

The Growth of Candidate-Centered Newspaper Advertisements

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We study the shift from this... (ad from 1902)

BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE. NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1902.

"HILL IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN BRYAN"—DR. CUYLER

Venerable Clergyman Who Has Known Coler From Boyhood Favours Odell.

TELLS WHY HE TAKES THIS VIEW

Credite Democratic Candidate With Good Intentions; Thinks He Lacks "Quality of Cast Iron."

The Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, for thirty years pastor of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church and for more than half a century a figure in the public life of the United States, gave out to-day the following exposition of his views as to the pending election in this State.

"It has been my custom for several years past to give my views on my neighbors either by address or through the press. I feel an especial interest in the present contest for the governorship of this State. The contest this year is of a somewhat unusual character. It is not simply a battle between Mr. Odell and Mr. Coler, but it involves a third question, and is really a battle between Governor Odell and David B. Hill.

"The control of the Democratic party in this State has been seized by Mr. Hill, and he feels sure that if he can win the State back to the Democratic party it will give him a powerage that will make his nomination for the Presidency almost a certainty. Every vote, therefore, cast for Mr. Coler will be, in a certain degree, a vote in favor of giving to David B. Hill the leadership of the Democratic party, not only in New York State, but in the whole United States.

"We are all familiar with Hill's address in 1882, and with his scandalous connection with the Standard Oil Company and all who have read his recent deniable demagogic address on the responsibility of alcoholic abuse, as well as many other things for which he is notorious, must realize that it is a far more dangerous public man than William J. Bryan was or could ever possibly be. For Bryan seems to possess such high moral virtues of which Mr. Hill can claim a most lamentable deficiency.

"In the direct contest between Governor Odell and David B. Hill it seems to me that Odell is clearly the better man, and that by a good margin. He not only has acquired that experience in office which would increase his usefulness, but he has also exhibited that earnestness and capacity, a great executive ability. There are two men who may make a good figure in the legislative body where there is one man who possesses executive ability.

"Governor Odell struck a high note at the very beginning of his term of office in favor of reform. This is a very good thing to praise above all others, and that, to be a very difficult thing for a public officer to practice after an official career. In substance the conduct of David Coler and Governor Odell is of the same order. In substance an endorsement of Odell's generally has been made in various State papers and in his

PRESIDENT CASSIDY REPLIES TO TAXPAYERS' CHARGES.

He Brings Figures to Show That He Has Been Unjustly Accused.

WORK DONE IN FIFTH WARD.

Amount Spent in That Ward Out of Proportion to That of the Other Four.

(Special to the Eagle.)

Long Island City, L. I., November 1.—The charge that Borough President Cassidy has used an unfair proportion of the funds of the Department of Highways in the Borough of Queens for salaries and not enough for maintenance has caused the greatest interest in this city. It appears that at the time the anti-Cassidy drive has begun to prepare for its charges against President Cassidy the Fifth Ward Taxpayers' Association wanted to participate in the investigation, but, after a consultation, it was decided that such a battle for it should be avoided for better.

The Long Island City charges were that with Mayor Love some time ago and experts have been busy for some weeks going over the books in the local departments here. The charges, however, respecting affairs in the Fifth Ward were first given out by the members of the taxpayers' association here and afterwards confirmed by Councilor Grant.

Few persons interested will venture even a guess as to what effect the publication of the charges will have on the campaign. Many of President Cassidy's business associates here are afraid to be heard of when Election Day is over.

President Cassidy is known among his followers as a man of great courage, and they think to him to fire a charge that will discredit his enemies and destroy any advantage the other side might gain from the publication of the charges.

The real roads of the borough government, however, look upon the matter in a different light and realize that it is always difficult to make a denial as far as the Fifth Ward is concerned, and that the allegations are not true.

When seen in his office in Borough Hall this morning President Cassidy was very willing to discuss the matter. Before him on his desk was a detailed report as to the work done in the Fifth Ward between the time he took office and the time he was elected to the office on October 1, which is the period covered by the charges. The report shows that during the first session of the Highways Department had received 125 loads of money from the Fifth Ward highways being done the following year.

(Our report of work done in broken down... from... of private owners.)

POLITICAL. POLITICAL. POLITICAL.

