# Online Appendix A: Supplemental Figures and Tables

Figure A.1: Locations of Daily Newspapers in 1840

A map of the united states

Description automatically generated

*Notes -* This figure maps the locations (county centroids) of daily newspapers in 1840.

Sources: The locations of daily newspapers come from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*.

Figure A.2: Average Effective Distance to Washington, 1840-1852

A graph with a line and a point

Description automatically generated

*Notes -* The figure shows the average effective distance to Washington (in miles) across counties in each presidential election year during the period 1840-1852.

Sources: Effective distance to Washington was calculated based on the telegraph network data compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852), as well as the locations of daily newspapers from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*.

Figure A.3: Effective Distance to Washington and House Election Turnout

A graph of a distance

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

*Notes -* The figure shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on House election turnout during 1840-1852. It follows the same specification as in Panel B of Figure 4 except the sample also includes the county-years in which a major party or a leading third party appeared on the ballot only in the presidential but not in the House election.

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers come from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data come from Haines (2010).

Figure A.4: Locations of the Small-Town Newspapers in My Sample

A map of the united states

Description automatically generated

*Notes -* This figure maps the locations (towns) of the small-town newspapers in my sample.

Sources: The newspapers are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/)

Figure A.5: Monthly Frequencies of Keywords in Newspapers, 1840-1849

A graph of different names

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

*Notes -* The figure shows the monthly average frequencies of the following words based on my newspaper sample for the period 1840-1849. Panel A shows the frequency of the last names of the U.S. Presidents during the 1840s, which equals the sum of the frequencies of “Van Buren,” “Harrison,” “Tyler,” “Polk,” and “Taylor.” Panel B shows the frequency of the word “Congress.” Panel C shows the frequency of the word “telegraph.” The monthly frequency of each word is averaged across the newspapers in my sample.

Sources: The newspaper text data come from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/)

Table A.1: Summary Statistics of Voting Analysis

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Panel A. County-level variables | N | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Presidential election turnout | 4,659 | 69.78 | 15.71 | 0 | 99.97 |
| House election turnout | 3,892 | 68.09 | 16.55 | 0 | 99.51 |
| % Votes for Democrats (Pres.) | 4,654 | 49.79 | 14.98 | 0.7 | 100 |
| % Votes for Whigs (Pres.) | 4,654 | 47.55 | 14.85 | 0 | 99.3 |
| % Votes for Democrats (House) | 3,886 | 49.23 | 22.25 | 0 | 100 |
| % Votes for Whig (House) | 3,886 | 44.53 | 21.62 | 0 | 100 |
| Effective dist. to Washington (100 miles) | 4,659 | 2.986 | 2.586 | 0 | 10.74 |
| Total population | 4,659 | 16,474 | 23,443 | 561 | 575,171 |
| % Urban | 4,659 | 3.861 | 12.82 | 0 | 100 |
| % White | 4,659 | 80.72 | 22.1 | 8.975 | 100 |
| % White males above 20 years old | 4,659 | 18.52 | 5.697 | 3.424 | 47.13 |
| % Slaves | 4,659 | 17.72 | 21.5 | 0 | 90.94 |
| Had newspaper in 1840 | 4,659 | 0.369 | 0.483 | 0 | 1 |
| Number of newspapers in 1840 | 4,595 | 1.168 | 3.176 | 0 | 68 |
| Had periodical in 1840 | 4,659 | 0.0653 | 0.247 | 0 | 1 |
| ∆ number of newspapers, 1840-50 | 1,162 | 0.363 | 2.346 | -7 | 52.05 |
| ∆ number of dailies, 1840-50 | 1,170 | 0.0827 | 0.815 | -18 | 8 |
| ∆ number of weeklies, 1840-50 | 1,163 | 0.266 | 2.203 | -7 | 48.03 |
| ∆ number of semi-/tri-weeklies, 1840-50 | 1,171 | 0.0137 | 0.521 | -6 | 8 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panel B. Congressman-level variables |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DW-Nominate score (1st dimension) | 1,643 | -0.0626 | 0.351 | -1.063 | 0.965 |
| DW-Nominate score (2nd dimension) | 1,643 | 0.000657 | 0.533 | -1.273 | 1.227 |
| Number of bills sponsored | 1,603 | 1.847 | 4.972 | 0 | 110 |

*Notes -* The table shows the summary statistics of the variables used in my main analysis. House election turnout has fewer observations because of missing values of some counties. Effective distance to Washington is defined as distance to the nearest daily newspaper with the latest Washington news. By construction, the effective distance to Washington before the introduction of the telegraph (i.e., in 1840 and 1844) is equal to the actual distance to Washington, and after the introduction of the telegraph (i.e., 1848 and 1852) it is equal to the distance to the nearest daily newspaper with telegraphic connection to Washington.

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The number of newspapers and periodicals in 1840 are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*, while data on newspapers in 1850 are collected from the *Catalogue of the Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United States* (Kennedy 1852). Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010). DW-NOMINATE score data are obtained from Voteview.com (Poole and Rosenthal 2001), and the number of bills sponsored by Congressmen are from the ICPSR 3371 dataset (Swift et al. 2009).

Table A.2: Testing and Controlling for Pre-trends in Voter Turnout

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Change in Presidential Election Turnout | | |
|  | ∆ Turnout | ∆Turnout | ∆ Turnout |
|  | 1844-1852 | 1840-1844 | 1844-1852 |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  |  |  |  |
| ∆ Eff. Dist. Washington, 1844-1852 | -1.539\*\*\* | -0.0363 | -1.658\*\*\* |
|  | (0.441) | (0.359) | (0.400) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 1,153 | 1,147 | 1,133 |
| R-squared | 0.521 | 0.394 | 0.629 |
| State dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Controlling for change in |  |  | Yes |
| turnout between 1840-1844 |  |  |  |

*Notes -* The table presents estimates from running long-difference versions of equation (1) for different sub-periods between 1840 and 1852. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a county. The explanatory variable is the change in effective distance to Washington (in hundred miles) between 1844 and 1852. The outcome variables are the changes in presidential election turnout during 1844-1852 in column 1 and 3 and the change in presidential election turnout during 1840-1844 in column 2, all measured in percentage points. Each regression controls for state dummies and changes in county demographics between 1844 and 1852, including changes in the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Column 3 further controls for the change in presidential election turnout during 1840-1844. Each regression is weighted by the voting eligible population as proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old in 1840. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.3: Robustness Checks for Baseline Result

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Presidential Election Turnout | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Drop counties |
|  | Control for |  | Drop counties | Only rural | Counties far | Consistent | with very low |
|  | railroad | Unweighted | with dailies | counties | from telegraph | boundary | turnout |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.222\*\*\* | -0.754\*\* | -0.946\*\*\* | -0.925\*\*\* | -1.880\*\*\* | -1.388\*\*\* | -1.366\*\*\* |
| (100 miles) | (0.345) | (0.333) | (0.333) | (0.346) | (0.634) | (0.384) | (0.329) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,659 | 4,659 | 4,458 | 4,271 | 1,006 | 3,158 | 4,625 |
| R-squared | 0.925 | 0.855 | 0.885 | 0.868 | 0.868 | 0.941 | 0.922 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table provides robustness checks on the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on presidential election turnout for the period 1840-1852. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a county-year. The outcome variable is presidential election turnout measured in percentage points. The explanatory variable is effective distance to Washington measured in hundred miles. Column 1 controls for distance to the nearest railroad. Column 2 uses an unweighted regression. Column 3 drops counties with a daily newspaper in 1840. Column 4 restricts the sample to counties with only rural population. Column 5 restricts the sample to counties that were more than 50 miles away from any telegraph line by 1852. Column 6 restricts the sample to counties with the same boundary between 1840-1850. Column 7 drops counties with presidential election turnout below 20%. Each regression controls for county fixed effects, state-by-year fixed effects, and county demographic characteristics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Each regression, except that in column 3, is weighted by the voting eligible population proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.4: Access to Telegraphed Washington News and Number of Newspapers, 1840-1850

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: ∆ Number of Newspapers, 1840-50 | | | |
|  |  |  |  | Semi-/Tri- |
|  | Total | Dailies | Weeklies | weeklies |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ∆ Eff. Dist. to Washington, 1840-50 | -0.0613 | -0.0481 | -0.0201 | 0.00711 |
|  | (0.0689) | (0.0435) | (0.0698) | (0.0158) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 1,162 | 1,170 | 1,163 | 1,171 |
| R-squared | 0.228 | 0.048 | 0.226 | 0.030 |
| State dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 0.363 | 0.0827 | 0.266 | 0.0137 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 2.346 | 0.815 | 2.203 | 0.521 |

*Notes -* The table estimates the relationship between the effective distance to Washington and the number of newspapers using a long-difference specification during 1840-1850. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a county. The explanatory variable is the change in effective distance to Washington (in hundred miles) between 1840 and 1850. The outcome variables are the changes in the number of newspapers (of various publishing frequencies) in the county during 1840-1850. Column 1 examines the change in the total number of newspapers, while columns 2-4 respectively examine the changes in the number of dailies, weeklies, and semi- or tri-weeklies. Each regression controls for state dummies and 1840 county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*, while data on newspapers in 1850 are collected from the *Catalogue of the Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United States* (Kennedy 1852).

