

Political Advantage, Disadvantage, and the Demand for Partisan News

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue that the national political environment can meaningfully affect variation in aggregate demand for partisan media. I focus on the relationship between the political context—namely, political advantage and disadvantage derived from elections—and media demand in the form of partisan newspaper circulations. Using a dataset that characterizes the partisan slant of local newspapers and their circulation levels between 1932 and 2004, I find that when parties are electorally advantaged in presidential contests, demand for their affiliated newspapers decreases relative to demand for papers affiliated with disadvantaged parties. I uncover evidence of similar patterns in a case study of Florida newspapers, and I also compare the power of presidential versus congressional outcomes in shaping feelings of advantage and disadvantage. Taken together, these results provide evidence of a negative link between political advantage derived from presidential elections and the relative demand for partisan news.

Keywords: partisan media; elections

Why do citizens consume political news? This paper examines the determinants of such news consumption by focusing on the relationship between the national political context and partisan news demand. Studying the conditions under which individuals choose to learn about politics is important because the press conveys key information to the public ranging from candidates' and parties' platforms to elected officials' behavior in office. Citizens, in turn, are thought to form political opinions and make political decisions on the basis of such information (e.g., Dahl 1998).

Of course, many of the political news sources that individuals rely on today are tinged with partisan bias (see Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010; Groseclose and Milyo 2005; Ho and Quinn 2008), an attribute that also characterizes media offerings of the past. Given the presence of partisan media throughout U.S. history (e.g., Groeling and Baum 2013 but see Schudson 1978) and today, this paper examines the conditions under which aggregate demand for news affiliated with the Republican and Democratic parties surges or declines. In doing so, I offer a new perspective on our understanding of partisan media that goes beyond their effects on viewers (e.g., Levendusky 2013) or the implications of changes in their supply (e.g., Gentzkow et al. 2011). Instead, my primary research question asks: how does the political environment affect demand for partisan news? I argue that a sense of advantage and disadvantage in the national electoral context can meaningfully influence relative partisan media consumption.

To understand how the political environment affects partisan media demand, my research—like Gerber and Huber (2009)—incorporates data rich in ecological validity that look beyond survey responses to study politically motivated behavior. Specifically, I examine two local Floridian papers' circulations between 1932 and 2014 and the aggregate circulations of local, daily partisan papers in the U.S. from 1932 to 2004. In doing so, my results speak to the effects of

political advantage and disadvantage across different time periods and geographic contexts.

Such analyses represent a new approach to the way that we typically conceptualize the relationship between the media and political outcomes. Existing literature often focuses on how nonpartisan and partisan media affect the political attitudes and behaviors of both citizens and elites (e.g., Clinton and Enamorado 2014; DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007; Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Yet I take a different approach by characterizing how factors in the political context (i.e., electoral advantage or disadvantage) influence the relative demand for partisan media.

This paper also helps adjudicate between competing hypotheses in the literature that suggest both advantage and disadvantage could boost or depress partisan news demand. While advantage could increase morale (e.g., Healy et al. 2010) and partisan news consumption, it may also promote a sense of complacency that decreases incentives to monitor politics. Conversely, the threat related to disadvantage may boost news demand (Marcus et al. 2000), but may also decrease efficacy and lead to political withdrawal (Hirschman 1970 as cited in Anderson et al. 2005).

Finally, examining the effects of advantage and disadvantage on partisan news demand has implications for the relationships between citizens and elites. Knowing whether the political context motivates some voters to consume more partisan news than others is critical, as this could lead to different responses to and interpretations of political outcomes based on the content of such news. Asymmetries in the monitoring of elites could also emerge, creating parallel asymmetries in accountability and representation. Thus, understanding *who* pays attention most and *when* can provide insight into the constraints elected officials perceive among their constituents.

CONNECTING THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT TO PARTISAN MEDIA DEMAND

The goal of this paper is to understand the relationship between the national political context and demand for partisan media. I argue that beyond more stable, individual-level traits like

education, political advantage and disadvantage derived from parties' standings in national elections can meaningfully affect partisan news consumption. And because the relative status of political parties fluctuates over time (Anderson et al. 2005)—no one party has dominated the zero-sum game of politics throughout U.S. history—the advantage and disadvantage felt by electoral winners and losers, respectively, should similarly fluctuate with the political context.

I focus on partisan news consumption because previous work in political communication (e.g., Iyengar et al. 2008; Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Severin and Tankard 1992 as cited in Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005; Stroud 2008; Stroud 2010 as cited in Lelkes et al. 2016), political psychology (e.g., Lodge and Taber 2013), and economics (e.g., Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005) suggests that individuals prefer news that aligns with their preexisting beliefs, including those that are political. That is, individuals have a preference for partisan-friendly media. Even more, the presence of biased news, which the literature attributes to supply- (Baron 2006) and demand-side forces (Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005; Gentzkow and Shapiro 2006 as cited in Galvis et al. 2016), has long been a feature of the American media landscape, which allows me to trace the relationship of interest across nearly a century. While independent papers emerged around the turn of the 20th century (Schudson 1978), Gentzkow et al. (2011) find evidence that partisan affiliations are rather enduring and can affect candidate endorsements into the 21st century. Patterson and Donsbach (1996 as cited in Baron 2006) also find evidence that political bias still affects decisions about story content and headlines among journalists in Western democracies¹.

¹ Independent papers did emerge in the U.S. with the rise of the high-speed printing press and penny press in the 1800s (Hamilton 2004; Schudson 1978), but these papers still exhibited some partisan biases—they were just less explicit about their affiliations (see also Gentzkow et al. 2014). Smaller, local papers that relied financially on parties and could not be sustained by advertising revenue alone like independent media (Petrova 2011 as cited in Galvis et al. 2016) operated with partisan leanings into the 1900s (McGerr 1986). Even in the 20th century when objectivity was the goal of professional reporters, Schudson (1978) observes there was skepticism that pure objectivity was or could ever be attained. Finally, partisan editorials have long been featured in American papers (Schudson 1978). In national data used in my main analyses, the mean percentage of Independent papers (1932-2004) is 22.39% and remains below 25% until 1984 (its maximum is 31.73% in 2000). The mean percentage of unaffiliated papers is 0.96%.

Various strands of literature support two competing hypotheses regarding the relationship between the national political context and demand for partisan news, as well as the null hypothesis that electoral conditions are unrelated to partisan news consumption. Previous work finds that political interest is rather stable over individuals' lifetimes, as even short-term disruptions often return to their long-term equilibrium within a year (Prior 2010). Perhaps the decision to purchase a politically friendly paper (by subscribing or buying one copy of the paper) is similarly stable in both the long- and short-term. Should this be the case, the null hypothesis that the demand for partisan media is orthogonal to political outcomes is a convincing possibility².