GRAND REPUBLICAN

MASS MEETING

SATURDAY EVENING, NOV 1, 8 O'CLOCK

PROSPECT HALL,

Prospect Avenue, Near Fifth Avenue.

MAYOR SETH LOW

WILL PRESIDE.

GOV. BENJ. B. ODELL

WILL SPEAK.

TURKEYS "QUIT" WARILY; ROOSEVELT ON THE TRAIL.

President's Party Starts Out Before Daylight for Wise Birds.

A BULL RUN BATTLEFIELD.

tion the writing would afford him and for the purpose of giving over the historic Bull Run battlefield.

At about 10 o'clock the party will assemble about one at the Liberty House, which is to be the very center of the operations of the first meeting of Bull Run. Thereafter will be served. During the afternoon, the President will drive over the battlefield. At 5:30 this afternoon the President and party on their special train will go to Brandy, Va., twenty-nine miles north of Manassas, where they will be the guests until Monday morning of relatives of Benjamin Franklin.

SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. "A Bird's Dove" will be the subject of the sermon by the Rev. Dr. J. F. Curran in the Central Presbyterian Church, Jefferson


SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENTS.

THE Coward Shoe Good Sense For Everybody.

Quite unlike any other.

To this... (ad from 1926)

★ ELECT ★



CONGRESSMAN
ANDREW L.
SOMERS

"Brooklyn Daily Eagle"
**Records of Boro Congressmen
Who Seek Re-election**

SOMERS BUSY FOR FIRST-TERMER
Somers—This member was in his first session. He introduced 15 bills and made 19 speeches. He worked out coal legislation, devised a wet-and-dry referendum mail scheme for Congressmen, asked for a simplified calendar for the United States and otherwise took an interested part in the House proceedings. He attained distinction when he sought an interview with the President on the coal strike and Mr. Coolidge refused to see him.

All other newspapers comment favorably upon his record.

Keep Somers in Congress

Motivation

- ▶ A large body of literature focuses on why American politics shifted so dramatically away from parties and toward individual campaigns in the latter half of the twentieth century.
- ▶ It is often suggested that the introduction of primary elections is behind US politics' uniquely candidate-centered campaigns. However, empirical evidence for this claim is lacking.
- ▶ Drawing on a novel dataset of political advertisements run in local daily newspapers between 1880 and 1930, we provide evidence that the introduction of the direct primary markedly increased the rate of individual political advertising for some offices.

Candidate-Centered Elections in the United States

- ▶ In the mid-to-late nineteenth century America grew to be “one the most partisan societies – arguably the most partisan society – there has ever been” (Ware 2000)
- ▶ However, party strength began to decline after the first decade or so the twentieth century (Mayhew 1986, Ban et al. 2016)
- ▶ The progressive movement called for reforms, including the Australian ballot, the direct primary, the initiative and referendum, and the direct election of U.S. senators (especially outside the South)
- ▶ The direct primary fundamentally altered the relationship of candidates to their party organizations: parties’ principal tool to enforce party discipline, the promise of nomination and renomination for public office, was stripped away

Our Argument

The introduction of the direct primary should increase levels of candidate-centered campaigning

Two possible pathways through which this effect might operate:

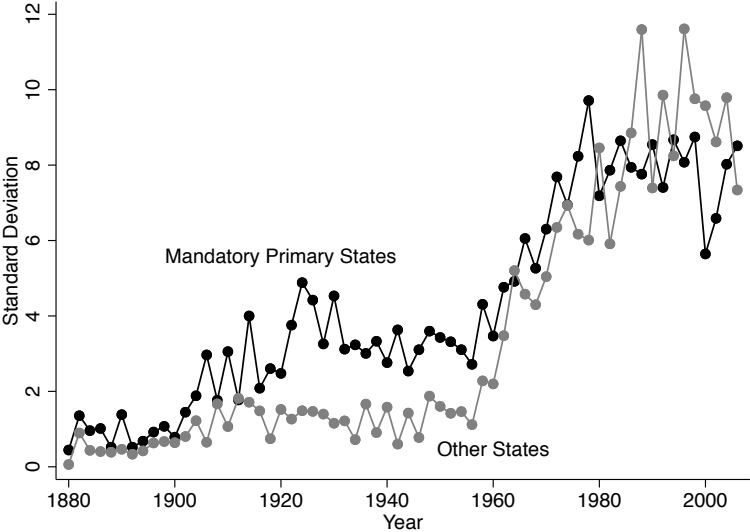
1. The direct primary reduces the parties' ability or willingness to actively campaign for candidates, increasing the incentives for candidates to do this on their own
2. The direct primary privileges candidates with skill sets conducive to conducting personal campaigns