Table A.5: Robustness to Alternative Ways of Adjusting Standard Errors

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Presidential Election Turnout | | | | | | |
|  | Cluster at |  | Conley S.E. with different distance cutoffs | | | | |
|  | state level |  | 50 miles | 100 miles | 200 miles | 300 miles | 400 miles |
|  | (1) |  | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.224\*\* |  | -1.224\*\*\* | -1.224\*\*\* | -1.224\*\*\* | -1.224\*\*\* | -1.224\*\*\* |
| (100 miles) | (0.573) |  | (0.415) | (0.435) | (0.383) | (0.340) | (0.390) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*Notes -* The table shows the baseline estimates (column 2 of Table 1) based on alternative ways of adjusting for standard errors. Column 1 shows the estimate when I cluster the standard errors at the state level, while columns 2-6 apply Conley (1999) standard errors with different distance cutoffs. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.6: Controlling for 1840 County Characteristics Interacted with Year Dummies

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | |
|  | Presidential | House |
|  | Election | Election |
|  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.053\*\*\* | -0.00365 |
| (100 miles) | (0.404) | (0.597) |
|  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,498 | 3,756 |
| R-squared | 0.923 | 0.837 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |
| 1840 County Characteristics x Year Dummies | Yes | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 69.99 | 68.06 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.56 | 16.49 |

*Notes -* The table shows the robustness of the baseline results to controlling for preexisting county characteristics interacted with year dummies. Specifically, I control for each of the following 1840 county characteristics interacted with year dummies: total population (in natural log), percent urban, percent white, percent slaves, percent illiterate white population above 20 years old, number of colleges, percent employed in commerce, percent employed in agriculture, percent employed in manufacturing, and capital in manufacturing (in natural log). Each regression also controls for county fixed effects and state-by-year fixed effects and is weighted by the voting eligible population proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.7: Constructing Effective Distance to Washington Using Telegraphic Connections

More Than 100 Miles Away

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.013\*\*\* | -0.847\*\*\* |  | 0.148 | 0.276 |
| (100 miles) | (0.357) | (0.289) |  | (0.540) | (0.525) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,400 | 4,400 |  | 3,737 | 3,737 |
| R-squared | 0.908 | 0.916 |  | 0.818 | 0.829 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | No | Yes |  | No | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 70.01 | 70.01 |  | 68.41 | 68.41 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.54 | 15.54 |  | 16.30 | 16.30 |

*Notes -* The table shows the robustness of the baseline results when exploiting only the variation from telegraphic connections more than 100 miles away from the county. Specifically, when measuring a county’s effective distance to Washington, I only use telegraphic connections by daily newspapers more than 100 miles away and ignore any connection by nearby dailies. The specifications follow those in Table 1, except here the effective distance to Washington is constructed based on telegraphic connections by daily newspapers further away. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.8: Effects Controlling for the Winners’ Margins of Victory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.204\*\*\* | -1.244\*\*\* |  | -0.438 | -0.596 |
| (100 miles) | (0.421) | (0.344) |  | (0.605) | (0.543) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,648 | 4,648 |  | 3,858 | 3,858 |
| R-squared | 0.918 | 0.926 |  | 0.855 | 0.864 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 69.78 | 69.78 |  | 68.22 | 68.22 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.69 | 15.69 |  | 16.42 | 16.42 |

*Notes -* The table shows the robustness of the baseline results when controlling for the winners’ margins of victory in elections. The specifications follow those in Table 1, except here I also control for the county-level winner’s electoral margin of victory. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.9: Taking into Account Special House Election Rules

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  | Outcome: House Election Turnout | | | | |
|  | Drop at-large elections | |  | Drop multi-round elections | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | 0.0802 | -0.0718 |  | 0.399 | 0.0985 |
| (100 miles) | (0.638) | (0.566) |  | (0.607) | (0.565) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 3,459 | 3,459 |  | 3,784 | 3,784 |
| R-squared | 0.828 | 0.837 |  | 0.800 | 0.807 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 67.06 | 67.06 |  | 68.65 | 68.65 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 16.30 | 16.30 |  | 16.15 | 16.15 |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects on House election turnout when taking into account special House election rules during the study period. The specifications follow those in Table 1 examining House election turnout, except here columns 1-2 drop the state-years which held House elections on a statewide (at-large) basis instead of at the congressional district level, and columns 3-4 drop the five New England states that held multi-round House elections. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.10: Robustness to Using the Same Sample of Counties for Presidential and

Congressional Election Turnout

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.365\*\*\* | -1.456\*\*\* |  | 0.0247 | -0.0999 |
| (100 miles) | (0.446) | (0.380) |  | (0.619) | (0.552) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 3,742 | 3,742 |  | 3,742 | 3,742 |
| R-squared | 0.924 | 0.931 |  | 0.831 | 0.840 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | No | Yes |  | No | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 71.72 | 71.72 |  | 67.96 | 67.96 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.03 | 15.03 |  | 16.32 | 16.32 |

*Notes -* The table shows the robustness of the baseline results to restricting the sample to the common subset of counties that reported both presidential and congressional election turnout. The specifications follow those in Table 1, except here the sample only consists of counties that have non-missing values for both presidential and congressional election turnout. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.11: Robustness to Using a Balanced Panel of Counties

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.320\*\*\* | -1.397\*\*\* |  | -0.511 | -0.578 |
| (100 miles) | (0.410) | (0.327) |  | (0.680) | (0.604) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,280 | 4,280 |  | 2,656 | 2,656 |
| R-squared | 0.926 | 0.934 |  | 0.825 | 0.836 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | No | Yes |  | No | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 69.97 | 69.97 |  | 68.24 | 68.24 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.26 | 15.26 |  | 16 | 16 |

*Notes -* The table shows the robustness of the baseline results to using a balanced panel of counties. The specifications follow those in Table 1, except here the sample only consists of counties that are observed in every presidential election year during the study period (1840-1852). \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.12: Robustness to Interpolating Intercensal Voting Population Log-Linearly

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -1.147\*\*\* | -1.182\*\*\* |  | -0.00205 | -0.0929 |
| (100 miles) | (0.431) | (0.351) |  | (0.621) | (0.554) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,629 | 4,629 |  | 3,865 | 3,865 |
| R-squared | 0.917 | 0.924 |  | 0.824 | 0.832 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 70.64 | 70.64 |  | 69 | 69 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.70 | 15.70 |  | 16.64 | 16.64 |

*Notes -* The table shows the robustness of the baseline results to interpolating the intercensal voting population log-linearly. The specifications follow those in Table 1, except here the voting population used to calculate voter turnout is interpolated log-linearly (instead of linearly) between Census years. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.13: Access to Telegraphed News from Washington (Based on Effective Travel

Time) and Voter Turnout, 1840-1852

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Effective Travel Time to | -0.0960\*\*\* | -0.102\*\*\* |  | 0.0652 | 0.0475 |
| Washington (in Hours) | (0.0289) | (0.0226) |  | (0.0449) | (0.0437) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,636 | 4,636 |  | 3,890 | 3,890 |
| R-squared | 0.919 | 0.926 |  | 0.826 | 0.835 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | No | Yes |  | No | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 69.89 | 69.89 |  | 68.10 | 68.10 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.60 | 15.60 |  | 16.54 | 16.54 |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington (based on effective travel time) on voter turnout for the period 1840-1852. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a county-year. The outcome variables are presidential election turnout in column 1 and 2 and House election turnout in column 3 and 4. The explanatory variable is the effective travel time to Washington, which is the estimated travel time (in hours) to the nearest daily newspaper with telegraphic connection to Washington taking into account the road, railroad and river transportation networks during the study period. Online Appendix B provides details on the construction of the effective travel time. Each regression controls for county fixed effects and state-by-year fixed effects. Column 2 and 4 further control for county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Each regression is weighted by the voting eligible population as proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old in 1840. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010). GIS shapefiles on railroads, canals and steamboat-navigated rivers during the period 1840-1852 are obtained from Atack (2015, 2016, 2017).

Table A.14: Access to Telegraphed News from Washington (Based on Effective Travel

Distance) and Voter Turnout, 1840-1852

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Effective Travel Distance to | -0.833\*\*\* | -0.927\*\*\* |  | 0.336 | 0.249 |
| Washington (in Hours) | (0.281) | (0.217) |  | (0.429) | (0.406) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,636 | 4,636 |  | 3,890 | 3,890 |
| R-squared | 0.919 | 0.926 |  | 0.826 | 0.835 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | No | Yes |  | No | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 69.89 | 69.89 |  | 68.10 | 68.10 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.60 | 15.60 |  | 16.54 | 16.54 |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington (based on effective travel distance) on voter turnout for the period 1840-1852. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression following equation (1), where each observation is a county-year. The outcome variables are presidential election turnout in column 1 and 2 and House election turnout in column 3 and 4. The explanatory variable is the effective travel distance to Washington, which is the estimated travel distance (in 100 miles) to the nearest daily newspaper with telegraphic connection to Washington taking into account the road, railroad and river transportation networks during the study period. Online Appendix B provides details on the construction of the effective travel distance. Each regression controls for county fixed effects and state-by-year fixed effects. Column 2 and 4 further control for county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Each regression is weighted by the voting eligible population as proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old in 1840. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010). GIS shapefiles on railroads, canals and steamboat-navigated rivers during the period 1840-1852 are obtained from Atack (2015, 2016, 2017).