However, caveats to Prior's (2010) results suggest the political environment can affect interest, as he notes that Eastern and Western Germans experienced spikes in political interest surrounding the reunification of Germany. Thus, it is plausible that electoral outcomes could also influence partisan media demand in the short-term, and the literature supports competing hypotheses regarding this relationship. First, demand for media affiliated with a party advantaged by favorable electoral conditions could increase, while demand for the disadvantaged party's media could decrease. The zero-sum nature of electoral competition in particular facilitates this effect because elections produce a clear winner and loser. Electoral winners are often more supportive of their political system than losers (Anderson et al. 2005); perhaps that sentiment also compels winners to consume more partisan-friendly news as a means of expressing support for and following their party. Political advantage could also engender enthusiasm, an emotion that increases individuals' interest in campaigns (Brader 2006) and may increase willingness to read partisan news. Similarly, the euphoria that accompanies electoral triumphs (akin to the euphoria of

² If people are driven to seek more information in general (rather than partisan information), then the results could also be consistent with the null hypothesis. For instance, those compelled by the political context to consume more news could subscribe to both Democratic and Republican papers, or do so in a random fashion that cancels out in the aggregate. This would suggest no net change across local partisan newspaper demand over time.

a sports team's victory [Healy et al. 2010]) might boost morale among advantaged partisans and heighten demand for partisan news. That is, an electoral win could elicit reactions similar to those of sports fans "basking" in the glow of their team's win (Cialdini et al. 1976 as cited in Hirt et al. 1992), with partisans basking in their party's glory by reading more about their victory or the opposition's loss.

Conversely, supporters of a disadvantaged party may choose to disengage from and exit politics (Hirschman 1970 as cited in Anderson et al. 2005). Individuals are less likely to vote when they expect to lose, particularly when they have repeatedly lost electoral contests (Anderson et al. 2005). Similar patterns may hold for partisan news demand; political losers may feel disconnected from politics and discouraged from consuming such news because it reminds them of their disadvantage. Alternatively, political losers may feel angry or aversive, emotions that lead to less systematic thought and an increased proclivity for action (Huddy et al. 2007; MacKuen et al. 2010). Those facing an unfavorable climate may focus on political action (Valentino et al. 2011; Huddy et al. 2015) instead of passively reading news—particularly those who are internally efficacious (Valentino et al. 2009b)—as a means of reversing their disadvantaged status.

With these forces at work among advantaged and disadvantaged partisans, one outcome that these theories support is that:

Demand for media affiliated with electorally advantaged parties should increase relative to demand for media affiliated with electorally disadvantaged parties.

Directly comparing demand for the two types of media sheds light on which are being consumed more or less—and potentially, which party is being monitored more or less.

Alternatively, the literature supports a competing hypothesis: demand for media affiliated with disadvantaged parties could increase, while favorable conditions may inhibit demand for advantaged parties' media. The electorally advantaged may feel more complacent than

enthusiastic, leading them to engage in politics without much critical thought (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus et al. 2000). Such contentment could lead advantaged partisans to let their guards down and rely on political habits instead of seeking out more partisan news. They may also defer to the officials they voted for, as winners generally have more trust in government than losers (Anderson et al. 2005). With this mindset, increased partisan news consumption is unnecessary.

In contrast, electoral disadvantage could signal a threatening event that induces anxiety and promotes partisan news consumption. Anxiety signals failure and uncertainty (Steenbergen and Ellis 2006 as cited in Albertson and Gadarian 2015), which motivates individuals to seek out new information to resolve those negative feelings (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus et al. 2000; Valentino et al. 2008). For instance, anxiety over immigration boosts information seeking about that topic (Albertson and Gadarian 2015), and fear cues—not enthusiasm cues—stimulate TV news consumption (Brader 2006). Importantly, individuals tend to seek out unbalanced, partisan friendly information in the face of anxiety³ (Valentino et al. 2009a).

Electoral losers are persistently less satisfied with the political system than winners, have less trust in government, and are more likely to protest. Additionally, electoral loss often increases support for changes to the electoral system (Anderson et al. 2005). Such political discontent coupled with a desire for change could motivate losers to consume more partisan news as a means of monitoring the opposition. Consuming partisan news can also help disadvantaged partisans cope with their loss by spinning their circumstances into something positive for their party. For example, Bill O'Reilly told Republicans there was a silver lining to their loss in the 2012 presidential election: the pressure on Democrats was now such that, “[i]f the economy doesn’t improve dramatically over the next four years, the Democratic Party will evaporate” (2012).

Taken together, this second set of theories suggests the opposite of my first hypothesis:

³ This is true unless one has to defend one’s beliefs later, making a balanced search beneficial (Valentino et al. 2009a).

Demand for media affiliated with electorally disadvantaged parties should increase relative to demand for media affiliated with electorally advantaged parties.

In the following sections, I examine variation in aggregate-level demand for partisan news to determine if evidence consistent with these expectations exists. In doing so, my results speak to the first-order conditions of the relationship of interest; that is, the findings will shed light on which of the predicted patterns occur in the aggregate—if at all. These data will not be able to discern which of the mechanisms predicted by the individual-level studies are at play (see, e.g., Kramer 1983), as the literature in support of each hypothesis point to observationally equivalent outcomes. However, uncovering evidence rich in ecological realism at the aggregate level that is consistent with individual-level studies equally rich in internal validity allows us to be more confident in our understanding of how the political context relates to partisan media demand.

To provide an initial proof of concept, I first examine the relationship of interest using two partisan-leaning papers' circulations in the Tampa Bay region of Florida. My main analyses then focus on variation in the demand for all local partisan papers in the U.S. across nearly one century. Finally, I examine which political actors set the tone for advantage and disadvantage by comparing the effects of presidential and Congressional election outcomes on demand for partisan papers.

ADVANTAGE, DISADVANTAGE, AND LOCAL PARTISAN PAPERS' CIRCULATIONS

In studying the relationship between the national political context and demand for partisan media, I focus primarily on the demand for local, daily partisan newspapers. I view local partisan papers as just one form of partisan media that the national political context can influence. Other forms of partisan news could certainly be analyzed, but this medium's longstanding presence and prevalence throughout much of American history makes it a compelling case. And while the media environments in which local partisan papers exist have changed over time, there has, at least, always been an alternative form of news (e.g., radio or TV) throughout my analyses.

