

**Mathew Knudson**  
*Curriculum Vitae, November 2018*

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Vanderbilt University

Department of Economics

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**Graduate Education**

Vanderbilt University, Department of Economics

Ph.D. in Economics, May 2020 (expected)

Primary Advisor: Professor Mattias Polborn

M.A. in Economics, 2017

**Undergraduate Education**

Temple University

B.A. in Economics, minor in Mathematics, May 2015

**Fields**

Primary: Political Economy

Secondary: Labor Economics

**Honors and Fellowships**

Kirk Dornbush Summer Research Grant, Vanderbilt University, 2017

Rendigs Fels Award for Teaching Excellence, Vanderbilt University, 2017

Household International Award for Best Research Paper, Vanderbilt University, 2018

**Teaching Experience**

Vanderbilt University, Instructor

Principles of Macroeconomics, Summer 2018

Vanderbilt University, Teaching Assistant

Graduate Micro Theory I, Fall 2017 and Fall 2018

International Finance, Spring 2018

Macroeconomic Models for Policy Analysis, Spring 2018

Social Choice Theory, Spring 2017

Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory, Fall 2016 and Spring 2017

Private Tutoring

Temple University MSRC, Math and Economics Tutor, 2014 to 2015

Private Tutoring in Mathematics and Economics, Fall 2013 to Present

## Works In Progress

### “The Stabilizing Effects of Disagreeing on Everything”

Candidates for office are restricted in what promises they can make by the party they are aligned with. My analysis shows that this type of candidate competition will have an equilibrium far more often than the classic model, and is robust to small changes in the electorate. Further, while candidate behavior is still strongly influenced by the locations of median voters, the candidate has some degree of autonomy, because there will generally be more than one possible winning position. Candidates are also shown to have choice over whether or not to take advantage of extremism of opinion.

### “Inefficiency Even Under Full Transparency”

Part of the promise of democracy is holding politicians accountable. In recent years, formal theory in political economy has analyzed the question of whether or not transparency of outcomes and actions improves accountability. Unfortunately, in either or both cases, there are incentives to ignore valuable private information and do what voters want to see, in order to be seen as competent or congruent. In these models, however, the politician still has private information about the state. A natural conjecture is that if we could eliminate the private information to begin with, then the politician would have no way of pretending they had received a different (more desirable) private signal, and therefore would be forced to act truthfully. However, even when there is no private information or hidden action of any kind, the desire of the politician to appear competent causes them to inefficiently implement policy, both too often when they are likely to be incompetent, and too little when they are likely to appear competent. If voters form their opinions by conducting informative research about the policy issues, the problem becomes even worse. Counterintuitively, overconfidence on the part of voters, or systematic correlation in the way voters think about issues with the way low type politicians think about issues, may improve policy choices.

### “Why Aren’t Juries Made of Experts?”

Many criminal cases involve complicated scientific analysis of evidence, subtle interpretation of the law, or other specialized knowledge. In order for jurors to make sense of complex evidence, both sides of the argument bring in experts to try to explain the issue to the jurors, so that the jurors can make the right decision. However, why have an expert interpret the information, then explain it to jurors, and then have the jurors vote? Why not eliminate potential sources of error by simply having the experts vote themselves? A similar question arises when considering majority voting about complicated scientific and economic issues. We construct a simple model in which an expert explains the facts of a situation to a jury, that then votes for guilt or innocence.