica.net/urban-voices/sand-miners-sierra-leone-working-waiting/>
6. Finn, B (2014). *Young men struggling for work in Freetown*. UrbanAfrica. 23 July 2014. <https://www.urbanafrica.net/urban-voices/young-men-caught-rock-hard-place-freetown>

#### **SERVICE TO PROFESSION:**

##### **Ad Hoc Peer Reviewer:**

*Cities* (2019)

##### **External Reviewer for MSc Dissertation Projects (3 reviews)**

2018

Graduate School of Design  
Harvard University

#### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP:**

American Association of Geographers

2016 – Present

**PROFESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS:**

**Member**, Urban Theory Lab

2016 – Present

The Urban Theory Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Design is the base for an international network of researchers, promoting theory-driven research on historical and contemporary definitions, effects, and processes of urbanization across multiple scales.