Newspapers are an appropriate medium to study for several additional reasons. Throughout much of U.S. history, papers were used as a platform for coalition merchants to advocate their stances on issues such as race. In doing so, these individuals used newspapers to guide the evolution of the parties' ideologies over time (Noel 2012). Papers also enjoy greater space to cover the news than TV broadcasts. While TV is constrained to sound bites and stories that last only minutes, newspapers can delve into greater detail with their coverage. Perhaps unsurprisingly, local papers tend to set the news agendas that their broadcast counterparts follow. Local papers also help hold elected officials accountable, as their reporters' knowledge of and access to lower-level bureaucratic processes make them well-positioned to uncover corruption (Arnold 2006).

In recent years, economic distress has plagued the newspaper industry and local papers have been no exception. Notable local papers like the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* ended their print circulation and shifted to online coverage (Yardley and Pérez-Peña 2009), while others have shut down entirely (see Dumpala 2009), giving citizens fewer choices in local papers to which they can subscribe or purchase. Aggregate circulation data of local partisan papers (used in later analyses) suggest that among U.S. cities with at least one paper, the mean percentage of cities with more than one paper fell from 69% in 1869 to 28% in 1932, 15% in 1968, and 3% in 2004⁴.

However, if citizens have only one newspaper in their city, the financial decision to subscribe or not subscribe at all to a local paper could still be affected by national politics. My results are likely conservative because those with only one local partisan paper may continue to subscribe to it so they can access news even when national political forces motivate them to do otherwise. In sum, studying local newspapers is critical because they expose readers to important information ranging from ideology to elected officials' behavior. And though papers have faced

⁴ See Online Appendix for a depiction of this and the mean percentage of these cities with at least one Democratic and one Republican paper: 51% in 1869, 11% in 1932, 3% in 1968, and finally, less than 1% in 2004.

economic distress and new media have emerged over time, focusing on newspapers allows me to trace the relationship between advantage, disadvantage, and demand across nearly one century⁵.

A Case Study of Florida Papers

To gain insight into the relationship between the political environment and demand for like-minded news, I first focus on the weekday circulations of two prominent papers in the Tampa Bay area of Florida: the *Tampa Bay Times* (formerly known as the *St. Petersburg Times*) and *The Tampa Tribune*. This case study serves as an ideal starting point for my analyses for several reasons. First, scholarly work has demonstrated that there are ideological differences in the papers' content: prior to the *Tampa Bay Times*' purchase of *The Tampa Tribune* in 2016, analyses found the former leaned Democratic with more liberal content while the latter leaned Republican with more conservative content⁶ (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). Therefore, this region had the option to consume two local papers with different political leanings. Tampa Bay is also neither staunchly Republican nor staunchly Democratic; in fact, it has been considered a swing region in the swing state of Florida (Cohen 2012). Such heterogeneity in partisanship suggests that there will likely be variation (i.e., a mix of “winners” and “losers”) in response to changes in the political context.

Papers in the Tampa Bay region also do not serve parts of the country like Washington D.C., in which citizens are more likely to be political junkies who perennially subscribe to newspapers regardless of the context. Even more, papers in Tampa Bay differ from those in cities like New York, which tend to serve not only locals, but also people throughout the country who are consistently more attentive to politics. Finally, while the politics of Tampa Bay have been characterized at times by patronage, corruption, and machines (Kerstein 1991; 1995), its political

⁵ Depending on the research question, future work on local papers will have to consider the effects of these papers' dwindling budgets for original reporting and the closing of local papers over time. For this study, I make efforts to account for trends over time and outline those in the analyses below.

⁶ The media directory Mondo Times corroborates these ideological slants (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010), however, Budak et al. (2016) suggest that Gentzkow and Shapiro's (2010) findings may overstate news outlets' bias.

history still has not been dominated by party bosses and formal party organizations like that of Northern cities (e.g., Chicago). Though the distinction between politics in Northern and Sunbelt regions is often overstated (Kerstein 1995), the relatively weaker presence of political machines in the Sunbelt region is helpful because a more dominant political class comprised of powerful party machines may have systematically deterred residents from following and engaging with politics.

To understand how the national political context affects newspaper circulations, I regress the relative changes in the demand for both Tampa Bay papers on presidential election outcomes. My primary independent variable is the difference in the two-party national vote share as a percentage of all votes cast. Formally, I subtract the Democratic Party's national votes from those of the Republican Party in presidential election year t and divide that value by the total votes cast:

$$\frac{[(RepublicanVotes_t) - (DemocraticVotes_t)]}{TotalVotes_t} * 100$$

Positive values of this variable, *GOP Vote Margin*, generally indicate a Republican victory and an electorate that is presumably more disposed toward Republican ideas, while negative values indicate a Democratic victory⁷. I use presidential elections to operationalize the political context because I am interested in how advantage and disadvantage permeating the nation affect demand for local partisan news. Additionally, presidential elections rose in prominence throughout the 20th century as the relative importance of the office increased (Moe and Howell 1999) and the president's relative ability to achieve policy goals was enhanced. Thus, presidential contests are likely to serve as powerful political stimuli that influence demand for partisan news⁸.

In addition to the enhanced role of the presidency during the 20th century, I focus this analysis on 1932 to 2014 for several reasons. First, illiteracy rates fell below 5% in the 1930s

⁷ Election data were collected in 2014 from uselectionatlas.org. See Online Appendix for a plot of *GOP Vote Margin*, which is not lopsided (its mean is -0.80%, standard deviation is 13.06 percentage points, min. is -24.26% and max. is 23.15%). This variation allays concerns that there are persistent losers disaffected by politics (Anderson et al. 2005).

⁸ Local political forces (e.g., how one's district or state votes) could certainly motivate partisan news consumption. Studying their effects is beyond the scope of this paper, but represents an interesting avenue for future work.

(National Center for Education Statistics), which decreases the proportion of individuals who chose not to purchase newspapers simply because they could not read. The years spanning 1932 to 2014 also contain the eras in which radio (1932-1952) and then television (1956-2004) enjoyed a national penetration rate of at least 50%⁹ [Sterling 1984 as cited in Gentzkow et al. 2011]). Thus, it could be the case that the types of individuals still purchasing newspapers represent a more politically fervent segment of the population that is strongly affected by the changing political environment. Such factors combined could heighten the ability of presidential elections to affect demand for local partisan papers.

