

# Katherine M. McKiernan

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## CONTACT

### INFORMATION

Center for Inter-American Policy and Research  
Tulane University  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70115

*Mobile:* +1 609.462.7023  
[kmckiernan@tulane.edu](mailto:kmckiernan@tulane.edu)  
[www.katherinemckiernan.com](http://www.katherinemckiernan.com)

## ACADEMIC

### APPOINTMENTS

**Tulane University**

2020- Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Inter-American Policy and Research

## EDUCATION

**The University of North Carolina**, Chapel Hill, North Carolina USA

Ph.D., Political Science, 2020

- Concentrations: *Comparative Politics* and *Methodology*
- Dissertation Title: “Club Goods Provision: The Effect of Weak Parties on Allocation Strategies”
- Dissertation Summary: In this three article dissertation, I analyze the use of club goods as a clientelist benefit in weak party contexts. In these articles, I ask: (1) Under what conditions will mayors serve as reliable brokers for legislators who provide club goods, (2) How can we estimate the use of clientelism at the local level, and (3) Where are legislators most likely to provide club goods as clientelist benefits?
- Committee: Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo (Chair), Anna Bassi, Jonathan Hartlyn, Lucy Martin, Santiago Olivella

M.A., Political Science, 2016

- Thesis Title: “Municipal Governance and Democratic Perceptions: The Role of Party Competition and Municipal Governance on Evaluations of Democracy”

**Franklin & Marshall College**, Lancaster, Pennsylvania USA

B.A., *Government* and *Hispanic Cultures*, May 2013

### ADDITIONAL TRAINING

EITM: Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Summer Workshop, June 26-July 14, 2017, University of California- Berkeley.

### UNDER REVIEW

McKiernan, Katherine and Stephanie McNulty. “Testing the Effect of Nationally-Mandated Participatory Reforms on Democracy and Governance”, presented at MPSA April 2018.

- In this article, we consider to what extent the promises of nationally-mandated participatory reforms, such as participatory budgeting, have been realized since their implementation. Using a novel dataset on the

presence of participatory and decentralization reforms in 125 countries, we test whether nationally mandated participatory reforms improve participation and accountability and decrease clientelism over time. We also test how the level of decentralization can influence the effects of participatory reforms. We find that nationally mandated participatory reforms improve participation overtime. Furthermore, we find that these reforms improve accountability at most levels of decentralization and can actually increase the use of clientelism in weakly decentralized contexts.

McKiernan, Katherine. “You Get What You Need? The Role of Credit Attribution in the Underprovision of Local Goods” (formerly “When do Club Goods Buy Votes? Broker Cooperation in Clientelist Exchanges”), presented at SPSA January 2021, expected submission July 2021.

- In this article, I ask why public goods are often underprovided in weak party systems, where decisions to favor copartisans are less likely to explain where goods are distributed. I argue that national politicians will make decisions in order to maximize their likelihood of receiving credit for their investments in local projects. I use a formal signaling model in order to analyze the relationship between national-level politicians and local-level politicians. I find that national politicians will prioritize providing smaller benefits to municipalities in order to increase their likelihood of receiving credit.

McKiernan, Katherine. “Who Gets the Goods: Locally Targeted Benefits in Weak Party Systems”, presented at APSA August 2019.

- In this article, I argue that national legislators are more likely to provide club goods to municipalities where mayors have strong clientelist networks. I test this argument in Colombia. I develop a novel estimation strategy to estimate patronage at the municipal level. I then apply these estimates as a proxy for clientelism at the municipal level and find that clientelist municipalities are more likely to receive additional targeted benefits from the national government.

PAPERS IN  
PREPARATION

Abbott, Jared and Stephanie McNulty and Katherine McKiernan. “Can Government-Imposed Participatory Institutions Improve Democracy and Citizen Well-Being? Lessons from Peru”, expected submission August 2021.

- In this article, we ask whether nationally-mandated participatory institutions actually change municipal spending patterns and improve citizen well-being. We use subnational time-series data on participatory budgeting (PB) in Peru from 2005-2015 and find evidence that when more of a budget is decided through PB, more money is allocated towards pro-poor projects. Moreover, we find that long running PB programs can improve citizen well being.

McKiernan, Katherine. “Who Gets Credit? Citizen Responses to Local Public Goods”, presented at LASA May 2021, expected submission September 2021.

- In this article, I ask under what conditions additional information about who provides local goods will affect both how citizens attribute credit and electoral returns. I argue that citizens are likely to attribute credit for local works based on both the visibility of a political actor and credit claiming behavior. As a result, credit attribution is asymmetrical. Local politicians have a ceiling effect where additional credit-claiming behavior is unlikely to increase the amount of credit they receive because they are visibly associated with local projects. However, for national politicians to receive credit voters need to receive strong signals of credit claiming, such as attending a ribbon cutting ceremony. Moreover, I argue that credit attribution will only translate to improved electoral returns for national politicians because of the implicit associations between local politicians and local goods. This argument introduces the idea that credit attribution on the part of the local politician may not be costly to their own success. I run a vignette survey experiment on over 2000 citizens in Colombia and find that citizens who receive signals about national-legislators roles in providing local goods are more likely to see the legislator is responsible and believe the legislators vote-share will improve, but additional information about a mayor’s involvement in providing local goods will have no effect on credit attribution or future vote-share.

McKiernan, Katherine. “Measuring Local-Level Patronage: A Mixed-Membership Approach”, presented at PolMeth July 2019, expected submission December 2021.