Table A.15: Heterogeneous Effects on Voter Turnout by 1840 Whig Vote Share

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Voter Turnout | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington (100 miles) | -1.122\*\*\* | -1.254\*\*\* |  | -0.130 | -0.184 |
|  | (0.360) | (0.348) |  | (0.553) | (0.545) |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.148 |  |  | -0.0353 |  |
| x Above median Whig share in 1840 | (0.137) |  |  | (0.170) |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington |  | 0.0907 |  |  | 0.244 |
| x Above 75th percentile Whig share in 1840 |  | (0.127) |  |  | (0.222) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,659 | 4,659 |  | 3,892 | 3,892 |
| R-squared | 0.925 | 0.925 |  | 0.834 | 0.835 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 69.78 | 69.78 |  | 68.09 | 68.09 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 15.71 | 15.71 |  | 16.55 | 16.55 |

*Notes -* The table explores the heterogeneity in the baseline effects on voter turnout by the county’s 1840 Whig vote share. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a county-year. The outcome variables are presidential election turnout in columns 1 and 2 and House election turnout in columns 3 and 4. The main explanatory variable is the effective distance to Washington measured in hundred miles. In columns 1 and 3, effective distance to Washington is interacted with a dummy variable that equals 1 if the county’s 1840 Whig vote share was above median; in columns 2 and 4, the interaction is with a dummy variable that equals 1 if the county’s 1840 Whig vote share was in the top quartile. Each regression controls for county fixed effects, state-by-year fixed effects, and county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Each regression is weighted by the voting eligible population as proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old in 1840. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.16: Access to Telegraphed Washington News and Party Vote Shares, 1840-1852

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Party Vote Shares | | | | |
|  | Presidential Elections | |  | House Elections | |
|  | Dem. | Whig |  | Dem. | Whig |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.400 | 0.412 |  | -0.424 | 0.360 |
| (100 miles) | (0.322) | (0.274) |  | (0.790) | (1.069) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,654 | 4,654 |  | 3,886 | 3,886 |
| R-squared | 0.934 | 0.914 |  | 0.765 | 0.741 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 49.79 | 47.55 |  | 49.23 | 44.53 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 14.98 | 14.85 |  | 22.25 | 21.62 |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on party vote shares (in percentage points) for the period 1840-1852. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression following equation (1), where each observation is a county-year. The outcome variables are the vote shares for the Democratic Party and the Whig Party in presidential elections (columns 1 and 2) and in House elections (columns 3 and 4). The explanatory variable is effective distance to Washington measured in hundred miles. Each regression controls for county fixed effects, state-by-year fixed effects, and county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Each regression is weighted by the voting eligible population as proxied by the population of white males above 20 years old in 1840. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the county level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.17: Effects on the Winners’ Margins of Victory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Electoral Margin of Victory | | | | |
|  | Presidential Election | |  | House Election | |
|  | (1) | (2) |  | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | 0.100 | 0.122 |  | -0.0431 | -0.276 |
| (100 miles) | (0.577) | (0.494) |  | (0.828) | (0.808) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,645 | 4,645 |  | 3,230 | 3,230 |
| R-squared | 0.826 | 0.830 |  | 0.692 | 0.693 |
| County FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Year FE | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 21.48 | 21.48 |  | 21.63 | 21.63 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 19.19 | 19.19 |  | 21.23 | 21.23 |

*Notes -* The table shows the effect of access to telegraphed Washington news on the winners’ margins of victory in elections, conditional on having both major parties on the ballot. The specifications follow those in Table 1, except here the outcome is the winner’s margin of victory in each county, and the sample consists of county-years that had both major parties on the ballot. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Election data come from Clubb et al. (2006). County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.18: Access to Telegraphed News from Washington and Congressmen Ideology,

26th-32rd Congress

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|  | Outcome: DW-Nominate Scores (standardized) | | | | | | | |
|  | 1st dim. | 2nd dim. | |1st dim.| | |2nd dim.| | 1st dim. | 2nd dim. | |1st dim.| | |2nd dim.| |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.0321 | -0.00946 | -0.0338 | 0.134 | 0.00251 | -0.0121 | 0.0127 | 0.0452 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0229) | (0.0659) | (0.0853) | (0.0909) | (0.0180) | (0.0336) | (0.0230) | (0.0301) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 1,643 | 1,643 | 1,643 | 1,643 | 1,008 | 1,008 | 1,008 | 1,008 |
| R-squared | 0.893 | 0.773 | 0.320 | 0.272 | 0.998 | 0.991 | 0.994 | 0.979 |
| Party FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Congress No. FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Individual FE | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on House representatives’ positions on roll call votes during the 26th-32rd Congress. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a House representative in a Congress. The outcome variables are the first dimension of a representative’s DW-NOMINATE score in a given Congress in columns 1 and 5, the second dimension of the score in columns 2 and 6, and their absolute values in columns 3-4 and 7-8, all standardized. The explanatory variable is effective distance to Washington, which is the distance (in hundred miles) from the centroid of each congressional district to the nearest daily newspaper with the latest Washington news. Each regression controls for party fixed effects and state-by-Congress fixed effects. Columns 5-8 further control for individual (Congressman) fixed effects. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the state level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. County demographic data are from Haines (2010). DW-NOMINATE score data are obtained from Voteview.com (Poole and Rosenthal 2001).

Table A.19: Access to Telegraphed News from Washington and Number of Bills Congressmen Sponsored, 26th-32rd Congress

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcome: Number of | |
|  | Bills Sponsored | |
|  | (1) | (2) |
|  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | 0.168 | -0.0860 |
| (100 miles) | (0.294) | (0.682) |
|  |  |  |
| Observations | 1,603 | 969 |
| R-squared | 0.080 | 0.593 |
| Party FE | Yes | Yes |
| State-by-Congress Number FE | Yes | Yes |
| Individual FE | No | Yes |
| Mean of Dep. Var. | 1.847 | 2.544 |
| Std. Dev. of Dep. Var. | 4.972 | 6.130 |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on House representatives’ number of bills sponsored during the 26th-32rd Congress. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression, where each observation is a House representative in a Congress. The outcome variable is the number of bills sponsored by a House representative in a given Congress. The explanatory variable is effective distance to Washington, which is the distance (in hundred miles) from the centroid of each congressional district to the nearest daily newspaper with the latest Washington news. Each regression controls for party fixed effects and state-by-Congress fixed effects. Columns 2 further controls for individual (Congressman) fixed effects. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the state level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. County demographic data are from Haines (2010). The number of bills sponsored by Congressmen are from the ICPSR 3371 dataset (Swift et al. 2009)