To construct the dependent variable of relative partisan media demand, I rely on original newspaper circulation data collected by the author from the *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook* (1932-2010) and the *Editor & Publisher International Databook*¹⁰ (2012-2014). This outcome variable is calculated as a measure of the relative changes in weekday circulations for each paper. I focus on the change in circulations every four years in response to presidential election outcomes. I first calculate the change in circulations from the year after one presidential election to the year after the next presidential election for each paper. These values illustrate how demand for the Democratic paper changed over time and how demand for the Republican paper changed over time. Then, I subtract the change in the Democratic-leaning paper (i.e., the *Tampa Bay Times*) from that of the Republican-leaning paper (i.e., *The Tampa Tribune*) and convert that value to a percentage of total circulations. Formally, for each presidential election year I calculate:

$$\frac{[R_{t+1}-R_{t-3}]-[D_{t+1}-D_{t-3}]}{R_{t+1}+D_{t+1}} * 100,$$

where $R_{(t+1)}$ is the circulation level of the Republican-leaning paper in the year after presidential election year t , $R_{(t-3)}$ is the circulation level of the Republican-leaning paper in the year after the

⁹ Gentzkow et al. (2011) only classify years up to 2004, but the TV era can presumably be extended to 2014.

¹⁰ The databook for 2011 does not seem to exist, but is not needed since I focus on the year after elections.

previous election year $t-4$, $D_{(t+1)}$ is the circulation level of the Democratic-leaning paper in the year after election year t , and $D_{(t-3)}$ is the circulation level of the Democratic paper in the year after the previous election year $t-4$. I divide this value by the sum of the papers' circulations in year $t+1$.

The goal of this paper is to examine how the national political context affects demand for the advantaged party's media compared to the disadvantaged party's media. By subtracting the change in the Democratic paper's circulations from that of the Republican paper's circulations, I am essentially comparing the papers' circulations while controlling for their raw differences and differencing out confounding factors that equally affected both (see, e.g., Card and Krueger 1994; Clinton and Enamorado 2014). For example, wars or natural disasters could affect the papers' circulations. This measure effectively controls for such systematic factors by differencing out their common effect on the papers¹¹. Importantly, these aggregate-level data speak to aggregate-level patterns, so not all individuals in all years will behave the same way, and some may respond in ways that differ from the majority¹². And while the timing of this analysis points to a causal relationship between presidential elections and the relative demand for the two papers, these data are still observational and the analysis is ultimately correlational.

To understand how the political context affects news demand, Figure 1 depicts the bivariate relationship between the electoral context and relative changes in the papers' circulations. The plotted values suggest a negative correlation, which column 1 of Table 1 confirms is statistically significant¹³ ($b=-0.24$; $p=0.03$). Substantively, an increase of one standard deviation (12.48

¹¹ Though this measure is not a traditional difference-in-differences (DiD) setup, it holds similar properties. Like other DiD models, I assume that in the absence of the current election, patterns in circulations from the previous election would follow parallel trajectories over time (see, e.g., Abadie 2005). They are, in effect, the baseline against which changes are compared. See Online Appendix for a plot of this measure.

¹² Future work could collect data with individuals' partisanship and paper circulations over time to speak to the mechanisms driving the overall patterns found in my results.

¹³ All analyses in this paper use robust standard errors to account for any issues with collinearity or heteroskedasticity. The effect of the change in *GOP Vote Margin* from the last election to the current one is insignificant ($b=-0.04$; $p=0.61$) and suggests citizens are not sensitive to relative changes in the two-party vote margins over time.

percentage points) in the percentage of votes received by the Republican Party over the Democratic Party corresponds with the Democratic-leaning *Tampa Bay Times* gaining roughly 10,110.03 circulations *more* than the Republican-leaning *Tampa Tribune*¹⁴. Including control variables for the change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) taken from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the lagged Republican vote margin, and the radio era of 1932 to 1952 (Sterling [1984] as cited in Gentzkow et al. [2011]) in columns two through four, respectively, suggests the negative relationship between *GOP Vote Margin* and circulation changes is quite robust.

[Figure 1 about here / Table 1 about here]

In column 5, I control for time and time-squared, which detrend the data and decrease the significance of *GOP Vote Margin*. Though it is still negatively signed ($b=-0.08$), this coefficient is not statistically significant ($p=0.37$). Finally, column 6 uses an alternative specification that also controls for time trends but in a different manner. Here, the dataset is reorganized so that the unit of analysis is year-party of paper; that is, each row contains the circulations of party j 's paper, so there are two rows per election year: one for each party's paper. The dependent variable in this model is the change in the circulations of party j 's paper from the year after the previous election ($t-3$) to the year after the current election ($t+1$), and the key independent variable is *Winner*, which represents whether or not the party affiliated with a given paper won that year's presidential election. Controls for time using decade fixed effects are also included¹⁵. The coefficient for *Winner* describes the average difference between the change in circulations for the winning party's paper and the change in circulations for the losing party's paper, and the results again point to a

¹⁴ To calculate this number, I took the standard deviation of *GOP Vote Margin* (12.48 percentage points) and multiplied it by the coefficient of interest: -0.24. This value represents the difference in the two papers' circulation changes as a percentage of all circulations. To transform that into circulations, I divided it by 100 and multiplied that by the mean value of total circulations in the year after an election (337,540.9).

¹⁵ I use time and time-squared in Model 5 and decade fixed effects here instead of year fixed effects due to the low N in this dataset and concerns of overfitting the model. In column 6, robust standard errors clustered by year are used.

negative, albeit insignificant, relationship: the disadvantaged party's paper gains an average of 3,596 more circulations than the advantaged party's paper from the year after the last election to the year after the current election (p -value=0.42, two-tailed). (Note that $b=-5,089$, $p=0.23$, two-tailed controlling also for the paper's party and change in GDP; $b=-472.49$, $p=0.20$, two-tailed when vote share is used as the independent variable with decade fixed effects.)

Taken together, the results of this case study are consistent with Hypothesis 2's expectation of a negative relationship between political advantage and the relative demand for partisan-affiliated media. The results do not allow us to discern if the advantaged are reading less, the disadvantaged are reading more, or if both are at play. They do, however, provide insight into the overall direction of the relationship of interest. Because these findings are not robust to all specifications in Table 1 and the analysis is limited to one specific part of the country, the next section draws on a more geographically expansive dataset with which I examine circulations for all local partisan papers across states. Doing so helps us understand if and how the national political context affects relative, aggregate demand for partisan media throughout the U.S. and across time.

