KAREN NERSHI

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania   *expected 2021*
  Benjamin Franklin Fellowship (full, 5-year academic fellowship)
  Fields: International Relations & Comparative Politics
  Committee: Prof. Beth Simmons, Prof. Edward Mansfield, & Prof. Julia Gray
  Perry World House Graduate Associate

M.A. in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania   *2018*

B.A. in International Studies, University of Alabama   *2013*
  University of Alabama President's Scholarship (full, 4-year academic scholarship)
  Honors: summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, University of Alabama Honors College

DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Anti-money Laundering Enforcement in Cryptocurrency *(Dissertation)*

Although many countries have adopted strict anti-money laundering laws, data leaks and a growing number of major money laundering scandals call into question how effectively countries enforce these laws. I provide insight into cross-national variation in enforcement by studying the application of a new customer due diligence law, which requires cryptocurrency exchanges to screen customers for money laundering risk. I collect a new dataset of cryptocurrency trades from 60 exchanges and compare levels of suspicious activity across exchanges by measuring trade "bunching" below a 1,000 USD/EUR threshold that requires customer due diligence. My research shows that there is significant variation in how well countries enforce anti-money laundering laws, a finding that holds important implications for international efforts to combat money laundering.

Estimating the Economic Costs of Money Laundering

Scholars argue that money laundering causes significant economic harm and identify economic costs as a potential mechanism driving countries to enforce anti-money laundering laws, but there is little documented evidence to support these claims. Another potential mechanism behind anti-money laundering enforcement is the risk of sanctioning by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an international organization dedicated to combating money laundering. In this project, I test the effect of two types of money laundering events – FATF blacklisting and news coverage of major money laundering cases – on three potential sources of economic harm (gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, financial instability, and foreign investment) using the robust synthetic control method. I show that FATF blacklisting contributed to a significant decrease in GDP per capita, while major money laundering cases did not significantly affect economic outcomes. This research provides the first quantitative estimates of the economic costs of two types of money laundering events, which holds important implications for understanding the mechanisms driving international cooperation in anti-money laundering enforcement.

Ties that Bind? Chinese Foreign Direct Investment & Political Influence in Africa

Over the past two decades, China has invested heavily in Africa alongside a growing demand for key minerals, leading some scholars to argue that investment has increased China's political influence in receiving countries. Conversely, some argue that Chinese investment has created backlash as it extracts finite natural resources without creating local economic benefits. I test whether Chinese investment has

led to political influence by measuring changes in attitudes toward China and support for democracy (the main alternative to the Chinese political model) in localities receiving Chinese investment. Using data from Afrobarometer, Pew Research, and AidData, I test this question across 297 localities in 25 African countries between 1999 and 2015 and employ Bartik-like shift-share instruments to exogenously predict Chinese investment. This paper provides evidence that Chinese investment has negatively impacted support for free elections in Africa (though there is no significant effect for other democracy-related outcomes) and offers a rigorous empirical test of whether foreign investment can produce political influence.

SELECTED HONORS, AWARDS, & FELLOWSHIPS

Provost Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Innovation, *University of Pennsylvania*	*2020*
Research Grant, *Browne Center for International Politics*	*2018, 2019, 2020*
Prestage-Cook Travel Award, *Southern Political Science Association*	*2020*
Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, *Russel Sage Foundation*	*2019*
Young Investigator Scholarship, *Network for the Advancement of Social and Political Studies*	*2018*
E. W. Mumford Graduate Fellow, *University of Pennsylvania*	*2018*
Mellon Ethnopol Graduate Fellow, *University of Pennsylvania*	*2017*
Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship, *U.S. Department of State*	*2016*
Benjamin Franklin Fellowship, *University of Pennsylvania*	*2015*
Critical Language Scholarship, *U.S. Department of State*	*2013*

SKILLS & TRAINING

Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models, Collegio Carlo Alberto; Turin, Italy   *2018*
- Completed modules in Statistical Foundations, Theoretical Foundations, Social Media Research, and Text Analysis

Summer Institute in Social Science Methods, ETH Zürich; Zürich, Switzerland   *2019*

Technology Skills	Python, R, STATA, LaTeX
Relevant Courses	Causal Inference, Modern Regression (machine learning), Longitudinal Data Analysis, Statistics for Public Policy I, II, and III
Language Skills	Arabic (intermediate), German (intermediate), French (beginner)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Project Manager, Barrister Global Services Network, Inc.; Hammond, LA *2014 – 2015*
- Analyzed contracts with top vendors and negotiated with a top vendor to reduce costs by 30%
- Provided research and managed special projects for the executive board, including a successful bid for a federal contracting certification for which the company had previously been rejected

Public Affairs Intern, U.S. Department of State; Frankfurt, Germany   *2012*
- Co-managed the consulate's social media pages leading to a 27% increase in traffic to the Facebook page
- Explained U.S. politics at schools throughout the Rhein-Neckar region and participated in events with consulate officials and key figures of the region's art and cultural communities
- Wrote talking points, speeches, and reports for consulate spokespeople on cultural and political topics relevant to U.S.-German relations

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Pennsylvania
Teaching Assistant
International Relations and Ethics (Prof. Mark Pollack)   *2018*
Introduction to International Relations (Prof. Alex Weisiger)   *2017*
International Political Economy (Prof. Mark Pollack)   *2017*
Introduction to International Relations (Prof. Edward Mansfield)   *2016*

LANGUAGE FELLOWSHIPS & IMMERSION

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, *Amman, Jordan*   *2016*
- Fellowship from the U.S. Department of State supporting an 8-week intensive Arabic language program

Critical Language Scholarship, *Meknes, Morocco*   *2013*
- Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State supporting an 8-week intensive Arabic language program

University of Mannheim, *Mannheim, Germany*   *2011*
- One-semester direct exchange at the University of Mannheim

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Southern Political Science Association   *2020*
Midwestern Political Science Association   *2020*
Political Methodology (PolMeth) Europe   *2020*

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Graduate Associate in Residence, Gregory College House   *2016 – present*
University of Pennsylvania
- Mentored undergraduate students in a residential setting and provided educational programming for residents

ACTIVITIES

Summer Invitational Datathon, Citidel   *2020*
- One of the top 10% selected from a pool of 2,000 to compete in Citadel's Data Open
- Finished 3rd out of 50 teams for having completed the best data analysis report for an original research question