- In this article, I estimate the use of patronage at the subnational level using a Bayesian Mixed-Membership model. This estimation strategy allows me to combine data on the nature of public service jobs and employees with demographic data about each subnational unit in order to better predict the extent to which patronage plays a role in hiring practices. I apply this estimation strategy to the case of Colombia and validate the measure showing how the estimates of patronage correlate with both qualitative knowledge of patronage networks and citizen perceptions of corruption in the public service. This estimation strategy allows researchers to ask new questions about the role of patronage at the subnational level and opens new avenues for research.

RECENT  
CONFERENCE  
PRESENTATIONS

McKiernan, Katherine. “Measuring Local-Level Patronage: A Mixed-Membership Approach” Visions in Methodology, Claremont, CA, November 2021.

McKiernan, Katherine. ”Who Gets Credit? Citizen Responses to Local Public Goods” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, September 30-October 3 2021.

- McKiernan, Katherine. "Who Gets Credit? Citizen Responses to Local Public Goods" Latin American Studies Association, Virtual, May 26-29 2021.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "When do Club Goods Buy Votes? Mayoral Cooperation in Clientelist Exchanges" Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Virtual, January 6- January 9 2021.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "When do Club Goods buy Votes? Mayoral Cooperation in Clientelist Exchanges" Duke Frontiers in Political Science: Clientelism as Electoral Linkage Mechanism, Virtual, December 8-10 2020.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Club Goods Provision: The Effect of Weak Parties on Allocation Strategies" American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, August 29-September 1 2019.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Measuring Local-Level Clientelism: A Mixed-Membership Approach" Presented Poster, Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology, Boston, MA, July 18- July 20 2019.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Club Goods Provision: The Effect of Weak Parties on Allocation Strategies " Latin American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, May 24-May 27 2019.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "When do Club Goods Buy Votes? Mayoral Cooperation in Clientelist Exchanges" North Carolina Conference on Latin American Studies, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 22-23, 2019.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Mechanisms for Cooperation: Development Contracts and Clientelist Exchanges" Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 5-8, 2018.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Testing the Effect of Nationally-Mandated Participatory Reforms on Democracy and Governance" Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 5-8, 2018.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Municipal Governance and Democratic Perceptions: The Role of Party Competition and Municipal Governance on Evaluations of Democracy." Latin American Studies Association Annual Meeting, New York, New York, May 27-30, 2016.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "Youth Activism in Argentina and Ecuador: How the Youth are Supporting the State." Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 11-14, 2013.
- McKiernan, Katherine. "La Cámpora en la Última Campaña Presidencial: Para

Entender las Relaciones Entre Movimientos Sociales y Kirchnerismo (La Campora in the Last Presidential Campaign: Understanding the Relationships between Social Movements and Kirchnerism)”International Sociological Association Second Forum of Sociology, Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 1-4, 2012.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2020- Visions in Methodology Travel Award  
2019- Society for Political Methodology Travel Award  
2019- Institute for the Study of the Americas Travel Award  
2018- University of North Carolina Graduate School Off-Campus Dissertation Research Fellowship \$10000  
2018- University of North Carolina Graduate School Summer Research Fellowship \$5000  
2018- Myrtle H. Lewin and Jonathan W. Lewin Student Award in Political Science \$3500  
2016- Tinker Field Research Grant, UNC Institute for the Studies of the Americas \$2500  
2009-2013- Franklin and Marshall College Marshall Scholar, merit scholarship with research grant \$3000

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative Politics: Latin American Politics; Subnational Politics; Decentralization; Distributive Politics; Development; Clientelism  
Methodology: Formal Theory; Measurement; Survey Experiments; Bayesian Analysis

TEACHING INTERESTS

Comparative Politics: Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics, Politics of the Global South; Development; Decentralization; Distributive Politics  
Methodology: Game Theory, Probability Theory, Regression Analysis, Survey Experiments

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

**The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**  
• *Research Assistant*: Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo 2019  
• *Research Assistant*: Evelyne Huber and John Stephens 2015  
**Franklin and Marshall College**  
• *Research Assistant, Hackman Fellow*: Stephanie McNulty 2011-2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Tulane University**

**Introduction to Comparative Politics**

- **Instructor**: Introduction to Comparative Politics (Fall 2021)

**The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

**Introduction to Comparative Politics**

- **Instructor:** Introduction to Comparative Politics (Spring 2019, Fall 2019)
- **Teaching Assistant:** Comparative Politics under Andrew Reynolds (Fall 2016)
- **Teaching Assistant:** Comparative Politics under Rahsaan Maxwell (Fall 2015)

### Latin American Politics

- **Teaching Assistant:** Latin American Politics under Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo (Spring 2016, Fall 2017)
- **Grader:** Latin American Politics under Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo (Fall 2014 and Spring 2015) .

### Designing Democracy

- **Graduate Research Coordinator:** Designing Democracy (Fall 2019)

### Game Theory

- **Teaching Assistant:** Graduate Game Theory 1 under Anna Bassi (Spring 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2020)

#### SERVICE

##### Discipline

- **Referee,** American Journal of Political Science
- **Referee,** Journal of Elections, Public Opinions, & Parties

##### Department

- **Speaker Series Coordinator** Tulane University, 2020-2021
- **Graduate Student Subfield Representative, Comparative Politics** University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016-2017
- **Coordinator, Latin American Politics Working Group** Duke/University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2015-2016

#### METHODS TRAINING

Research Methods, Ordinary Least Squares Regression, Generalized Linear Models, Multi-level Modeling, Formal Theory, Bayesian Statistics, Experimental Design

#### TECHNICAL SKILLS

Statistical computing: R, Stan, and STATA  
 Document composition: L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X  
 Additional Programs: Qualtrics

#### LANGUAGES

Professional Fluency in Spanish

#### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Political Science Association, Latin American Studies Association, Society for Political Methodology, Southern Political Science Association