An Analysis of All Local, Daily Partisan Newspaper Circulations

To understand the effects of national political conditions on partisan news consumption across time and the entire U.S., I focus on the demand for all local, daily partisan newspapers from 1932 to 2004. In this analysis, the political context is again represented by electoral outcomes from presidential races, which serve as an indicator of each party's political advantage or disadvantage. For this measure, I again calculate the difference between the two parties' votes received in presidential elections from 1932 to 2004 by subtracting the Democratic Party's votes from the Republican Party's votes in election year t and dividing that by all votes cast¹⁶. Once again, positive values generally indicate a Republican victory and an electorate that is more disposed

¹⁶ Analyses that calculate the denominator using the sum of only the two party's votes produce similar results.

toward Republican ideas, while negative values indicate a Democratic victory.

To measure and characterize demand for local partisan papers, I rely on a dataset collected by Gentzkow, Shapiro, and Sinkinson (2012). Their data provide information on the circulation levels of local daily papers for each presidential election year from 1869 to 2004 and classify every newspaper as Republican, Democratic, Independent or unaffiliated. This information was collected from the G. Rowell & Co.'s *American Newspaper Directory* (for papers from 1869 to 1876), the N.W. Ayer & Son's *American Newspaper Annual* (for papers from 1880 to 1928), and the *Editor & Publisher Yearbook* (for papers from 1932 to 2004). Like before, I begin my analysis in 1932, but end it in 2004, as this is the last year of Gentzkow et al.'s (2012) dataset¹⁷.

While recent scholarship attempts to quantify and rank the ideology of media organizations, this work characterizes a narrow sliver of the contemporary media environment (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010; Groseclose and Milyo 2005; Ho and Quinn 2008) or an even narrower sample of historical papers (e.g., Groeling and Baum 2013 examine two papers), and is unhelpful for this analysis. Therefore, I rely on the coding scheme of Gentzkow et al. (2011) to determine the political associations of local newspapers. Specifically, the authors use whether or not the paper had ever formally declared a Republican, Democratic, or Independent affiliation to assign political associations to papers throughout the duration of the dataset¹⁸.

The assumption of time-invariant partisan reputations is strong, but Gentzkow et al. (2011) conduct content analyses to show that between 1872 and 1928—the years in which papers were the preeminent source of news—Republican papers devoted 48% of their candidate mentions to Republicans while Democratic papers mentioned Republican candidates only 29% of the time, a

¹⁷ Gentzkow et al.'s (2012) data include only general-circulation English-language daily U.S. papers (distributed at least four weekdays per week) and exclude foreign-language papers and national papers like *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Their data are missing circulation numbers for less than 1% of Republican and Democratic papers from 1932-2004. I downloaded this dataset from ICPSR in February 2014; it has since been revised on that site.

¹⁸ In the few cases in which a paper switched partisan affiliation, the majority affiliation is used.

difference that is highly significant. In more recent years (1932 to 2004), historically Republican papers endorsed Republican candidates 90% of the time while historically Democratic papers endorsed Republican candidates only 45% of the time¹⁹ (Gentzkow et al. 2011).

Even if these analyses prove unconvincing, the claim that there are lasting partisan differences is an empirical one. If the partisan reputations of papers eroded over time, then we would expect the differences in my hypotheses to deteriorate, particularly as emerging papers became less partisan. That is, the lack of enduring partisan effects would provide another reason to expect a null relationship between political forces and media demand. Should we find empirical evidence of one of the theoretically expected relationships, this would suggest that the original affiliation truly does have a lasting impact as Gentzkow et al. (2011) assume²⁰.

To understand the relative demand for partisan papers, I focus once again on the changes in circulation trends over time. Here, I use a measure of Republican and Democratic papers that calculates the change in circulations from the previous election year to the current one for both types of papers and then subtracts the change in Democratic papers from that of Republican papers. This measure again allows me to identify relative changes in demand for the two types of papers while also eliminating confounding factors by subtracting out their common effects on both papers. The outcome variable also controls for disparities in the papers' raw circulation levels, which is helpful because relying on the raw measures would nearly always result in a Republican

¹⁹ This endorsement rate of out-party candidates may seem high for originally Democratic papers, and it suggests more variance around Democratic papers. Ideally, I would use more fine-grained data with the partisanship and strength of partisan bias of each paper reassessed each election year, as the political context could have a stronger effect on demand for more partisan papers versus less partisan papers. Unfortunately, such data are not readily available, so I follow Gentzkow and Shapiro (2011) and use the majority partisan affiliation provided. It is reassuring that Republican vote share is positively related—albeit, not precisely estimated—to the Republican minus Democratic paper circulation difference over time (similar to analyses in Gentzkow et al. 2014).

²⁰ See Online Appendix for a plot of the circulations of local partisan papers from 1932 to 2004. While the two types of papers follow the same general pattern over time—with Republican papers enjoying more circulations than Democratic ones—there are clear divergences in the slopes of their trend lines at times.

paper advantage even though there have been sizable surges in Democratic papers' circulations at various points in history. Formally, for each presidential election year t I calculate:

$$\frac{[R_t - R_{t-4}] - [D_t - D_{t-4}]}{TotalCirculations_t} * 100,$$

where R_t is the circulation level of Republican papers in presidential election year t , $R_{(t-4)}$ is the circulation level of Republican papers in the previous election year $t-4$, D_t is the circulation level of Democratic papers in election year t , and $D_{(t-4)}$ is the circulation level of Democratic papers in the last election year $t-4$. Like before, I divide this measure by total circulations in election year t ²¹.

Ideally, I would focus on circulations in the year following presidential elections, as I did in the Florida case study analyses. Doing so would better model the temporal order of the relationship of interest. However, aggregate circulation data in the year after presidential elections are not readily available for all local partisan papers in the country from 1932 to 2004. Therefore, I make a key assumption in support of my model choice based on analyses of existing and newly collected data consisting of a sample of papers' yearly circulations: I assume that newspapers' circulations in year t versus year $t+1$ are linearly related to one another²². (This does not preclude the possibility of circulations changing meaningfully every four years, as incremental changes each year could result in larger differences in circulations between every fourth year.)

It is even more reassuring that analyses with the Tampa Bay papers produce substantively similar results using both temporal operationalizations of my dependent variable. The results remain nearly identical when I focus on circulation changes from year $t-3$ to year $t+1$ (*GOP Vote*

²¹ See Online Appendix for a plot of this dependent variable. Analyses omitting Independent and unaffiliated papers from the denominator produce substantively similar results.

²² To validate this assumption, I collected the circulations of 13 notable newspapers—local and national, as well as Republican and Democratic—for all years from 1950 to 2013 using the *Editor & Publisher International Yearbooks*. I find a tight mapping from one year to the next (average $b=0.92$ for all papers regressing year t on $t-1$). I also analyze circulations for *all* domestic papers between 1945 and 2009 using *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook* data. The results are similar (regressing t on $t-1$: $b=1.00$, $p=0.00$ for daily papers; $b=0.96$, $p=0.00$ for Sunday papers), and imply there are not large year-to-year circulation changes. Analyses are available by request.