Background I

In “Primary Elections in the United States” (Shigeo Hirano and James M. Snyder, Jr.) we find that Primary Elections have a significant, positive effect on split-ticket voting.

Background I (continued)

Mandatory Primary State = 1 if state adopted direct primary between 1900 and 1915



Background II

In “The Decline of American Party Organizations” (Pamela Ban, Alexander Fournaies, Andrew B. Hall, and James M. Snyder, Jr.) we find that Primary Elections have a significant, negative effect on the amount of newspaper coverage of party organizations.

Background II (continued)

“With large stocks of patronage available from city, county, and state offices, and with relatively centralized control over the distribution of those stocks, the [Cook County Democratic] organization is both massive and organized.”

(Leo M. Snowiss, *American Political Science Review*, 1965)

“Nobody wants to be the chairman of the Cook County Democratic Party... Nobody wants it because the Democratic Party of Cook County has become nothing more than a distraction...”

(R. Bruce Dold, *Chicago Tribune*, 2000)

Background II (continued)

Effect of three reforms on newspaper mentions of state and local party organizations

	Share of Coverage to State/Local Party Organizations					
	All Years			1876–1950		
Australian Ballot	-0.56 (0.25)			-0.52 (0.23)	-0.53 (0.23)	-0.35 (0.24)
Primaries		-0.66 (0.24)		-0.62 (0.24)	-0.63 (0.22)	-0.62 (0.23)
State Civil Service			0.01 (0.20)	0.03 (0.20)	0.04 (0.19)	
Newspaper Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspaper-linear Trends					Yes	
# Observations	42,270	42,270	42,270	42,270	42,270	32,053

Robust standard errors clustered by state in parentheses.

Scope of our analysis

- ▶ Period of Focus: 1880 to 1930
- ▶ Candidate-centered campaigning
 - ▶ Candidate-Specific Newspaper Advertisements
- ▶ The Direct Primary
 - ▶ Focus on primary adoption
 - ▶ Existence of primary; not levels or types
- ▶ Other Reforms (in progress)
 - ▶ Australian ballot
 - ▶ Non-partisan elections

Newspaper Advertising

- ▶ We are constructing a dataset of advertisements from 75 local newspapers in 28 states in the period of 1880-1930
- ▶ Most of these newspapers were accessed online via Newspapers.com; some from Newspaperarchive.com; some from microfilm
- ▶ Newspapers were chosen based on availability, geographic diversity, electoral competitiveness
- ▶ Coding was done by human coders coordinating to achieve comparability of efforts (some newspaper-days double-coded to check)
- ▶ So far we have coded about 23,000 ads and 8,100 newspaper-days (many of which have zero ads)

Newspaper Advertising

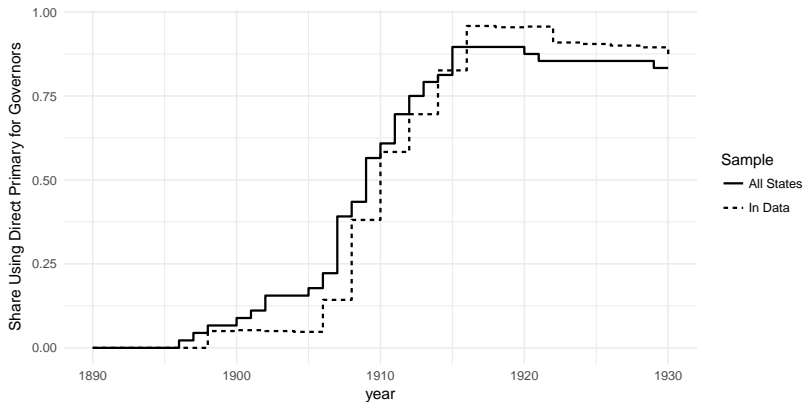
- ▶ Starting on the Tuesday preceding and running through the Tuesday of the general election, we search each page and code all political advertisements. We record the office and party. We also record the number of days each newspaper was printed each week.
- ▶ We collapsed the data to reveal the number of advertisements per day for each office, giving us our outcome variable at the state-year level.
- ▶ Because the data are substantially right-skewed, we use the log of this measure (+1) in our analyses.