Table A.20: List of the Small-Town Newspapers in My Sample and Their Locations

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Place | State | Title | Place | State |
| The Illinois free trader. | Ottawa | Illinois | The Yazoo Democrat. | Yazoo | Mississippi |
| Juliet signal. | Juliet | Illinois | The Yazoo City Whig. | Yazoo | Mississippi |
| Indiana State sentinel. | Indianapolis | Indiana | Saturday morning visitor. | Warsaw | Missouri |
| The Evansville journal. | Evansville | Indiana | Boon’s Lick times. | Glasgow | Missouri |
| Richmond palladium. | Richmond | Indiana | Salt River journal. | Bowling Green | Missouri |
| Burlington hawk-eye. | Burlington | Iowa Territory | The North-Carolinian. | Fayetteville | North Carolina |
| Iowa territorial gazette | Burlington | Iowa Territory | Tarboro’ press. | Tarboro | North Carolina |
| and advertiser. |  |  | The Charlotte journal. | Charlotte | North Carolina |
| Weekly miners’ express. | Dubuque | Iowa Territory | Wilmington journal. | Wilmington | North Carolina |
| Iowa capitol reporter. | Iowa City | Iowa Territory | The Hillsborough recorder. | Hillsboro | North Carolina |
| Bloomington herald. | Bloomington | Iowa Territory | The North-Carolina standard. | Raleigh | North Carolina |
| Baton-Rouge gazette. | Baton Rouge | Louisiana | Democratic standard. | Georgetown | Ohio |
| The Planters’ banner. | New Iberia | Louisiana | Carroll free press. | Carrollton | Ohio |
| Southern sentinel. | Plaquemine | Louisiana | The Lancaster gazette. | Lancaster | Ohio |
| The St. Landry whig. | Opelousas | Louisiana | The Cadiz sentinel. | Cadiz | Ohio |
| The Cecil Whig. | Elkton | Maryland | Maumee City express. | Maumee | Ohio |
| Port Tobacco Times | Port Tobacco | Maryland | Meigs County times. | Pomeroy | Ohio |
| Hillsdale Whig standard. | Hillsdale | Michigan | The spirit of democracy. | Woodsfield | Ohio |
| Ypsilanti sentinel. | Ypsilanti | Michigan | Portage sentinel. | Ravenna | Ohio |
| Piney Woods planter. | Liberty | Mississippi | The Kalida venture. | Kalida | Ohio |
| Liberty advocate. | Liberty | Mississippi | Lower Sandusky freeman. | Lower Sandusky | Ohio |
| Jeffersonian Democrat. | Kosciusko | Mississippi | The Ohio Democrat. | Dover | Ohio |
| Kosciusko chronicle. | Kosciusko | Mississippi | Anti-slavery bugle | Carrollton | Ohio |
| Central register. | Kosciusko | Mississippi | The Democratic pioneer. | Upper Sandusky | Ohio |
| Attala register. | Kosciusko | Mississippi | The mountain sentinel. | Ebensburg | Pennsylvania |
| Mississippi Democrat. | Carrollton | Mississippi | The Columbia Democrat. | Bloomsburg | Pennsylvania |
| The Whig creed. | Carrollton | Mississippi | Lewistown gazette. | Lewistown | Pennsylvania |
| The Southern Pioneer | Carrollton | Mississippi | Jeffersonian Republican. | East Stroudsburg | Pennsylvania |
| The hornet. | Carrollton | Mississippi | Sunbury American. | Sunbury | Pennsylvania |
| Western statesman. | Carrollton | Mississippi | The Somerset herald. | Somerset | Pennsylvania |
| Southern patriot. | Houston | Mississippi | Lewisburg chronicle. | Lewisburg | Pennsylvania |
| Port-Gibson herald. | Port Gibson | Mississippi | The Abbeville banner. | Abbeville | South Carolina |
| The Port-Gibson correspondent. | Port Gibson | Mississippi | Farmers’ gazette. | Cheraw | South Carolina |
| Whig Republican. | Lexington | Mississippi | Edgefield advertiser. | Edgefield | South Carolina |
| Lexington union. | Lexington | Mississippi | The Camden journal. | Camden | South Carolina |
| True Democrat. | Paulding | Mississippi | Keowee courier. | Walhalla | South Carolina |
| The Rodney telegraph. | Rodney | Mississippi | The Spartan. | Spartanburg | South Carolina |
| The organizer. | Oxford | Mississippi | The Sumter banner. | Sumter | South Carolina |
| The Democratic Whig. | Columbus | Mississippi | South Branch intelligencer. | Romney | Virginia |
| Columbus Democrat. | Columbus | Mississippi | Spirit of Jefferson. | Charles Town | Virginia |
| Southern Argus. | Columbus | Mississippi | The Middlebury galaxy. | Middlebury | Vermont |
| The Mississippi Creole. | Canton | Mississippi | The Caledonian. | St Johnsbury | Vermont |
| Holly Springs banner. | Holly Springs | Mississippi | Burlington free press. | Burlington | Vermont |
| The guard. | Holly Springs | Mississippi | Rutland herald. | Rutland | Vermont |
| Holly Springs gazette. | Holly Springs | Mississippi | Vermont watchman | Montpelier | Vermont |
| The weekly independent. | Aberdeen | Mississippi | and State journal. |  |  |
| Southern tribune. | Aberdeen | Mississippi | Vermont phœnix. | Bellows Falls | Vermont |
| Macon intelligencer. | Macon | Mississippi | Windham County Democrat. | Brattleboro | Vermont |
| The Weekly register. | Panola | Mississippi | The spirit of the age. | Woodstock | Vermont |
| The Ripley advertiser. | Ripley | Mississippi | The voice of freedom. | Rutland | Vermont |
| Woodville Republican. | Woodville | Mississippi | Green-Mountain freeman. | Montpelier | Vermont |
| Louisville messenger. Louisville Mississippi Wisconsin tribune. Mineral Point Wisconsin Territory | | | | | |

*Notes -* The table lists the small-town newspapers in my sample that were used for the text analysis.

Sources: The newspapers are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/)

Table A.21: Summary Statistics of Word Frequency for the Newspaper Text Analysis

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| “Congress” | 4,882 | 30.81 | 27.89 | 0 | 242 |
| Presidents’ last names | 4,882 | 14.48 | 18.49 | 0 | 191 |
| Presidential candidates’ last names | 1,429 | 99.19 | 103.4 | 0 | 785 |
| Pres. & Vice Pres. candidates’ last names | 1,429 | 114.4 | 117.8 | 0 | 884 |
| Town name | 4,882 | 80.40 | 74.49 | 0 | 520 |
| County name | 4,882 | 58.05 | 71.29 | 0 | 748 |
| State capital name | 4,882 | 20.46 | 37.12 | 0 | 313 |
| State name | 4,882 | 61.07 | 57.61 | 0 | 475 |
| Governor name | 4,882 | 21.58 | 24.05 | 0 | 214 |
| European country names | 4,882 | 28.87 | 28.16 | 0 | 349 |
| “slavery” | 4,882 | 13.78 | 39.10 | 0 | 435 |
| “texas” | 4,882 | 13.93 | 23.40 | 0 | 410 |
| “annex” | 4,882 | 7.706 | 13.01 | 0 | 198 |
| “tariff” | 4,882 | 9.770 | 15.97 | 0 | 281 |
| “mexic” | 4,882 | 34.42 | 52.88 | 0 | 559 |
| “vote” | 4,882 | 37.86 | 34.14 | 0 | 354 |
| “telegraph” | 4,882 | 2.664 | 4.290 | 0 | 57 |
| “abolition” | 4,882 | 5.868 | 12.75 | 0 | 218 |
| “free soil” | 4,882 | 1.209 | 6.084 | 0 | 166 |
| “liberty party” | 4,882 | 0.771 | 4.396 | 0 | 87 |
| “wilmot proviso” | 4,882 | 0.856 | 3.354 | 0 | 75 |
| “plantation” | 4,882 | 3.331 | 6.249 | 0 | 59 |
| “rally” | 1,429 | 2.159 | 2.418 | 0 | 23 |
| “meeting” | 1,429 | 23.83 | 22.02 | 0 | 179 |
| “speech” | 1,429 | 14.47 | 13.47 | 0 | 99 |
| “orator” | 1,429 | 2.761 | 4.298 | 0 | 100 |
| “gathering” | 1,429 | 1.327 | 1.787 | 0 | 14 |
| “invite” | 1,429 | 10.30 | 9.618 | 0 | 65 |
| “assembl” | 1,429 | 10.78 | 11.26 | 0 | 143 |
| Campaign-related words combined 1,429 65.63 48.11 0 348 | | | | | |

*Notes -* The table presents summary statistics of the words used in the newspaper text analysis. The newspapers are obtained from the *Chronicling America* database. The frequency of each word is based on my newspaper sample for the period 1840-1849. Presidents’ last names consist of the last names of the U.S. presidents that were in office in each year. Presidential candidates’ last names include all presidential candidates from the two major parties (Whigs and Democrats) and the leading third party in each presidential election year during 1840-1848. Pres. & Vice Pres. candidates’ last names further include the last names of the vice presidential candidates in election years. European country names consist of the following: “Britain,” “United Kingdom,” “France,” “Austria,” “Prussia,” “Russia,” “Italy,” “Portugal,” “Greece,” “Belgium,” “Switzerland,” “Netherland,” “Sweden,” “Poland,” and the word “Europe.” Campaign-related words combined is the sum of the following words: “rally,” “meeting,” “speech,” “orator,” “gathering,” “invite,” and “assembl”.

Sources: The newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/)

Table A.22: Access to Telegraphed Washington News and Newspaper Mentioning of “Telegraph”

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  | Outcome: ln(“telegraph”) | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.122\*\*\* | -0.0785\*\*\* | -0.0760\*\*\* | -0.115\*\*\* |
| (100 miles) | (0.0125) | (0.0231) | (0.0243) | (0.0307) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.165 | 0.554 | 0.555 | 0.608 |
| Newspaper FE | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Newspaper-specific time trend | No | No | No | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on the mentioning of the word “telegraph” in my sample of newspapers from the 1840s. Each column represents the results from a separate OLS regression following equation (2), where each observation is a newspaper-year-month. The outcome variable is the natural log of the frequency of the word “telegraph.” The explanatory variable is effective distance to Washington measured in hundred miles. Column 1 includes no controls. Column 2 adds newspaper fixed effects and month-by-year fixed effects. Column 3 adds county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Column 4 adds newspaper-specific linear time trends. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the newspaper location (town) level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.23: Access to Telegraphed News from Washington and Mentioning of Words Related to Slavery in Newspapers

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|  |  |  | ln(“Free | ln(“Liberty | ln(“Wilmot |  |
|  | ln(“Slavery”) | ln(“Abolition”) | Soil”) | Party”) | Proviso”) | ln(“Plantation”) |
|  | Panel A. Sample: All Newspapers in Sample | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.102\*\*\* | -0.0773\*\*\* | -0.0162 | -0.0173 | -0.0542 | -0.0351 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0361) | (0.0269) | (0.0241) | (0.0134) | (0.0369) | (0.0257) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.632 | 0.462 | 0.701 | 0.641 | 0.573 | 0.594 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
|  | Panel B. Sample: Northern Newspapers | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.137\*\* | -0.109\*\* | -0.0220 | -0.0404 | -0.115\*\*\* | -0.0227 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0519) | (0.0436) | (0.0374) | (0.0256) | (0.0203) | (0.0247) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 2,780 | 2,780 | 2,780 | 2,780 | 2,780 | 2,780 |
| R-squared | 0.686 | 0.493 | 0.731 | 0.645 | 0.575 | 0.292 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
|  | Panel C. Sample: Southern Newspapers | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.0278 | -0.00211 | 0.00342 | 0.000662 | 0.0169 | -0.0232 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0592) | (0.0430) | (0.0338) | (0.00350) | (0.0739) | (0.0495) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 2,102 | 2,102 | 2,102 | 2,102 | 2,102 | 2,102 |
| R-squared | 0.548 | 0.516 | 0.687 | 0.127 | 0.626 | 0.541 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed news from Washington on the mentioning of words related to slavery. Each column of each panel represents the results from a separate OLS regression following equation (2), where each observation is a newspaper-year-month. The explanatory variable is effective distance to Washington measured in hundred miles. The outcome variables are the frequencies of words related to slavery, all measured in natural logs. Panel A includes all newspapers in my baseline analysis. Panels B focuses on the sample of newspapers from the North, while Panel C focuses on newspapers from the South. Each regression controls for newspaper fixed effect, month-by-year fixed effects, and county demographics including the natural log of population, the population share of whites, share of urban population, share of white males above 20 years old, and share of slaves. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the newspaper location (town) level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.24: Robustness of the Newspaper Text Analysis to Dropping Mississippi Newspapers from the Sample