Margin's coefficient is -0.24 ; $p=0.03$ in the bivariate regression) and from year $t-4$ to year t (*GOP Vote Margin*'s coefficient is -0.19 ; $p=0.12$ in the bivariate regression), where t again represents the presidential election year. If anything, the operationalization used in this section produces estimates that are somewhat conservative compared to the alternative measure.

I also assume that leading up to Election Day, the sense that the winning party will be victorious can be palpable to voters. For instance, the 1984 election was a landslide victory for the Republican incumbent, President Ronald Reagan, who beat his Democratic opponent, Walter Mondale, with 58.8% of the popular vote. Even more telling is that Reagan's approval ratings exceeded his disapproval ratings throughout 1984 (Roper Center Public Opinion Archives), so it is possible that Democrats began to sense their impending loss prior to November and adjusted their media demand in real time. Indeed, that same year also saw a large relative change in circulations favoring Democratic papers, suggesting this was the case²³.

Figure 2 plots the relationship between the vote margin of the Republican Party in a given presidential election year and the relative changes in the papers' circulations. The bivariate regression line also pictured summarizes the negative relationship between the two: as the percentage of votes received by Republicans over Democrats increases, Republican papers' circulations actually decrease compared to those of Democratic papers ($b=-0.10$; $p=0.01$).

[Figure 2 about here]

Statistical analyses of the dependent variable in column 1 of Table 2 confirm the significance and robustness of the negative bivariate correlation in Figure 2²⁴. Substantively, the results suggest that a one standard deviation increase (13.06 percentage points) in the percentage of votes received by the Republican Party over the Democratic Party corresponds with Democratic

²³ The effects I uncover in these analyses are, of course, average effects, so this will not always be true in each year.

²⁴ Bootstrapping ($J=250$) uncovers a similar result: *GOP Vote Margin* $= -0.10$ with a 95% c.i. of $[-0.18, -0.04]$.

newspapers gaining roughly 693,486 *more* circulations than Republican papers²⁵. This finding provides evidence consistent with Hypothesis 2's expectation that demand for media affiliated with the disadvantaged party will increase relative to demand for media affiliated with the advantaged party. Both Hypothesis 1—which predicted a positive relationship between advantage and relative partisan media demand—and the null hypothesis are not supported by these analyses.

[Table 2 about here]

To ensure the robustness of this key finding and to reduce the possibility that it is due to omitted variables, Table 2 also reports several other model specifications similar to those included in the analysis of the Floridian papers. Though the differencing used to construct the dependent variable should have eliminated the effects of confounding variables, I again control for changes in GDP from the previous election year to the current one to assess whether that is the case. Column 2 suggests the change in GDP does marginally affect the relative changes in circulations between the two papers, but the Republican vote margin remains significant and negative²⁶. Column 3 includes the lagged *GOP Vote Margin* to capture the effect of previous elections. The results not only suggest the lagged vote margin is insignificant, but the independent variable of interest is again negatively signed and significant at the same magnitude as the original bivariate analysis²⁷.

I also examine whether the changing nature of the media environment across the radio (1932-1952) and TV eras (1956-2004) as designated by Gentzkow et al. (2011) may be driving the results. Column 4 includes an indicator variable for the radio period that uses the TV era as the baseline, and its coefficient suggests the difference between the two is insignificant. Even more,

²⁵ I calculated this number by multiplying the standard deviation of *GOP Vote Margin* (13.06 percentage points) by the key coefficient: -0.10. I divide that by 100 and multiply it by the mean of all circulations (53,100,000).

²⁶ I also ran analyses with the raw GDP for each election year and find that raw GDP has an insignificant effect.

²⁷ Using the change in Republican vote margin (as a percentage of total votes cast) from one election to the next as the key independent variable again produces an insignificant result. This finding reinforces the notion that the current political context alone seems to drive patterns of newspaper consumption.

the size and significance of *GOP Vote Margin* remain largely intact. Analyses dividing 1932 to 2004 into thirds also alleviate concerns that the results are confined to one era, as the coefficient of interest is consistently negative over time²⁸. Further, column 5 detrends the data by including measures for *time*, a count variable for election years, and *time-squared*, which captures nonlinear effects of time. Neither reaches significance, while *GOP Vote Margin* remains negative, albeit smaller in magnitude ($b=-0.06$) and significance ($p=0.19$) than before. It is reassuring, though, that placebo tests using election results from $t-8$, $t-4$, $t+4$, and $t+8$ while controlling for *time* and *time-squared* produce effects that are smaller in absolute magnitude and much less significant²⁹.

The model in the last column of Table 2 accounts for time trends in a different manner while employing an alternative specification similar to what was used in the last column of Table 1. Here, the data are reorganized so that the unit of analysis is year-state-party of paper. Each row contains the circulations of party j 's papers in each election year-state combination (i.e., two rows per year-state combination—one for each party's papers). Similar to column 6 of Table 1, the dependent variable is the change in the circulations of party j 's papers within a state from the previous election year ($t-4$) to the current election year t . The key independent variable is again *Winner*, a dummy for whether or not the papers' affiliated party won the presidential election.

Controls for time and region using state-year fixed effects are also included³⁰. Therefore, the coefficient for *Winner* represents the average difference between the change in circulations for the

²⁸ I created dummy variables for three time periods (1932-1956, 1960-1980 and 1984-2004) and interacted each with *GOP Vote Margin*. I then regressed the dependent variable on *GOP Vote Margin*, dummies for 1960-1980 and 1984-2004 (1932-1956 was the suppressed baseline), and interactions between those two time periods and *GOP Vote Margin*. The results suggest the effects do not differ significantly over time, as none of the interactions reaches statistical significance, and the overall effect of *GOP Vote Margin* is consistently negative in each period.

²⁹ See Clinton and Enamorado (2014) for similar placebo analyses with a similar analysis. Cities without two distinct partisan papers might dull my effects, so I replicated the main analyses only in cities with one of each paper. Here, the coefficient for *GOP Vote Margin* ($b=-0.14$, $p=0.29$ two-tailed) is larger in magnitude. Finally, the overall negative effect is a bit stronger in more competitive elections (i.e., when *GOP Vote Margin* is less than or equal to 10 percentage points): $b=-0.21$, $p=0.03$. The main effect in less competitive elections is still negative and significant ($b=-0.09$, $p=0.05$) though. See Online Appendix for related figures, more robustness checks, and analyses with raw values.

