

Ellen M. Key

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Education

Ph.D., Stony Brook University, Political Science, (expected 2012).

Dissertation: “The Political Economy: The Effect of Public Opinion and the Media Coverage on the Macroeconomy.”

Examination Fields: American Politics, Methodology, Political Economy

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Matthew Lebo (chair), Dr. Jeffrey Segal, Dr. Helmut Norpoth, Dr. Janet Box-Steffensmeier

M.A., University of Georgia, Political Science, 2007.

Thesis: “Think Locally, Vote Locally: An Examination of Voter Behavior in Open Primaries and General Elections in Athens-Clarke County.”

Advisory Committee: Dr. Arnold Fleischmann (chair), Dr. Paul-Henri Gurian, Dr. Damon Cann

A.B., Georgetown University, Government and Women’s Studies, 2004.

Thesis: “We Don’t Get Written About: Women in the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement.”

Advisor: Dr. Leona Fisher

Research and Teaching Interests

Political Methodology and Time Series

Public Opinion, Voting Behavior, and American Elections

Political Institutions and Judicial Politics

Honors and Awards

Milton Lodge Award for Graduate Student with Outstanding Potential, Stony Brook University, 2011.

Political Science Graduate Student Teaching Award, Stony Brook University, 2011.

Political Methodology Summer Meeting Fellowship, 2011.

Department of Political Science Graduate Assistantship, Stony Brook University, 2007-present.

Presidential Fellowship, Stony Brook University, 2007-2010.

Graduate Dean’s Fellowship for Professional Activities Award, Stony Brook University, 2009.

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, The University of Georgia, 2007.

School of Public and International Affairs Teaching Assistantship, The University of Georgia, 2005-2007.

Dissertation Summary

My dissertation uses multivariate GARCH models to address several overlapping research questions. First, what effect does media coverage of the president and the economy have on the electorates evaluations of the presidents job performance? Building upon this analysis, I then address the role political evaluations and media coverage play in determining the stability of consumer confidence. I conclude by showing presidential approval has a significant effect on both the level and stability of the macroeconomy even when controlling for objective economic indicators and consumer sentiment.

Papers Under Review and Working Papers

“The Politics of Scandals: The Case of Supreme Court Nominations, 1877-2010” with Charles Cameron and Jeffrey Segal.

We argue that when a nominee’s opponents control the Supreme Court confirmation process, they often delay it in the hope of uncovering a scandal. If a scandal is discovered, they further delay the

process in order to exploit the scandal and damage the nominee's prospects of confirmation. (Under review at the *Journal of Politics*)

"The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in the House and Senate" with Jamie Carson in *Strategic Party Government* by Matthew Lebo and Gregory Koger.

As leaders search for support in key Congressional votes, the level of electoral safety that a legislator has is a good determinant of how likely they are to support the party. Using a two-stage least-squares panel data estimator with fixed effects and instrumental variables, we find that Senators and House members are punished electorally as party unity increases and members of Congress strategically adjust their level of party unity according to their degree of electoral security. (Book chapter in completed manuscript)

"The Political Economy: Political Determinants of the Macroeconomy."

Although much attention has been paid to the role economic conditions play in political evaluations, little attention has been devoted to the role politics plays in explaining changes in the macroeconomy. I argue that in order to fully explain changes in the macroeconomy, one needs to incorporate politics—specifically presidential approval, media coverage, and political events—in addition to variables typically employed by economists. (Under review at the *American Political Science Review*)

"Large Scale Online Text Analysis Using Lydia."

This paper introduces the Lydia system and its method of collecting and classifying entities, describes each phase of the process, and presents a practical application of the system for political scientists by examining the value of the Lydia system in predicting presidential approval. I find media coverage of the president and economy affects not just how approval rises and falls but also how it expands and contracts. (In preparation for submission)

"The Causes and Consequences of Instability in Consumer Sentiment."

The level of consumer sentiment is affected by both economic conditions and political evaluations, but what factors affect sentiment volatility? Furthermore, what are political consequences of instability in economic evaluations? (Data analysis)

"Pink Slips and Policy Preferences: An Examination of the Effects of the Economy on Supreme Court Voting."

I use a random coefficient model of individual justices' votes on the merits in labor cases to determine the extent to which economic conditions affect judicial decision making. As economic conditions worsen, conservative justices vote more liberally, sacrificing their preferred policy in favor of more advantageous public policy. (Working paper)

"Approval Gaps and Partisan Polarization in the American Electorate" with Matthew Lebo, Heather Ondercin, and Christopher Weber.

What are the long- and short-term forces that explain partisan polarization within the American electorate? We look at several important cleavages within the electorate and how the various groups respond to different economic and political factors over time in evaluating the president. (Working paper)

"The (De)Mobilizing Effects of Negative Advertising" with Wendy Gross.

We extend the analysis of advertising and election outcomes by exploring the effects of timing, tone, and exposure to negative television advertising on split-ticket voting in U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races. We also model the factors that increase the number of attack ads aired in each campaign. (Working paper)

“The Persistence of the Sexuality Gap” with Wendy Gross.