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Panel A. | Mentioning of ``Congress'' and Presidents' & Presidential Candidates' Last Names | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | ln(Pres. Cand. Name) | |
|  |  | ln(President | ln(Pres. Name) | | P. Cand | P. & V.P. |
|  | ln(``Congress'') | Name) | Pres. Year | Off Year | Only | Cand |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.0398 | -0.0640\* | -0.120\*\* | -0.0495 | -0.113\*\* | -0.0874\* |
| (100 miles) | (0.0352) | (0.0326) | (0.0530) | (0.0396) | (0.0512) | (0.0449) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 3,912 | 3,912 | 1,173 | 2,737 | 1,173 | 1,173 |
| R-squared | 0.484 | 0.495 | 0.552 | 0.500 | 0.624 | 0.635 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panel B. | Mentioning of Local, State-Specific, and European Nation Names | | | | | |
|  | ln(Town | ln(County | ln(State Cap- | ln(State | ln(Governor | ln(European |
|  | Name) | Name) | ital Name) | Name) | Name) | Nation Name) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | 0.0821\*\* | 0.0274 | 0.0636\* | 0.00209 | 0.00579 | 0.0220 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0332) | (0.0330) | (0.0377) | (0.0295) | (0.0260) | (0.0386) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 |
| R-squared | 0.810 | 0.733 | 0.700 | 0.662 | 0.616 | 0.492 |
|  |  | | | | | |
| Panel C. | Mentioning of Issues of National Importance | | | | | |
|  | ln(``Slavery'') | ln(``Texas'') | ln(``Annex'') | ln(``Tariff'') | ln(``Mexic'') | ln(``Vote'') |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.0854\* | -0.0636\* | -0.0283 | -0.0293 | -0.0117 | -0.0289 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0433) | (0.0362) | (0.0331) | (0.0358) | (0.0339) | (0.0274) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 | 3,912 |
| R-squared | 0.637 | 0.610 | 0.608 | 0.534 | 0.745 | 0.506 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimates from Table 3 after dropping all newspapers in my sample from Mississippi. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1.

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.25: Robustness of the Newspaper Text Analysis to Controlling for North-South

Region Dummies Interacted with Year-Month Fixed Effects

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Panel A. | Mentioning of ``Congress'' and Presidents' & Presidential Candidates' Last Names | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | ln(Pres. Cand. Name) | |
|  |  | ln(President | ln(Pres. Name) | | P. Cand | P. & V.P. |
|  | ln(``Congress'') | Name) | Pres. Year | Off Year | Only | Cand |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.0497 | -0.0567\*\* | -0.142\*\* | -0.0510 | -0.158\*\*\* | -0.133\*\* |
| (100 miles) | (0.0306) | (0.0284) | (0.0556) | (0.0362) | (0.0591) | (0.0524) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 1,427 | 3,451 | 1,427 | 1,427 |
| R-squared | 0.487 | 0.523 | 0.577 | 0.536 | 0.643 | 0.653 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panel B. | Mentioning of Local, State-Specific, and European Nation Names | | | | | |
|  | ln(Town | ln(County | ln(State Cap- | ln(State | ln(Governor | ln(European |
|  | Name) | Name) | ital Name) | Name) | Name) | Name) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | 0.0325 | -0.00533 | 0.00629 | -0.0290 | -0.0296 | 0.00782 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0292) | (0.0272) | (0.0289) | (0.0255) | (0.0202) | (0.0308) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.794 | 0.722 | 0.678 | 0.630 | 0.594 | 0.503 |
|  |  | | | | | |
| Panel C. | Mentioning of Issues of National Importance | | | | | |
|  | ln(``Slavery'') | ln(``Texas'') | ln(``Annex'') | ln(``Tariff'') | ln(``Mexic'') | ln(``Vote'') |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.100\*\*\* | -0.0482\* | -0.0333 | -0.0183 | -0.000381 | -0.0341 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0346) | (0.0283) | (0.0270) | (0.0290) | (0.0294) | (0.0220) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.654 | 0.608 | 0.621 | 0.536 | 0.748 | 0.509 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| North/South x Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimates from Table 3 after controlling for the interaction between a North-South region dummy and year-month fixed effects. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.26: Robustness of the Newspaper Text Analysis to Controlling for Census Region Dummies Interacted with Year-Month Fixed Effects

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Panel A. | Mentioning of ``Congress'' and Presidents' & Presidential Candidates' Last Names | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | ln(Pres. Cand. Name) | |
|  |  | ln(President | ln(Pres. Name) | | P. Cand | P. & V.P. |
|  | ln(``Congress'') | Name) | Pres. Year | Off Year | Only | Cand |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.0110 | 0.0121 | -0.115 | 0.0433 | -0.116 | -0.0985 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0523) | (0.0319) | (0.0728) | (0.0426) | (0.0814) | (0.0736) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 1,427 | 3,451 | 1,427 | 1,427 |
| R-squared | 0.523 | 0.560 | 0.606 | 0.574 | 0.675 | 0.684 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panel B. | Mentioning of Local, State-Specific, and European Nation Names | | | | | |
|  | ln(Town | ln(County | ln(State Cap- | ln(State | ln(Governor | ln(European |
|  | Name) | Name) | ital Name) | Name) | Name) | Name) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | 0.0581 | 0.0489 | 0.0115 | -0.00668 | -0.00462 | 0.0392 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0522) | (0.0440) | (0.0471) | (0.0396) | (0.0324) | (0.0450) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.815 | 0.742 | 0.707 | 0.664 | 0.647 | 0.531 |
|  |  | | | | | |
| Panel C. | Mentioning of Issues of National Importance | | | | | |
|  | ln(``Slavery'') | ln(``Texas'') | ln(``Annex'') | ln(``Tariff'') | ln(``Mexic'') | ln(``Vote'') |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.0772\* | -0.0340 | -0.0259 | 0.0262 | 0.0216 | 0.0256 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0453) | (0.0405) | (0.0423) | (0.0400) | (0.0492) | (0.0355) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.683 | 0.633 | 0.646 | 0.579 | 0.766 | 0.554 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Region x Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimates from Table 3 after controlling for the interactions between Census region dummies (indicators for the Northeast, Midwest, Southeast, and South Central regions) and year-month fixed effects. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.27: Robustness of the Newspaper Text Analysis to Controlling for Newspaper-

Specific Linear Trends

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Panel A. | Mentioning of ``Congress'' and Presidents' & Presidential Candidates' Last Names | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | | ln(Pres. Cand. Name) | |
|  |  | ln(President | ln(Pres. Name) | | P. Cand | P. & V.P. |
|  | ln(``Congress'') | Name) | Pres. Year | Off Year | Only | Cand |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.0920\*\*\* | -0.0477 | -0.176 | -0.0756 | -0.0655 | -0.0395 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0279) | (0.0446) | (0.118) | (0.0564) | (0.100) | (0.0867) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 1,427 | 3,451 | 1,427 | 1,427 |
| R-squared | 0.557 | 0.567 | 0.668 | 0.581 | 0.728 | 0.737 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panel B. | Mentioning of Local, State-Specific, and European Nation Names | | | | | |
|  | ln(Town | ln(County | ln(State Cap- | ln(State | ln(Governor | ln(European |
|  | Name) | Name) | ital Name) | Name) | Name) | Name) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | 0.0400 | -0.0276 | 0.0283 | -0.0214 | -0.0253 | 0.000401 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0436) | (0.0378) | (0.0517) | (0.0375) | (0.0351) | (0.0321) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.838 | 0.772 | 0.719 | 0.672 | 0.624 | 0.584 |
|  |  | | | | | |
| Panel C. | Mentioning of Issues of National Importance | | | | | |
|  | ln(``Slavery'') | ln(``Texas'') | ln(``Annex'') | ln(``Tariff'') | ln(``Mexic'') | ln(``Vote'') |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. To Washington | -0.106\*\* | -0.0841\*\* | -0.0553\* | -0.0593 | -0.0448 | -0.0779\*\*\* |
| (100 miles) | (0.0461) | (0.0395) | (0.0284) | (0.0383) | (0.0347) | (0.0253) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 | 4,882 |
| R-squared | 0.672 | 0.636 | 0.645 | 0.570 | 0.768 | 0.564 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Newspaper-specific linear trend | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimates from Table 3 after controlling for newspaper-specific linear trends in each regression. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.28: Access to Telegraphed Washington News and Mentioning of Campaign-Related Words