³⁰ All results using this specification are similar when state- and year-fixed effects are included separately and when the percentage of total votes won by party j in the nation is the key independent variable instead of *Winner*.

winning party's papers and the change in circulations for the losing party's papers within each state-year combination. As reported in Column 6 of Table 2, the key coefficient is both negative and significant ($b=-9,292.30$; $p=0.04$), indicating a negative link between electoral advantage and change in circulations from the previous to current election year. Aggregating the effect size to the national level (i.e., multiplying the coefficient by 51 to include D.C.) suggests that the disadvantaged party's papers gain roughly 473,907 more circulations throughout the nation than the advantaged party's papers.

One cause for concern could be that voters in the South experienced changes in partisanship (Stanley 1988) during the timeframe of my analysis due to shifts in the parties' ideological reputations. To alleviate concerns that this is driving my results, I drop the 11 states that were members of the Confederacy. Doing so has no effect on my overall findings. As reported in Online Appendix A, the coefficients for *GOP Vote Margin* using the same specifications as Models 1 and 6 of Table 2 are $b=-0.14$ ($p=0.02$) and $b=-15,082.99$ ($p=0.006$), respectively.

Taken together, the results in Table 2 provide repeated evidence that the political context is meaningfully correlated with aggregate partisan media demand. In particular, the results are consistent with—though not dispositive of—Hypothesis 2's causal expectation that when parties are electorally advantaged, demand for their affiliated local papers decreases relative to demand for the disadvantaged party's papers. This negative link helps alleviate concerns of endogeneity, as it is unlikely the same forces increasing one type of paper's circulations would also depress voter turnout for its affiliated party. And while the findings do not allow us to discern if the advantaged are reading less, the disadvantaged are reading more, or if it is a mixture of both, the results do undermine Hypothesis 1's prediction of a positive link between advantage and relative demand as well as the null hypothesis that the political context is unrelated to partisan news consumption.

ALL EYES ON THE WHITE HOUSE

Thus far, my analyses have suggested a negative link between partisan newspaper circulations and advantage in the national political context operationalized solely in terms of the presidency. However, elected officials besides the commander-in-chief could set the tone of the political environment. In this section, I expand my analysis of local partisan paper circulations from 1932 to 2004 to consider how the partisan makeup of the House of Representatives may influence feelings of political advantage and disadvantage. Below, I compare the effects of the House's partisan composition against presidential election outcomes in driving relative changes in partisan paper circulations. I find that the latter tends to be the more important factor.

Examining the House over the Senate in my analysis makes sense because all 435 members of the House face re-election at the same time unlike the staggered terms of their Senate counterparts. Thus, the attention given to all of the House seats versus a subset of Senate seats is better positioned to influence the dynamics of political advantage and disadvantage. Additionally, members of the lower chamber still enjoy media attention given their lawmaking and oversight roles on issues that affect citizens' lives ranging from national security to healthcare.

In the analyses below, I use the partisan makeup of the House elected in the same year as the president to operationalize the parties' relative advantage or disadvantage in the lower chamber. Specifically, I subtract the number of Democratic seats elected from Republican seats elected and convert that value to a percentage of total seats to form *GOP House Seat Margin*. Positive values of this measure reflect instances in which there are more House Republicans than Democrats. For my dependent variable, I again use the two measures of circulation changes for all local partisan newspapers (1932 to 2004) used in Table 2.

I first focus on the dependent variable used in the first five models of Table 2. Model 1 of

Table 3 reports a negative and marginally significant bivariate correlation between *GOP House Seat Margin* and relative changes in demand for local partisan papers ($b=-0.05$; $p=0.12$). However, Model 2 of Table 3 regresses the dependent variable on both the *GOP House Seat Margin* and *GOP [Presidential] Vote Margin*, the latter of which is identical to the measure used in the last two sections. Including both the House and presidency allows for a direct comparison between the influence of Congressional electoral outcomes and presidential ones. And though the two are correlated at 0.60, it is plausible that they each still have independent effects.

[Table 3 about here]

Though still negative, the coefficient for seats in the House is now insignificant ($b=-0.005$; $p=0.90$), while that of presidential elections is negative and significant ($b=-0.10$; $p=0.03$). This suggests that the marginal significance of Congressional outcomes in Column 1 of Table 3 was largely due to that independent variable tapping into House *and* presidential outcomes simultaneously. Columns 3 through 6 report robustness checks similar to those used in previous analyses, and provide evidence that even when controlling for a variety of other factors, the effect of presidential outcomes overpowers that of House outcomes³¹. Finally, Column 7 compares House and presidential election results but employs the alternative specification used in the last column of Table 2. The results demonstrate a negative and significant effect of winning the presidential election ($b=-8,153.44$; $p=0.11$), while the effect of the number of House seats won by party j is again insignificant³² ($b=-25.37$; $p=0.63$).

In sum, the results suggest that even though House races have meaningful political consequences, their overall influence on the relative demand for partisan newspapers is largely out-shadowed by presidential campaigns and elections. That is, citizens seem to take cues of

³¹ Like before, *Change in GOP Vote Margin* is insignificant, but so is the result for *GOP House Seat Margin*.

³² Using the vote share (%) won by party j in the presidential election in this model produces negative and significant results ($b=-977.79$; $p=0.01$), while the effect of House seats won by party j is again insignificant ($b=-5.14$; $p=0.92$).

advantage and disadvantage more from the party of the presidency than the partisan makeup of the House. Such asymmetries in attention paid to different political actors could have implications for asymmetries in citizens' abilities to monitor and hold elected representatives accountable.

CONCLUSION

In defense of their decision to publish a controversial article about government surveillance of terrorists' financial transactions, the former executive editor of *The New York Times* and the former editor of *The Los Angeles Times* wrote that, “[o]ur job...is to bring our readers information that will enable them to judge how well their elected leaders are fighting on their behalf, and at what price” (Baquet and Keller 2006). Normative theories of democracy also uphold the importance of free-flowing information as it enhances citizens' participation and ability to hold elites accountable (Dahl 1998).

Given the press's import, it is crucial that scholars understand the determinants of media consumption, particularly its political determinants. My work represents one approach to doing so by examining how advantage and disadvantage in the political environment affect relative partisan news demand. While many scholars have considered the effects of media consumption on political outcomes like voter turnout or candidate choice, I examine whether political outcomes affect the consumption of partisan news. Taken together, the combined analyses provide compelling evidence of a negative correlation between political advantage and relative, aggregate partisan media consumption across nearly a century. This paper is the first of my knowledge to establish the first-order conditions for such a relationship. The findings also undermine the plausibility of both the null hypothesis and the expectation that political advantage could boost partisan media demand relative to disadvantage. Additionally, I find that presidential election outcomes tend to overpower those related to the House in terms of influence over citizens' partisan media demand.

