Karen Nershi

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Academic Appointments

Middlebury Institute of International Studies (Fall 2024–Present)
Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity, Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies Program

IE University (2023–2024)
Assistant Professor of Political Science, School of Politics, Economics, and Global Affairs

Stanford University (2021-2023)
Postdoctoral Fellow, Stanford Internet Observatory
Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC)

Education

University of Pennsylvania (fall 2021)
Ph.D. in Political Science
    Topic: Anti-Money Laundering Regulation
    Committee: Beth A. Simmons (chair), Edward D. Mansfield, Julia Gray

       – **Summer Institute in Computational Social Science Methods**. ETH Zürich (2019)
       – **Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models**. Turin, Italy (2018)

M.A. in Political Science (2018)

University of Alabama (2013)
B.A. in International Studies
    Summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa

Research Interests

Cybersecurity, Ransomware, Cryptocurrency Regulation, Cybercrime, Anti-Money Laundering Enforcement, Causal Inference Methods

Working Papers

[1] **Nershi, Karen** and Shelby Grossman. Assessing the Political Motivations Behind Ransomware Attacks. [SSRN] *(Under review)*

- **Media coverage**: WIRED; The Washington Post; The Economist; SC Media; Infosecurity Magazine.

[2] **Nershi, Karen**. How Strong Are International Standards in Practice? Evidence from Cryptocurrency Transactions. [SSRN] *(Revise & resubmit)*

[3] **Nershi, Karen**. Embedded Reputation: Measuring Reputational Harm in Money Laundering Cases. [SSRN]

[4] **Nershi, Karen**. Quantifying International Pressure: Synthetic Estimates of the Economic Impact of Blacklisting. [PDF]

Selected Works in Progress

[6] **Nershi, Karen,** Rosemary Ajayi, Shelby Grossman, and Jennifer Pan. Measuring the Effect of Chinese State Media on Attitudes Among Nigerians. [OSF Preregistration]

[7] **Nershi, Karen**. Ties that Bind? Chinese Foreign Direct Investment & Political Influence in Africa. [PDF]

[8] **Nershi, Karen**. New Theoretical Lenses for Emerging Cybersecurity Threats.

[9] Jun, Jenny and **Karen Nershi**. Strategic Threat Actors and Moral Hazard in the Cyber Insurance Market

[10] **Nershi, Karen** and Serena Hofstetter. Does Rank Choice Voting Increase Electoral Chances for Female and Minority Candidates? Evidence from California Local Elections.

Public Commentary and Reports

Nershi, K. (2023). "The Slow and Steady Regulation of Cryptocurrency." *Inkstick Media.* DOI.

Grossman, S., DiResta, R., Ramali, K., Sharma, R., Bradshaw, S., and **Nershi, K.** (2021). "In Bed with Embeds: How a Network Tied to IRA Operations Created Fake 'Man on the Street' Content Embedded in News Articles." Stanford Digital Repository. DOI.

Teaching

Instructor of Record

Middlebury Institute of International Studies
    Fundamentals of Cybersecurity (Fall 2024)
    Research on the Dark Web (Fall 2024)

IE University
    International Money and Finance (Fall 2023)
    International Political Economy (Spring 2024)

Guest Lectures

    "Cybersecurity and International Relations"

        – Prof. Christopher Chiego, California State University Maritime Academy (2023)

  – Prof. Samantha Bradshaw, American University (2023)

Advising and Mentoring

  – Polmeth Expansions Program, Society of Political Methodology (2023)

  – IE University Advisors, advising and mentoring for undergraduate students (2023)

  – CISAC Increasing Diversity in International Security Mentoring Program (2023)

  – Graduate Associate, Gregory College House, University of Pennsylvania (2016-2021)

Selected Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

External:
Perry World House Foreign Affairs Emerging Scholars Policy Prize (2023)
Oxford Large Language Models Travel Grant (2023)
Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) Fellow (2021–2023)
Stanford University Cyber Policy Center Research Grant (2022)
Prestage-Cook Travel Award, *Southern Political Science Association* (2020)
Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, *ETH Zürich* (2019)
Young Investigator Scholarship, *Network for the Advancement of Social and Political Studies*
    (2018)
Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowship (Arabic), *U.S. Department of State* (2016)
Critical Language Scholarship (Arabic), *U.S. Department of State* (2013)

University of Pennsylvania:
Perry World House Graduate Associate (2020–2021)
GAPSA-Provost Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Innovation (2020)
Browne Center for International Politics Research Grant (2018, 2019, 2020)
E. W. Mumford Graduate Fellow (2018)
Mellon Ethnopol Graduate Fellow (2017)
Benjamin Franklin Fellowship (2015–2020)