Sample of Newspapers

Akron Beacon Journal	Albany Democrat	Alton Evening Telegraph
Altoona Tribune	Anaconda Standard	Atlanta Constitution
Baltimore Sun	Belvidere Daily Republican	Bemidji Pioneer
Bloomington Pantagraph	Boston Globe	Bridgewater Courier-News
Brooklyn Daily Eagle	Buffalo Enquirer	Burlington Free Press
Butte Miner	Butte Montana Standard	Carlisle Sentinel
Charlotte Observer	Chicago Daily Herald	Chicago Tribune
Cincinnati Enquirer	Crystal Lake Herald	Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times
Davenport Quad-City Times	DeKalb Daily Chronicle	Decatur Daily Review
Decatur Herald	Denver Post	Des Moines Register
Detroit Free Press	Dixon Evening Telegraph	East Liverpool Evening Review
Eugene Guard	Fitchburg Sentinel	Frederick News
Great Falls Tribune	Green Bay Press Gazette	Harrisburg Telegraph
Indianapolis News	Iola Register	Lincoln Journal Star
Louisville Courier-Journal	Mansfield News-Journal	Minneapolis Star Tribune
Missoulian	Moline Dispatch	Nashville Tennessean
Nebraska State Journal	Nevada State Journal	New York Tribune
Oakland Tribune	Oshkosh Daily Northwestern	Petaluma Argus-Courier
Philadelphia Inquirer	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Pittsburgh Press
Port Huron Times Herald	Portsmouth Herald	Racine Journal Times
Reading Times	Reno Evening Gazette	Salem Daily Capital Journal
Salem Statesman Journal	Salt Lake Telegram	San Bernardino County Sun
San Francisco Chronicle	Santa Ana Register	Seattle Star
Sioux Falls Argus-Leader	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Topeka State Journal
Wichita Daily Eagle	Wilmington Morning News	Woodland Daily Democrat

