

**Mathew Knudson**  
*Curriculum Vitae, May 2019*

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**Education**

Vanderbilt University  
Ph.D. in Economics, May 2020 (expected)  
Primary Advisor: Professor Mattias Polborn

M.A. in Economics, 2017

Temple University  
B.A. in Economics, minor in Mathematics, *summa cum laude*, 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  
Kirk Dornbush Dissertation Fellowship, Vanderbilt University, 2019

**Teaching**

Certificate in College Teaching, Vanderbilt University, Summer 2018

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 and 2019  
Macroeconomic Models for Policy Analysis, Spring 2018 and 2019  
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

## Working Papers

### “Two Candidate Competition on Differentiated Policy Sets”

In the classic spatial model of office-motivated candidate competition, equilibrium exists only if the distribution of voter ideal points has a total median, a condition which is virtually never met. However, in the classic model, both candidates can propose policies anywhere in policy space, and this is a crucial element in proving the necessity of that condition. If each candidate may only propose policies from a subset of policy space, does an equilibrium exist more generally? I consider a model in which each of two office-motivated candidates proposes a policy from a distinct policy set. When the policy sets are convex and one does not contain the proposed equilibrium policy, it need not be the case that the proposed policy is a total median, because any competing proposal must be at least some positive distance away, and may only lie in certain directions; hence, the conditions of Plott do not apply. Instead, it is only necessary for each median hyperplane to lie in a given halfspace formed by the hyperplane separating the proposed equilibrium from the closest policy the opponent can propose. The intersection of all of the halfspaces is the set of *guaranteed supporters* of the equilibrium policy, that is, the set of voters for whom the equilibrium policy is closer than any alternative the opposing candidate can propose. Hence, the requirement on the median hyperplanes for the proposed policy to be an equilibrium is that one can choose a median voter on each median hyperplane to be a guaranteed supporter of the proposed policy.

### “Uncertain Policy Implementation with Public Information ”

Recent papers in political accountability have documented the detrimental behavior that results when voters observe an incumbent’s actions or their outcomes because the incumbent distorts her actions in order to signal competence; however, signaling requires private information. We consider a model in which the politician’s information is made publicly available, and voters observe her actions and their outcomes. We call this situation *public information*. Incumbents are either competent or incompetent. Compared to the status quo, voters are made better off when competent types implement policy, but worse off when incompetent types do so. When information is public, only those who are sufficiently unlikely to be competent, according to the public signal, choose to implement their ideal policy. Those who are likely to be competent prefer the status quo. In contrast, private information provides incentives for those more likely to be competent to implement policy, and some of those least likely to be competent to choose the status quo. Consequently, private information may provide higher welfare than public information.

## Work in Progress

### “Campaigning to Persuade”

When candidates decide which positions to take on major issues, they must always bear in mind the difficulty of selling those positions to the voters. Candidates for office spend enormous resources attempting to persuade voters about the merits of their policy platforms. However, such persuasion is mostly absent from models of spatial competition. While there is a growing literature on Bayesian Persuasion, in which politicians design policy experiments ?optimally? to convince voters to support a given idea or candidate,

to the best of my knowledge, there is little research on the effect of persuasion on the choice of policy position. If voters' policy preferences are determined stochastically by the positions of the alternatives offered, what kinds of equilibria would exist? The answer to this question could provide another explanation for policy divergence, which is a long-standing puzzle in political economy. It could also explain why initially unpopular positions are sometimes victorious and why voters often change their policy positions in relatively short time frames.

## **Professional Activities**

### Referee

Social Choice and Welfare

### Service

Council of Economics Graduate Students, Representative, 2018-2019

### Presentations of Work

“Two Candidate Competition on Differentiated Policy Sets”

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2017)

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2018)

North American Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society (2019)

“Uncertain Policy Implementation with Public Information”

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2018)

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2019)

Departmental Political Economy Seminar, Vanderbilt (2019)

### Conference and Workshop Participation

Frontiers in Formal Political Theory, Vanderbilt (2018)

Job Market Workshop, Organizer/Coordinator, Vanderbilt (2019)