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|  | ln("Rally") | ln("Meeting") | ln("Speech") | ln("Orator") | ln("Gathering") | ln("Invite") | ln("Assembl") | ln(Combined) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eff. Dist. to Washington | -0.0236 | -0.0280 | -0.0261 | -0.0242 | -0.00321 | 0.0732\* | -0.00746 | -0.00363 |
| (100 miles) | (0.0324) | (0.0311) | (0.0413) | (0.0363) | (0.0208) | (0.0392) | (0.0566) | (0.0342) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 |
| R-squared | 0.291 | 0.589 | 0.581 | 0.309 | 0.344 | 0.587 | 0.517 | 0.617 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of access to telegraphed Washington news on the mentioning of words related to local campaigning activities in my sample of newspapers during presidential election years. The regressions follow the same specification as in Table 3. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

Table A.29: Direct Access to the Telegraph and Mentioning of Campaign-Related Words

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|  | ln("Rally") | ln("Meeting") | ln("Speech") | ln("Orator") | ln("Gathering") | ln("Invite") | ln("Assembl") | ln(Combined) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Telegraph connection | 0.0371 | 0.116 | -0.161 | -0.155 | -0.0863 | 0.273\* | -0.0754 | 0.00825 |
|  | (0.145) | (0.175) | (0.193) | (0.215) | (0.102) | (0.161) | (0.209) | (0.158) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 | 1,427 |
| R-squared | 0.345 | 0.722 | 0.700 | 0.375 | 0.393 | 0.687 | 0.615 | 0.821 |
| Newspaper FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Month-by-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Demographic controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Ln(total word count） | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes -* The table shows the estimated effects of a town’s direct connection to the telegraph on the mentioning of words related to local campaigning activities in my sample of newspapers during presidential election years. The explanatory variable is a dummy variable that becomes 1 once the newspaper’s town was connected to the telegraph and 0 otherwise. Each regression controls for newspaper fixed effects, month-by-year fixed effects, county demographic controls as in Table 3, and the natural log of the total number of words in newspapers. Standard errors are corrected for clustering at the newspaper location (town) level. \*\*\* p*<*0.01, \*\* p*<*0.05, \* p*<*0.1

Sources: Data on the telegraph network are compiled primarily from Thompson (1947), Reid (1886), and the *Report of the Superintendent of the Census* (US Census Office 1852). The locations of daily newspapers are from the 1840 *Census of Manufactures*. Newspaper text data are obtained from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*: Historic American Newspapers site: [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/.](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/) County demographic data are from Haines (2010).

**Online Appendix B: Robustness Checks and Additional Results**

## Robustness Checks for the Baseline Results

One potential threat to identification is the possibility that counties receiving greater access to telegraphed news from Washington might have already been on an upward trend in turnout before the introduction of the telegraph, which would violate the usual parallel trends assumption. Such pre-trends would also suggest the presence of reverse causality. To address this concern, I test for the presence of pre-trends by running long-difference versions of equation (1) for different sub-periods during 1840-1852. In column 1 of Table A.2, I show that the baseline finding still holds when I run a long-difference version of equation (1) for the period 1844-1852, during which the telegraph grew from a single line between Washington and Baltimore to a national network. In contrast, column 2 of Table A.2 conducts a placebo test by regressing the change in presidential election turnout between 1840 and 1844, the period *before* the spread of the telegraph, on the change in effective distance between 1844 and 1852.[[1]](#footnote-1) It is evident that the estimate from the placebo test is close to zero and statistically insignificant, suggesting that counties receiving greater access to telegraphed news from Washington were not already on a differential pre-trend in turnout. Moreover, column 3 of the table further includes the change in presidential election turnout between 1840 and 1844 as a control variable in the regression from column 1. The estimate remains statistically significant and, if anything, increases slightly in magnitude, providing support that the results are not driven by pre-trends.

I present additional robustness checks on the baseline results on presidential election turnout in Table A.3. A potential concern is that the results might be confounded by access to the railroad. To address this concern, column 1 of Table A.3 controls for distance to the nearest railroad and shows similar result, suggesting that rail access was unlikely a confounder.[[2]](#footnote-2) In column 2, I show the result from an unweighted regression. The point estimate, while slightly smaller, remains statistically significant, suggesting that weighting does not change the main results. In column 3, I drop counties that had a daily newspaper in 1840. Daily newspapers in 1840 could only be found in the largest cities. The estimate remains similar and suggests that the result is not driven by major urban centers with dailies. Similarly, in column 4, I restrict the sample to counties with only rural population. The estimate stays similar, suggesting that the effect was not a uniquely urban phenomenon.

In column 5, I restrict the sample to counties that were more than 50 miles away from any telegraph lines by 1852. Counties far away from any telegraph lines in 1852, by which time the telegraph network had spanned the nation, were unlikely to have been targeted by the telegraph companies. The variation in the effective distance to Washington in such counties was primarily driven by *distant* cities’ connection to the telegraph, which was unlikely related to local demand for the telegraph. As seen in column 5, the estimate remains robust and becomes somewhat larger in magnitude, suggesting that the effect was unlikely driven by unobserved local factors that might have increased both telegraph access and voter turnout.[[3]](#footnote-3) To show that the results are not driven by the method to harmonize county boundaries over time (Hornbeck 2010), I report in column 6 the estimate only for counties with consistent boundaries between 1840 and 1850. The result is robust and slightly larger in magnitude than the baseline estimate. Besides, in column 7, I drop counties with presidential election turnout below 20% and find similar estimates, suggesting that the result is not driven by outlier counties with extremely low turnout.

The number of US newspapers expanded rapidly during 1840-1850 (Dill 1928; Blondheim 1994). One could be concerned that the increasing availability of national news via the telegraph might have contributed to the expansion of the number of newspapers, which would make it harder to isolate the effect of the telegraph from the expansion of newspapers. To address this concern, I collect and digitize new data on the spatial distribution of US newspapers in 1850 from the *Catalogue of the Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United States* (Kennedy 1852)[[4]](#footnote-4). I then combine this new dataset on 1850 newspapers with the newspaper data from the 1840 Census to examine whether access to telegraphed news affected the number of newspapers during 1840-1850. Using a long-difference specification between 1840 and 1850, column 1 of Table A.4 shows that there is not a strong association between the change in a county’s effective distance to Washington and the change in the total number of newspapers in the county during 1840-1850. The coefficients are negative but statistically insignificant. I find similar evidence when looking at newspapers published with different frequencies (columns 2-4). The results therefore suggest that access to telegraphed news from Washington was unlikely to have affected the number of newspapers.[[5]](#footnote-5)

To account for the spatial correlation of the error terms, I do robustness tests using alternative ways of adjusting for standard errors. Table A.5 shows that the estimates remain significant at 1 or 5 percent level when I cluster the standard errors at the state level or use Conley (1999) standard errors with different distance cutoffs ranging between 50-400 miles.

To further address the issue of potential confounders, I check the results after controlling for a rich set of preexisting 1840 county characteristics interacted with year dummies, which would allow each local characteristic to have a differential effect over time.[[6]](#footnote-6) Table A.6 shows that the results from this exercise stay substantially the same, further alleviating the concern about potential confounders. In addition, I follow a similar exercise in Hornbeck (2010) by exploiting only the variation from telegraphic connections further away from the county, which is even less likely to be affected by local factors. Specifically, when measuring a county’s effective distance to Washington, I only use telegraphic connections by daily newspapers more than 100 miles away and ignore any connection by nearby dailies. Thus, the variation in effective distance to Washington would only come from telegraphic connections in faraway places. Table A.7 shows that the results are substantially the same when exploiting this arguably more exogenous source of variation in access to telegraphed Washington news. Besides, Table A.8 shows that the baseline results are qualitatively similar when controlling for the winners’ margins of victory as a measure of electoral competition.

During the study period, House elections in several states were held on a statewide (at-large) basis instead of at the congressional district level.[[7]](#footnote-7) Columns 1-2 of Table A.9 show that the baseline results on House election turnout are not sensitive to dropping the state-years with at-large House elections. Besides, five of the six New England states (with Connecticut being the exception) required a House candidate to receive a majority and not just a plurality of all votes cast in order to be elected (Dubin 1998). In the absence of a majority winner, additional rounds of elections were held until a majority winner emerged. Columns 3-4 of Table A.9 show that the baseline results on House election turnout are similar when dropping the five New England states that held such multi-round House elections from the sample.

In addition, the baseline sample size for congressional election is smaller primarily because congressional election turnout is missing (not reported) for some counties in the data. Table A.10 shows that the results are similar when I restrict the sample to the common subset of counties that reported both presidential and congressional election turnout.[[8]](#footnote-8) Besides, I perform a robustness check by restricting the sample to a balanced panel of counties that are in the sample throughout the 1840-1852 period. As shown in Table A.11, the results from the balanced panel are robust and substantially the same as the baseline estimates.

Furthermore, voting population in the baseline was linearly interpolated for intercensal years. Table A.12 shows that the results are substantially the same if I instead use loglinear interpolation to obtain intercensal voting population. The contrasting results between presidential and congressional elections also suggest that the results are unlikely driven by the particular way that intercensal voting population was interpolated.

Moreover, the next subsection and Tables A.13-A.14 show that the results are similar when I construct alternative measures of access to telegraphed news from Washington based on GIS network analysis that takes into account the overland, rail, and water transportation networks during the study period.[[9]](#footnote-9) Taken together, the series of robustness checks presented in this section further strengthen the causal interpretation of the results.