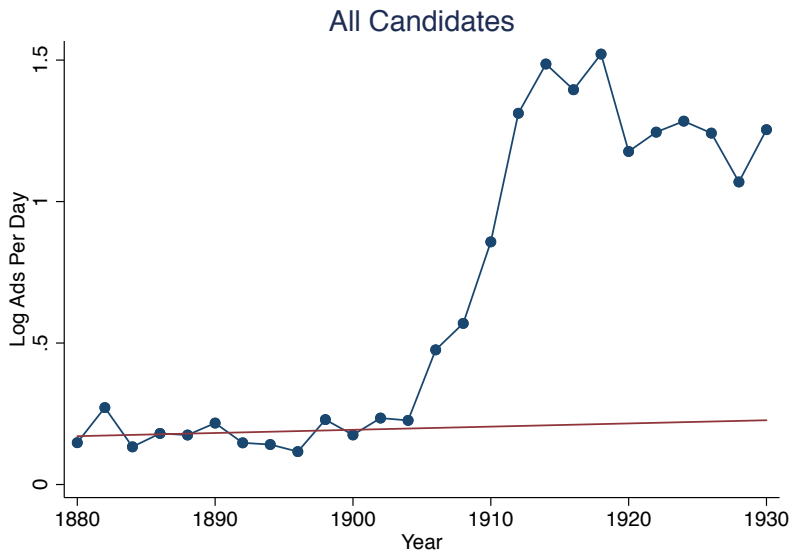
Direct Primary Adoption

Figure: Primary Use over Time

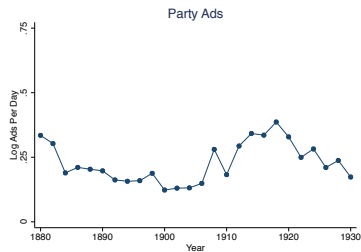
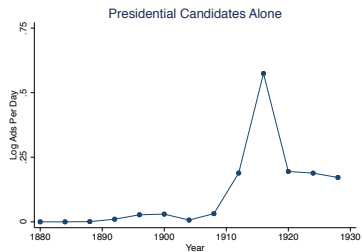
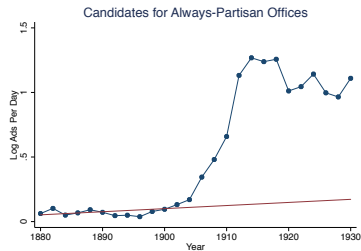
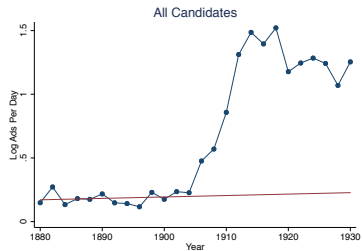


Ads Over Time

Figure: Log of Ads Per Day Over Time, All Offices



Ads Over Time, Different Types



Comments on the Figure

Evidently, the Adoption of the Australian Ballot, which took place between 1888 and 1896, did not increase the amount of advertising.

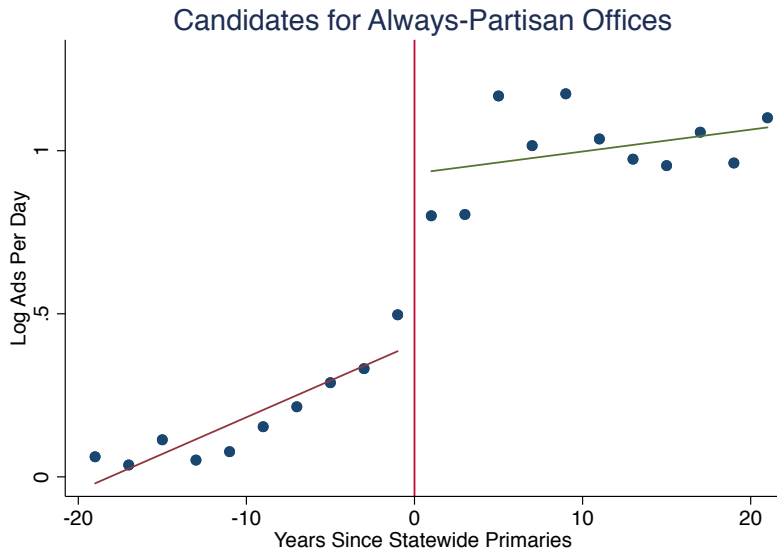
However, there is a large increase around the time that primaries were introduced, between 1900 and 1915.

Empirical Strategy

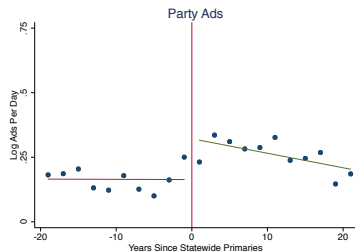
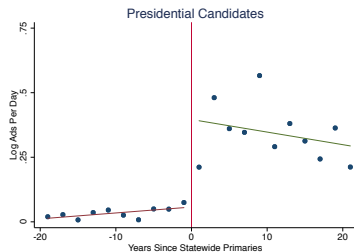
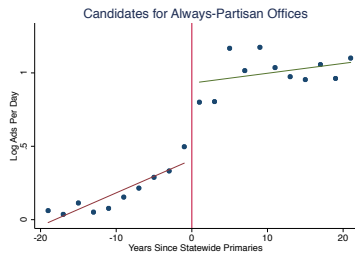
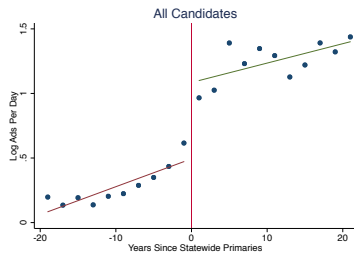
$$\ln(\text{Ads Per Day})_{it} = \beta \text{Primary}_{it} + \gamma \mathbf{X}_{it} + \sum_{k=0}^K t^k \alpha_{ik} + \tau_t + \epsilon_{it}$$

