

**Mathew Knudson**  
**Curriculum Vitae, September 2019**

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Vanderbilt University  
Department of Economics  
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Nashville, TN 37235-1819

**Graduate Education**

Vanderbilt University, Department of Economics  
Ph.D. Candidate in Economics  
Expected completion date: May 2020

Dissertation Title: Three Essays in Political Economy

References:

Professor Mattias Polborn (Primary Advisor), mattias.polborn@vanderbilt.edu, 615-875-8113  
Professor John Weymark, john.weymark@vanderbilt.edu, 615-322-1437  
Professor Alan Wiseman, alan.wiseman@vanderbilt.edu, 615-322-6241

M.A. in Economics, 2017

Vanderbilt University, Center for Teaching  
Certificate in College Teaching, 2018

**Undergraduate Education**

Temple University  
B.A. in Economics, minor in Mathematics, *summa cum laude*, May 2015

**Fields**

Primary: Political Economy,  
Secondary: Microeconomic Theory

**Honors and Fellowships**

Graduate Fellowship and Topping-Up award, Vanderbilt University, 2015-2020  
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**

Vanderbilt University, Instructor  
Principles of Macroeconomics, Summer 2018

Vanderbilt University, Teaching Assistant  
Ph. D. Microeconomic 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

Vanderbilt University, Law and Economics Tutor  
Ph. D. Microeconomic Theory II, Spring 2017  
Ph. D. Mathematics for Economics, Summer 2019

## Research Papers

“Uncertain Policy Implementation with Public Information” [[Job Market Paper](#)]

A repeated finding in the political accountability literature is that incumbents with private information implement policy inefficiently, due to their efforts to signal competence to voters. I consider a model in which the politician’s information is publicly available. Incumbents are either competent or incompetent, but neither the voters nor the incumbent know which. Consequently, learning about the incumbent’s type comes from research about her policies and observing the policy’s outcomes, and no one knows the outcome of the policy in advance. When voters receive a good signal about the incumbent’s policy, it leaves the incumbent with a high reputation, and she does not want to risk it by implementing the policy. When voters receive a bad signal about the incumbent’s policy, it leaves the incumbent with a poor reputation, and she is willing to gamble on implementing her policy for a chance to repair it. This result may provide an electoral explanation for why popular policies are sometimes not implemented, while unpopular policies are, and why failing policies persist. When only the incumbent receives the signal about her policy, she implements it if and only if the signal is sufficiently positive. In this environment, evidence that policy is likely to make everyone better off makes it more likely that the policy passes. Consequently, voters may be better off when institutions are designed to keep policy information private. Further, it suggests that interventions that provide policy information directly to decision-makers may be more effective than those that make information publicly accessible.

“Two Candidate Competition of Differentiated Policy Sets”

In the classical spatial model of two candidate competition, an equilibrium exists only if the distribution of voter ideal points is such that every median hyperplane passes through a single policy. The necessity of this condition crucially depends upon both candidates being able to propose any policy in a Euclidean space. I assume that each candidate is affiliated with a party which restricts the policies that its candidate can propose and that voters have Euclidean spatial preferences. I show that if the candidates can only make proposals from disjoint sets of policies, then an equilibrium exists if each median hyperplane passes through a region with a nonempty interior that contains the equilibrium policy. An equilibrium, if it exists, is generically robust to perturbations of the voters’ ideal points.

## Work in Progress

“Campaigning to Persuade”

Candidates for office spend most of the campaign attempting to persuade voters about the merits of their policy platforms. However, such persuasion is mostly absent from models of two candidate spatial competition. I consider a model in which policy choice precedes a persuasion stage in which both candidates attempt to convince voters of their policy positions. Such a model may help to explain divergence, and the strategic incentives to take less popular, non-centrist positions more broadly.

## **Professional Activities**

### Presentations of Work

“Two Candidate Competition on Differentiated Policy Sets”

North American Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society (2019)

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2019)

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2018)

“Uncertain Policy Implementation with Public Information”

Young Economists Symposium, Columbia (2019)

Departmental Political Economy Seminar, Vanderbilt (2019)

Graduate Student Brown Bag Seminar, Vanderbilt (2018, 2019)

### Referee

Social Choice and Welfare

### Content Creation

Top Hat Economics Question Writer & Checker, Summer 2018

US Academic Decathlon Economics Editor, Spring 2019 to Present

### Service

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

Council of Economics Graduate Students, Representative, 2018-2019

### Conference and Workshop Participation

Teaching Assistant Orientation, Expert TA Panel, Vanderbilt (2019)

Frontiers in Formal Political Theory, Vanderbilt (2018)