## Constructing Alternative Measures of Access to Telegraphed Washington News based on Historical Transportation Networks

In this section, I construct alternative measures of access to telegraphed news from Washington based on GIS network analysis that takes into account the overland, rail, and water transportation networks available during the study period. I then test the robustness of the results when I use these alternative measures of access to telegraphed Washington news as the explanatory variables.

To implement this exercise, I take the following steps. First, I obtain GIS datasets on the historical transportation networks during my study period. Specifically, GIS shapefiles on railroads, canals and steamboat-navigated rivers during the period 1840-1852 are obtained from Atack (2015, 2016, 2017). One caveat is that GIS shapefiles for roads or turnpikes are not available for this early period. To proxy the road network, I connect each county centroid with the 5 nearest other county centroids within a 50-mile radius; the results, however, are not sensitive to using alternative numbers or distance cutoffs to proxy the road network.[[10]](#footnote-10) I then integrate the shapefiles for the different transportation modes into one single GIS network dataset in ArcGIS Pro.

Next, I collect information on the travel speeds of the various modes of transportation during the 1840s, including those of stagecoaches, railroads, and steamboats. Based on *The Historical Statistics of the United States* (Carter et al. 2006), in 1845, the typical speed of steamboats was 9 miles per hour (average of upstream and downstream speeds) and that of railroad transportation was about 27 miles per hour. While Carter et al. (2006) does not include information for the speed of stagecoaches, various sources suggest that the typical speed of stagecoaches during this period was about 8-9 miles per hour.[[11]](#footnote-11) I use the speeds of the different transportation modes (9 miles per hour for steamboat-navigated rivers, 27 miles per hour for railroads, and 8 miles per hour for roads) as input parameters for the subsequent GIS network analysis.

Finally, combining the GIS network dataset and the travel speed information, I run the origin-destination (OD) cost matrix analysis tool in ArcGIS Pro, minimizing the travel time from each county centroid to the nearest daily newspaper with telegraphed Washington news in each election year during 1840-1852.[[12]](#footnote-12) The predicted travel time and travel distance based on this procedure, which I call the effective travel time and the effective travel distance to Washington, are what I use as alternative measures of access to telegraphed Washington news (instead of the baseline straight-line distance measure).

Table A.13 shows the results on voter turnout when I use the predicted travel time to measure access to telegraphed news from Washington. Columns 1-2 show that a reduction in the effective travel time to Washington by 10 hours is associated with an increase in presidential election turnout by about 1 percentage point. Columns 3-4 show that there is no such effect on House elections on average, consistent with the baseline finding.

Similarly, Table A.14 shows the results on voter turnout when I use the predicted travel distance to measure access to telegraphed news from Washington. Columns 1-2 show that a reduction in the effective travel distance to Washington by 100 miles is associated with an increase in presidential election turnout by about 0.9 percentage point, which is very similar to the baseline estimate (1.2 percentage points). Columns 3-4 show that the effects on House elections are small and statistically insignificant on average, again consistent with the baseline finding.

In short, the evidence presented here suggests that the results are not sensitive to using alternative travel time and distance measures of access to telegraphed news that take into account the historical transportation networks.

**Heterogeneity of the Results by Preexisting Partisanship**

Do the baseline effects depend on a county’s preexisting partisanship? I explore heterogeneity of the results by preexisting partisanship. Specifically, I measure a county’s preexisting partisanship using its vote share for the Whig Party in 1840, the last election year before the introduction of the telegraph in 1844. I then interact measures of a county’s preexisting Whig support with the effective distance to Washington to explore heterogeneity of the results. Table A.15 presents the findings. In columns 1 and 3 of the Table, I measure Whig support using a dummy variable that equals 1 if a county’s 1840 Whig vote share was above median; in columns 2 and 4, the measure is a dummy variable that equals 1 if the county’s 1840 Whig vote share was in the top quartile. As seen in Table A.15, the coefficients on all the interaction terms are small and statistically insignificant, suggesting that access to telegraphed news from Washington had no differential effect depending on a county’s preexisting partisanship.[[13]](#footnote-13)

## Effects on Party Vote Shares and Roll Call Votes in Congress

Did the increase in voter turnout affect the margins of victory, and how did politicians respond to a more informed electorate? In this subsection, I explore the effects of access to telegraphed Washington news on party vote shares as well as on measures of Congressmen’s ideology and behavior, including their positions on roll call votes and the number of bills they introduced.

Table A.16 examines the effects on party vote shares. The outcomes are the vote shares for each party (Democrats and Whigs) in presidential elections (columns 1-2) and House elections (columns 3-4). As seen in Table A.16, the coefficients are relatively small in magnitude and statistically insignificant, suggesting that access to telegraphed Washington news had little effect on vote shares. This finding is consistent with the idea that the telegraph itself was not partisan and that the increase in voter turnout was shared between and similar for both parties, which resulted in little change in the overall party vote shares. In addition, Table A.17 shows that, conditional on having both major parties on the ballot, effective distance to Washington is not correlated with the winner’s margin of victory in presidential or House elections.

Next, I explore the effects on politician ideology and behavior, focusing on the House representatives’ positions on roll call votes and number of bills introduced during the 26th-32nd Congress that largely overlapped with my study period (1840-1852). Table A.18 examines the positions on roll call votes as measured by the DW-NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal 2001).[[14]](#footnote-14) I examine both the first and the second dimensions of the DW-NOMINATE scores as well as their absolute values (since the scores of the two parties have opposite signs) to allow for the possibility of ideological convergence or divergence between the two parties. Table A.18 indicates that the estimated coefficients are small and statistically insignificant, including when I control for both individual (Congressman) fixed effects and state-by-Congress fixed effects (columns 5-8) to examine within-Congressman change over time. The results therefore suggest that access to telegraphed news from Washington had little effect on Congressmen’s ideology. In addition, using data from the ICPSR 3371 dataset (Swift et al. 2009), Table A.19 shows that access to telegraphed Washington news had little effect on the representatives’ number of bills sponsored in Congress.

One possible explanation for the null effect on representatives’ roll call votes and number of bills introduced is that the telegraph was unlikely to have affected the access to such information during this early period. Because the telegraph was still very expensive during my study period, news sent via the telegraph were usually kept brief. This means that telegraphed news from Washington would hardly contain detailed information such as the votes cast or the bills sponsored by each representative; detailed information like this, if transmitted, would still have to rely on the traditional methods such as postal services. Thus, the telegraph was unlikely to have increased the ease for the constituency to observe and monitor their representatives during this early period, giving politicians little incentive to alter their behavior or ideology.

# Online Appendix C: Newspaper Text Analysis

## Text Data from Historical Newspapers

The newspaper text data come from the *Chronicling America* database, which to my knowledge holds the largest collection of digitized newspaper full-text data for the mid-19th century.[[15]](#footnote-15) *Chronicling America* is produced by the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP), a partnership between the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NDNP describes itself as “a long-term effort to provide permanent access to a national digital resource of newspaper bibliographic information and historic newspapers, selected and digitized by NEH-funded institutions (awardees) from all U.S. states and territories.” Since 2005, the NEH has been awarding grants annually to state institutions such as state libraries, historical societies, and universities to participate in the program. According to *Chronicling America*, newspapers to be digitized are primarily chosen based on technical considerations, such as the quality of the underlying microfilms; preference was also given to newspapers of high historical value for representing the“state’s regional history, geographic coverage, and events of note,” that have not been digitized elsewhere, and that are at risk because of the absence of an active ownership. Newspaper pages are digitized with the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology and digitized pages are available as text documents on *Chronicling America*’s website.

I scraped *Chronicling America*’s website to obtain all digitized newspapers published between January 1, 1840 and December 31, 1849.[[16]](#footnote-16) My analysis focuses on small-town newspapers, both because there are few big-city newspapers in the *Chronicling America* database for the period and because access to the telegraph by small-town newspapers was more likely to be exogenous.[[17]](#footnote-17) After removing the few big-city newspapers, I obtain a sample of 102 small-town newspapers from 17 states. All the newspapers in my sample are four pages in size and published weekly. Appendix Table A.20 lists the newspapers in my sample, and Figure A.4 maps the locations of the newspapers.

A caveat of the data, however, is that a digitized newspaper is not available from every single state during this period and geographically the newspapers in my sample are more representative of the Midwest and the South.[[18]](#footnote-18) Despite the limitation, to my knowledge *Chronicling America* holds the largest collection of digitized newspaper full-text data for my period of study, which are crucial for my subsequent text analysis.

## Measuring News Topics

The goal of my newspaper text analysis is to study the impact of the telegraph on news coverage, focusing on the coverage of national news. This section describes how I measure coverage of national news and other news topics.