Invited Seminars

2024:   University of Chicago, Department of Politics (*scheduled*)

2023:   U.S. Internal Revenue Service, RAAS Innovation Lab 3.0 - Digital Assets. *Virtual.*
        U.S. Department of Treasury, Data & Analytics Community of Practice. *Virtual.*

2022:   Cyber Policy Center seminar series (Stanford University). *Stanford, CA.*
        The Munich Cyber Crime Conference M3C (Maltego). *Munich, Germany.*
        Oak Ridge National Laboratory "Geek Brief." *Virtual.*
        The Stanford Blockchain Seminar (Center for Blockchain Research and the Future of Digital Currency Initiative). *Stanford, CA.*

Conference Presentations

2023: Political Economy of Cyber Conflict (ETH Zurich). *Zurich, Switzerland.*
Empirical Studies of Conflict annual conference (Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, and University of California, San Diego). *Washington, DC.*
War and Peace: Conflict, Behaviour and Diplomacy in Cyberspace (The Hague Program on Cybersecurity). *The Hague, Netherlands.*
American Political Science Association annual conference. *Los Angeles, CA.*
Public Choice Society annual conference. *Seattle, WA.*
Fourth International Empirical Research Conference on Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Crime (Central Bank of the Bahamas). *Nassau, Bahamas.*
Cyber Escalation in Conflict: Bridging Policy, Data, and Theory (UC San Diego). *San Diego, CA.*

2022: CYBERWARCON. *Arlington, VA.*
Trust and Safety Research Conference (Stanford University). *Stanford, CA.*
Politics of Emerging Technologies Mini-Conference. *Virtual.*
American Political Science Association annual conference. *Montreal, Canada.*
Society for Political Methodology (PolMeth) annual conference. *St. Louis, Missouri.*
American Causal Inference Conference. *Berkeley, CA.*
Symposium on Cryptocurrency and Societal Harm (Stanford University). *Stanford, CA.*
Technologies of Deception (Yale Law School). *Virtual.*
International Studies Association annual conference. *Nashville, TN.*
Third International Empirical Research Conference on Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Crime (Central Bank of the Bahamas). *Nassau, Bahamas.*

2021: American Political Science Association annual conference. *Seattle, WA.*
International Studies Association annual conference. *Virtual.*
Second International Empirical Research Conference on Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Crime (Central Bank of the Bahamas). *Virtual.*
Southern Political Science Association annual conference. *Virtual.*

2020: Visions in Methodology (VIM) Job Talk Series. *Virtual.*
Graduate Student International Political Economy (GSIPE) Workshop: The International Political Economy of Aid and Development. *Virtual.*
Polmeth Europe. *(cancelled due to Covid-19)*
Southern Political Science Association annual conference. *San Juan, PR.*

Original Datasets

Victims of Double Extortion Ransomware Attacks Dataset

- Includes 4,194 victims of double-extortion ransomware attacks by 55 ransomware groups posted to the dark web between May 2019 and May 2022

- All victims are classified according to country (physical location or headquarters) and sector (according to a 14-sector scheme)

- Includes the identity of the threat actor and the approximate date of each attack

Cross-National Cryptocurrency Trades Dataset

- Includes 150 million transactions from 65 of the world's highest volume cryptocurrency exchanges between 07/01/2020 and 08/15/2020

- Details the time, amount, and price of trades between Bitcoin and Ethereum to dollars, euros, and other international currencies

- Collected in real time from each site's API using remote servers from Amazon Web Services

International Money Laundering Cases Dataset

- Details money laundering cases against individuals and banks between 01/01/2001 and 07/01/2020

- Collected using keyword searches of articles in the *New York Times* and *The Financial Times*

- Presents the first dataset of money laundering cases and is supported by the Browne Center for International Politics and the University of Pennsylvania's GAPSA Provost Innovation Fellowship

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Academic Service

Reviewer, *Financial Innovation*, *Science Advances*

Organizer, Symposium on Cryptocurrency and Societal Harm, Stanford University (2022)

- [Symposium Program](#)

Skills

Technology   R, Python, Qualtrics, LaTeX

Languages   Arabic (intermediate), German (intermediate), French (beginner)

References

Beth A. Simmons
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University of Pennsylvania
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Research Scholar
Stanford Internet Observatory
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Julia C. Gray
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University of Pennsylvania
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Daniel Nielson
Professor of Government
University of Texas at Austin
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