- ▶ Independent variable: binary indicator for whether or not a state used a direct primary for the relevant office in a given state year.
- ▶ Dependent Variable: logged ads per day (for a specific office)
- ▶ Year fixed effects and newspaper-specific trends
- ▶ State-level control variables from the US census to capture demographic factors (race, nativity, urban, population)
- ▶ Clustered standard errors

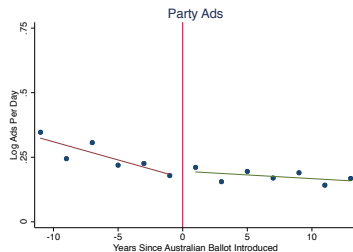
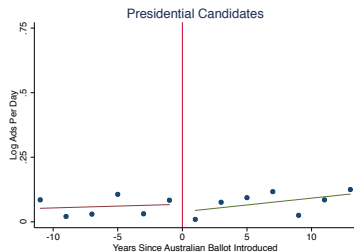
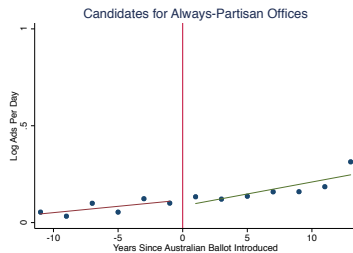
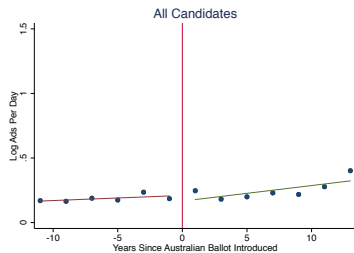
Ads Before and After Primaries, Candidates for Always-Partisan Offices



Ads Before and After Primaries, Different Types



Ads Before and After Australian Ballot, Different Types



Main Results at State-Year Level, All Candidates

Table: Electoral Reforms & Newspaper Advertising 1880-1930, Analysis at State-Year Level

Dep. Var. = Log Ads Per Day						
<i>All Candidates</i>						
Direct Primary	0.397 (0.102)	0.411 (0.104)	0.398 (0.101)	0.255 (0.101)	0.254 (0.103)	0.254 (0.103)
Australian Ballot		0.080 (0.101)			-0.004 (0.058)	
State-Year Trends	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The number of observations is 984 in all regressions. State fixed effects and Year fixed effects included in all specifications. Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by state in all specifications.

Main Results at Newspaper-Year Level, All Candidates

Table: Electoral Reforms & Newspaper Advertising 1880-1930, Analysis at Newspaper-Year Level

	Dep. Var. = Log Ads Per Day					
<i>All Candidates</i>						
Direct Primary	0.346 (0.098)	0.352 (0.100)	0.353 (0.096)	0.223 (0.083)	0.221 (0.084)	0.220 (0.081)
Australian Ballot		0.052 (0.096)			-0.012 (0.059)	
State-Year Trends	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The number of observations is 1,914 in all regressions. Newspaper fixed effects and Year fixed effects included in all specifications. Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by state in all specifications.

Main Results at State-Year Level, Always-Partisan Offices

Table: Electoral Reforms & Newspaper Advertising 1880-1930, Analysis at State-Year Level

Dep. Var. = Log Ads Per Day						
<i>Candidates for Always-Partisan Offices</i>						
Direct Primary	0.353 (0.080)	0.372 (0.080)	0.355 (0.080)	0.221 (0.080)	0.230 (0.084)	0.231 (0.084)
Australian Ballot		0.109 (0.089)			-0.004 (0.058)	
State-Year Trends	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The number of observations is 891 in all regressions. State fixed effects and Year fixed effects included in all specifications. Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by state in all specifications.

Main Results at Newspaper-Year Level, Always-Partisan Offices

Table: Electoral Reforms & Newspaper Advertising 1880-1930, Analysis at Newspaper-Year Level

	Dep. Var. = Log Ads Per Day					
<i>Candidates for Always-Partisan Offices</i>						
Direct Primary	0.318 (0.091)	0.324 (0.092)	0.317 (0.090)	0.168 (0.085)	0.170 (0.088)	0.168 (0.084)
Australian Ballot		0.052 (0.089)			-0.012 (0.059)	
State-Year Trends	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The number of observations is 1,684 in all regressions. Newspaper fixed effects and Year fixed effects included in all specifications. Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by state in all specifications.