National news in the mid-19th century primarily consists of news on Congress and the presidency (Kernell and Jacobson 1987). I therefore focus my analysis on the coverage of these topics. Because *Chronicling America* provides each newspaper’s text data in bulk, which are separable only by date and page number, one cannot easily separate news by articles or count the number of articles on a certain topic. I therefore use the frequency of words that are typically associated with each news topic to measure coverage. For example,

I use the frequency of the word “Congress” to measure the coverage of news on Congress.[[19]](#footnote-19)The assumption is that the more frequently the word “Congress” was mentioned on a date, the greater the coverage was for Congress-related news on that date. Similarly, I use the frequency of the last names of the U.S. presidents in the 1840s to measure the coverage of presidential news.[[20]](#footnote-20)

To check whether frequencies of words provide a reasonable measure of news coverage, I plot the monthly average frequencies of words in my newspaper sample over time in Figure A.5. Panel A of Figure A.5 shows the average frequency of the presidents’ last names as appeared in my newspaper sample over time. It is evident from this figure that the frequency of the presidents’ last names spiked in presidential election years, consistent with what Kernell and Jacobson (1987) find that in the mid-19th century presidential news dominated national news during presidential election years.

Panel B of Figure A.5 shows the average frequency of the word “Congress.” Although the frequency of “Congress” exhibits a less clear trend at first glance, a closer inspection of the figure using congressional calendar during the 1840s reveals that the frequency of the word “Congress” largely followed the calendar of congressional meetings during the 1840s. Lastly, Panel C plots the average frequency of the word “telegraph” over time and shows a drastic increase in the mentioning of the word since the introduction of the technology in May, 1844, consistent with the rise in the use of the telegraph for news gathering during the period. Taken as a whole, Figure A.5 suggests that the frequency of words does provide a meaningful measure of news coverage.

## Robustness Checks for the Newspaper Text Analysis

In this subsection, I perform several robustness checks for the newspaper text analysis. While about 20 percent of my data on historical newspapers comes from Mississippi, Table A.24 shows that the results remain qualitatively similar when dropping the Mississippi papers from the analysis. I also test the robustness of the results to including regional dummies interacted with period fixed effects. As seen in Table A.25, the results stay substantially the same when I control for a North-South region dummy interacted with year-month dummies.

In Table A.26, I control for Census region dummies interacted with year-month dummies. Given there are only about 100 newspapers from 16 states in my sample, this is a more demanding specification as the region-by-year-month fixed effects would absorb much of the variation used for identification. Not surprisingly, as shown in Table A.26, the results are less precisely estimated, but they are qualitatively similar overall. For example, column 3 of Panel A shows that access to telegraphed news from Washington is still associated with an increase in the mentioning of presidents’ names by a similar magnitude in presidential election years, although the effect is not statistically significant at the conventional level (p-value=0.118). Overall, controlling for regional fixed effects interacted with period dummies, while demanding, does not change the main conclusion of the newspaper text analysis. Finally, Table A.27 shows that the results controlling for newspaper-specific linear time trends are broadly similar.

## Local Campaigning as a Potential Channel

Another potential channel is that access to the telegraph and Washington news might have increased the amount of grass-roots campaigning in an area, which was both an extensive and intensive activity. To explore this potential channel, I examine news articles and advertisements on local political rallies in my sample of 1840s newspapers and identify keywords that were frequently associated with such articles, including “rally”, “meeting”, “speech”, “orator”, “gathering”, “invite”, and “assembl\*”. Table A.28 investigates the occurrence of these campaign-related keywords during presidential election years and shows that access to telegraphed Washington news had little effect on newspaper mentioning of these words, either individually (columns 1-7) or combined (column 8).[[21]](#footnote-21) Similarly, Table A.29 shows that a town’s direct connection to the electric telegraph also had little effect on the mentioning of the campaign-related words.[[22]](#footnote-22) Taken together, the results suggest that local grass-roots campaigning was unlikely a channel for the increase in voter turnout.

1. Following its completion in May, 1844, the line between Washington and Baltimore, about 40 miles in length, remained the only telegraph line in the U.S. through early 1846. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The estimate is also similar when I instead control for an indicator for having a railroad within 10 miles. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The results are also robust to using alternative distance cutoffs, such as by restricting the sample to counties more than 20-40 miles away from any telegraph lines by 1852. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The *Catalogue of the Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United States* (Kennedy 1852) was compiled from the 1850 Census of Social Statistics and lists all the newspapers in the US in 1850, including the location (state, county, and township), publishing frequency, circulation, and party affiliation of each paper. I collected and digitized the newspaper data from *Catalogue* from the Rare Book Collection at the New York Public Library. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Newspapers during this period were highly partisan (Gentzkow et al. 2006), and one may wonder whether access to telegraphed news from Washington might have affected the partisanship of newspapers. To explore this question, I manually searched through newspaper bibliographic information on Chronicling America as well as the newly digitized 1850 newspaper catalogue (Kennedy 1852) to identify the party affiliations for the sample of newspapers that I use for text analysis in Section 6. Out of the 102 newspapers in my sample, I managed to identify the party affiliations of 98 papers, among which only two had a switch in party affiliation during the study period after the introduction of the telegraph. This finding is consistent with the idea that newspaper partisanship tended to be very stable during this period and was unlikely to have changed in response to the telegraph. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Specifically, I control for the interactions between each of the following 1840 county characteristics and year dummies: total population (in natural log), percent urban, percent white, percent slaves, percent illiterate white population above 20 years old, number of colleges, percent employed in commerce, percent employed in agriculture, percent employed in manufacturing, and capital in manufacturing (in natural log). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Based on Dubin (1998), the following states held at-large House elections during the study period: Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, Alabama, Mississippi, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island in 1840; Missouri, Mississippi, New Hampshire, and Iowa in 1844; California in 1848; California and Mississippi in 1852. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It is worth noting that for Table A.10, the presidential and House elections were not necessarily held concurrently. Indeed, House and presidential elections were frequently held months apart during the study period in many states (Dubin 1998; Engstrom and Kernell 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Specifically, using the historical GIS transportation network data, I run the origin-destination (OD) cost matrix analysis tool in ArcGIS Pro, minimizing the travel time from each county centroid to the nearest daily newspaper with telegraphed Washington news. I then use the predicted travel time and distance as alternative measures of access to telegraphed news from Washington. Online Appendix B provides the detailed steps of this exercise. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. I chose to connect county centroids with its 5 nearest neighbors within a 50-mile radius to balance considerations for reality and for the feasibility of the network analysis, as direct road connections are more likely to exist between nearby counties while too few connections would break the network structure and prevent the subsequent GIS network analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For example, see [https://www.teachushistory.org/detocqueville-visit-united-states/ articles/historical-background-traveling-early-19th-century](https://www.teachushistory.org/detocqueville-visit-united-states/articles/historical-background-traveling-early-19th-century) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Specifically, the origin-destination (OD) cost matrix solver finds and measures the least-cost paths along the network from multiple origins to multiple destinations. The best path on the network is discovered for each origin-destination pair, and the travel times and travel distances are stored as attributes of the output lines. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The findings are similar if I measure partisanship with a continuous variable of the vote share. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Developed by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal, DW-NOMINATE scores measure Congressmen’s ideological positions based on their roll call votes and have two dimensions. The first dimension is the traditional liberal-conservative spectrum on economic matters, while the second dimension measures attitudes on cross-cutting, salient issues of the day, which would be slavery for my study period (Poole and Rosenthal 2001) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The *Chronicling America* database is available online from <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. I focus on the period 1840-1849 for my newspaper text analysis because for this period I have relatively precise information on the continuous *within-year* growth of telegraph lines, which is essential for analyzing high-frequency newspaper text data with substantial within-year variation; after 1849, I have a snapshot of telegraph lines in 1852, which is used for the voting analysis but less ideal for the newspaper text analysis because of the high-frequency nature of the text data. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. To restrict my newspaper sample to small-town newspapers, I removed from my sample the few newspapers published in any of the “100 largest urban places in 1840” based on the 1840 Census ([https:](https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab07.txt)

    [//www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab07.txt)](https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab07.txt). Since the 100th largest urban place in 1840 (New Albany, IN) had 4,226 people, the resulting sample consists of newspapers from places with a population of about 4,000 or below, which I consider as small towns in the paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Out of the 30 states in the U.S. in 1850, my newspaper sample from *Chronicling America* contains newspapers from 17 states; other states so far have only digitized newspapers from the more recent past. Out of the 17 states, only 2 states (Pennsylvania and Vermont) are from the Northeast, and the rest of the newspapers are from the Midwest and the South. While a relatively large share of the observations (about 21%) come from Mississippi newspapers, the results are qualitatively similar if I drop Mississippi newspapers from the analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. It is worth noting that when counting the frequency of words associated with a news topic, I count the frequency of the root word wherever applicable. Therefore, the frequency of “Congress” represents the sum of the frequencies of all words with the root “Congress,” such as “Congress,” “congressional,” and “congressman” et cetera. Similarly, the frequency of the word “telegraph” also includes words such as “telegraphed” and “telegraphic.” All the words in the text data have also been converted to lower case before being analyzed, so letter case does not matter. By considering the root word, I avoid omitting related variants of the words and measure news coverage more accurately. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The presidents’ last names consist of “Van Buren,” “Harrison,” “Tyler,” “Polk,” and “Taylor.” [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The results are qualitatively similar if I also include the midterm election years. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. In this exercise, I also control for the total number of words in newspapers, because I find that a town’s *direct* connection to the telegraph is associated with a statistically significant increase in the total number of words in local newspapers. This is consistent with the idea that a town’s direct connection to the telegraph might be endogenous to local socioeconomic changes or growth that might also affect the amount of news provided by newspapers. In contrast, I do not find such a relationship between the effective distance to Washington and the total number of words in newspapers. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)