While there is general agreement that the LGBT community is more liberal than the general population, academic research has relied on samples that are small in size, non-representative, or exclusive to the LGBT community, effectively restricting the inferential power. Utilizing a nationally representative sample of 30,000 adults, including approximately 3,000 self-identified LGBT individuals, we explore whether a sexual identity gap is the result of differences in traditional political predictors or whether it persists after accounting for these variables. (Data collection and analysis)

“Why Do Individuals Comply with Informal Institutions?” with Martijn Schoonvelde.

Applying theories of cooperation to a variety of informal institutions including judicial review and prime minister selection, we explain why informal political institutions shape our behavior in ways that could be costly to individuals. (Working paper)

“Choice of Party Ballot in Open Primaries Under Changing Rules: A Quasi-Experiment” with Arnold Fleischmann and Damon Cann.

We analyze a heavily Democratic county’s open primaries both before and after most local elections became nonpartisan and were removed from primary ballots to study the effect of electoral systems and competition on voter participation. Competition for local offices, rather than federal or statewide offices, is major determinant of Republican or Democratic ballot choice and the removal of local offices from the primary ballot has a positive effect on the likelihood that a voter would choose a Republican ballot. (In preparation for submission.)

Conference Papers and Posters

“The Political Economy: Political Determinants of the Macroeconomy.” Annual Society for Political Methodology Summer Meeting, Princeton, NJ July 2011.

“Approval Gaps and Partisan Polarization in the American Electorate, 1968–2008” (with Matthew Lebo, Heather Ondercin, and Christopher Weber). Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL April 2011.

“The Effect of Politics and Public Opinion on Consumer Behavior.” Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL April 2011.

“The Dynamic Relationship Between Media Sentiment and Presidential Approval.” Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL April 2011.

“The Politics of Scandal” (with Jeffrey Segal and Charles Cameron). Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC September 2010.

“Large Scale Online Text Analysis Using Lydia” (with Leonie Huddy, Matthew Lebo, and Steve Skiena). Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC September 2010.

“The *Marks v. United States* Narrowest Grounds Holding: Is it as Flawed Empirically as it is Doctrinally?” (with Jeffrey Segal). Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association, Chicago, IL May 2010.

“Pink Slips and Policy Preferences: An Examination of the Effects of Changes in the Unemployment Rate on Labor Cases.” Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL April 2010.

“The Impact of Diplomatic and Economic Intervention on Repression after Civil War” (with Cynthia

McMeekin). Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, LA February 2010.

“How Low Can You Go? Modeling the Amount of Negative Advertisements in Campaigns” (with Wendy Gross). Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA January 2009.

“A New Twist: Negative Campaigning and Split-Ticket Voting in Congressional and Gubernatorial Elections” (with Wendy Gross). Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA August 2008.

“Fail to the Chief: The Effect of Failed Presidential Primary Bids on Congressional Re-Election Campaigns” (with Elizabeth Coggins and Cynthia McMeekin). Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA January 2008.

“State vs. Local Influences on Turnout and Rolloff in an Open Primary” (with Arnold Fleischmann and Damon Cann). Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL September 2007.

“A New Game in Town: Rules Changes and Voting in an Open Primary” (with Arnold Fleischmann and Damon Cann). Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL April 2007.

“Problem-Solving Courts: Patterns and Effectiveness.” (with Brian Levey, John Newton, and Wendy Gross). Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA January 2007.

“Framing the Public Debate: Gays and Lesbians vs. Homosexuals” (with Adam Fowler and Brian Levey). Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA September 2006.

Teaching Experience

Stony Brook University, Instructor of Record

POL 325: “Civil Liberties and Civil Rights”

Fall 2009, Fall 2010, Spring 2011

POL 102: “Introduction to American Government”

Summer 2008, Summer 2010; Summer 2011, Fall 2011

Stony Brook University, Teaching Assistant

SOC 201: “Research Methods in Sociology”

Spring 2009 (Ivan Chase)

POL 402: “Political Economy: Government and Market Failures”

Spring 2008 (Rene Lindstädt)

POL 502: “Intermediate Statistics for Public Policy,” *Graduate level*

Spring 2008 (Rene Lindstädt)

University of Georgia, Teaching Assistant

POLS 1101: “Introduction to American Government”

Spring 2007 (John Maltese), *Lead TA*

Fall 2006 (Paul Gurian), *Lead TA*

Spring 2006 (Jamie Carson)

Fall 2005 (Paul Gurian)

Research Experience

Stony Brook University, Research Assistant

Jeffrey Segal: Fall 2008, Summer 2009, Spring 2010, Summer 2011

Matthew Lebo: Fall 2008, Summer 2009, Spring 2010, Summer 2010, Summer 2011

Helmut Norpoth: Summer 2009

Rene Lindstädt: Spring 2008

Joel Simmons: Fall 2007, Summer 2008

Public and Professional Service

Intel Talent Search Advisor (for Laura Kirsch), 2010

Interviewer for the Georgetown University Alumni Admissions Program, 2010–present.

Guest Lecturer on the politics of abortion for WST 401 “Maternal and Fetal Medicine,” March 2010.

Invited Panel Member for GRSC 7770 “Introduction to Teaching Political Science,” September 2006.

Researcher for the UGA Survey Research Center and Georgia Secretary of State, November 2006.

Work Experience

Women’s Campaign Fund, Washington, DC

Development Intern, Spring 2004.

Women’s Campaign Research Fund, Washington, DC

Political Intern, Spring 2004.

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Washington, DC

Development Intern, Fall 2002.

References

Teaching evaluations available upon request.

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