Main Results at State-Year Level, Party Ads

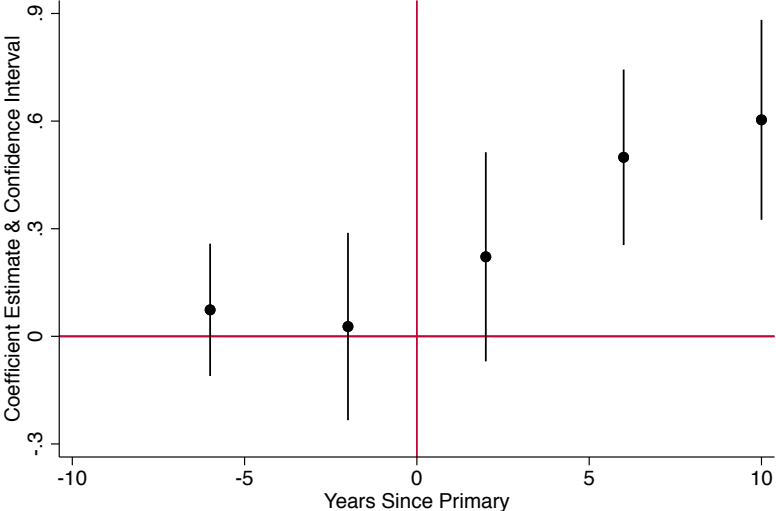
Table: Electoral Reforms & Newspaper Advertising 1880-1930, Analysis at State-Year Level

Dep. Var. = Log Ads Per Day						
<i>Party Advertisements</i>						
Direct Primary	-0.061 (0.075)	-0.054 (0.076)	-0.034 (0.079)	-0.008 (0.044)	-0.002 (0.044)	0.037 (0.052)
Australian Ballot		0.041 (0.041)			-0.004 (0.058)	
State-Year Trends	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The number of observations is 984 in all regressions. State fixed effects and Year fixed effects included in all specifications. Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by state in all specifications.

Effect of Primary Elections Over Time

Candidates for Always-Partisan Offices



Robustness

Our results are generally robust to using alternative empirical approaches:

- ▶ Newspaper trends of alternative polynomial orders (quadratic)
- ▶ Lagged-dependent variable models
- ▶ Wild-cluster bootstrap/pairs cluster bootstrap inference (Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller 2008)
- ▶ Non-logged outcome variables

Advertising By Type of Candidate

Is most of the increase associated with “new” candidates, or do even “old” candidates switch campaign strategies?

Table: Newspaper Advertising by Different Types of Candidates, 1880-1930

	Dep. Var. = One or More Ads					
	All Years			1912 to 1930		
Previous Experience	0.031 (0.009)	0.031 (0.010)	0.030 (0.010)	0.035 (0.010)	0.036 (0.010)	0.034 (0.011)
General Election Margin		-0.488 (0.117)	-0.485 (0.116)		-0.521 (0.124)	-0.517 (0.122)
Primary Election Margin			-0.031 (0.020)			-0.028 (0.023)
Observations	4985	4835	4835	4217	4077	4077

Year fixed effects included in all specifications. Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by state in all specifications.

Future Research

Non-partisan elections as another reform. We have begun to explore this for judges but will expand to local offices. There is a lot of variation here.

How does advertising vary depending on the level of competition? Is there typically more advertising by the party that has a (local) electoral advantage?

Decreasing partisanship of newspapers themselves?

Development of advertising after 1930. For example, we find that pure party ticket ads, and ads announcing party rallies and meetings, are essentially flat. Do party ads actually decrease at some point?

Conclusion

- ▶ We develop a novel dataset of the volume of political advertising in a diverse set of geographic locations between 1880 and 1930
- ▶ Candidate advertising overall, and advertising for state and congressional candidates, markedly increased following the introduction of the direct primary
- ▶ There does not appear to be a similar increase following the introduction of the Australian ballot
- ▶ Party advertising did not increase following either reform
- ▶ We provide some of the first empirical evidence that direct primaries are at least partially responsible for candidate-centered campaigning in the United States.