Focusing on local partisan newspaper circulations has provided a broad historical view of the relationship between the electoral context and partisan news demand, but cable news channels like Fox News and MSNBC have emerged more recently as prominent sources of partisan news for Republicans and Democrats, respectively. Research on partisan media has and should continue to draw on this contemporary news medium, which can also shed light on the results in this paper. Because partisan cable news is rather new—Fox News was created in 1996, while MSNBC began to lean left in 2007 (Pew 2007)—I am limited in the analyses I can perform. Therefore, I briefly examine fluctuations in these channels’ median prime-time audiences below. In doing so, I find further evidence of a negative link between advantage and relative partisan media demand³¹.

For instance, after the 2008 election, Democrats were advantaged with control of the White House and majorities in both houses of Congress, while Republicans were disadvantaged. That disadvantaged status seems to have propelled Republicans to watch their favored cable TV news channel at a rate that outpaced their Democratic counterparts. While both Fox News and MSNBC experienced increases in viewers from 2008 to 2009, the former’s median prime-time viewership increased 19.02% compared to the latter’s increase of 2.5%. Similarly, the 2012 election resulted in the re-election of President Obama and Democrats gaining back eight seats in the House and one in the Senate. Thus, Republicans were relatively disadvantaged while Democrats were advantaged. Changes in prime-time viewership again suggest that relative political advantage dampens demand for partisan-friendly news more so than disadvantage: while MSNBC saw a 24.21% decrease in audience share for these key hours from 2012 to 2013, Fox News experienced only a 5.67% decrease in their audience share. And even in the months right after the 2016 election of Republican Donald Trump, prime-time viewership for MSNBC increased 55 percent from one

³¹ Transcripts of prime-time shows on Fox News and MSNBC verify their biases through devices like strategic story selection (Levendusky 2013). See Online Appendix for a plot of changes in both channels’ prime-time audiences.

year prior—a growth rate that is larger than its rivals (Grynbaum and Koblin 2017). In sum, these patterns suggest the findings based on local partisan newspapers may generalize to other, more contemporary forms of partisan media.

Throughout this paper, it has been reassuring that the results based on aggregate-level data, which are rich in ecological realism and focus on actual behavior instead of potentially biased self-reports (Prior 2009), have been consistent with individual-level studies of information demand (e.g., Marcus et al. 2000). However, using solely aggregate data can lead to problems of ecological inference, as I cannot clearly identify the mechanism(s) at play. For instance, I cannot discern if in- or out-party affect is a stronger force, or if advantaged partisans are consuming less, disadvantaged partisans are consuming more, or a bit of both is at play. Future work could further this research by pinpointing which of the plausible individual-level mechanisms are driving these overall patterns.

Finally, the results of this paper can speak to critical issues of accountability and representation. If advantaged partisans sometimes check out of politics and blindly trust elected officials, then the monitoring of those who govern may be uneven. Consequently, the feedback given to representatives may be in one party's best interest while those in the other party may not voice their opinions as intensely. Those whose party is out of power may also be more likely to act on opinions formed after consuming partisan-tinged news that misrepresent reality. Future work might examine if the disadvantaged are generally more critical, outspoken, and politically active with a focus on the next election, or perhaps more likely to participate as a result of consuming biased information. In the end, understanding how advantage and disadvantage affect the relative demand for partisan news sheds light on both the political determinants of partisan media consumption and also the relationship between elites and citizens in democratic societies.

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TABLES

Table 1 Political Environment and Demand for Partisan Newspapers in Tampa Bay, 1932-2014

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
GOP Vote	-0.24**	-0.24**	-0.20*	-0.14*	-0.08	
Margin [%]	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.07	0.09	
Change in GDP		-0.0008 0.002				
GOP Vote Margin			-0.10			
Lagged [%]			0.10			
Radio Period				8.37* 4.16		
Time					-2.64** 1.17	
Time-Squared					0.10* 0.05	
Winner						-3595.95 4310.70
Decade Fixed						Yes
Effects						
Intercept	-0.94 1.38	0.02 2.43	-1.04 1.34	-2.99*** 0.98	13.58* 6.68	9041.48*** 2155.35
<i>N</i>	20	18	20	20	20	40
R²	0.19	0.22	0.22	0.45	0.43	0.80

Note: The dependent variables in Columns 1-5 are a relative measure of the changes in the two papers' circulations over time as a percentage of circulations in the year after a presidential election. Column 6 uses the alternative specification with the change in circulations for party j 's paper as the dependent variable. Table entry is the OLS regression coefficient with robust standard error below; Column 6 also has standard errors clustered by year. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

Table 2 Political Environment and Demand for All Local Partisan Newspapers, 1932-2004

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
GOP Vote Margin [%]	-0.10**	-0.07**	-0.10**	-0.08*	-0.06	
Change in GDP		-0.0009*				
		0.0005				
GOP Vote Margin Lagged [%]			-0.02			
			0.04			
Radio Period				1.39		
				0.91		
Time					-0.45	
					0.41	
Time-Squared					0.01	
					0.02	
Winner						-9292.30**
						4520.64
State-Year Fixed Effects						Yes
Intercept	0.28	0.74	0.29	-0.14	3.02	77831.65
	0.41	0.56	0.41	0.45	1.89	77904.64
<i>N</i>	19	18	19	19	19	1938
R²	0.36	0.40	0.37	0.43	0.52	0.50

Note: Columns 1-5 use a dependent variable that is a relative measure of the changes in the two types of papers' circulations over time as a percentage of all circulations. Column 6 uses the alternative specification with the change in circulations for party j 's paper as the dependent variable. Table entry is the OLS regression coefficient with robust standard error below. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

Table 3 Differential Effects of the Political Environment on Demand for Partisan Newspapers, 1932-2004

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
GOP House Seat Margin [%]	-0.05	-0.005	0.05	-0.01	0.002	0.03	
Margin [%]	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	
GOP Vote Margin [%]		-0.10**	-0.10***	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.08†	
Change in GDP			-0.001**				
			0.0005				
GOP Vote Margin Lagged [%]				-0.02			
				0.05			
Radio Period					1.40		
					0.91		
Time						-0.42	
						0.43	
Time-Squared						0.01	
						0.02	
House Seats							-25.37
							52.27
Winner							-8153.44†
							5120.93
State-Year Fixed Effects							Yes
Intercept	-0.51	0.21	1.88*	0.06	-0.11	3.58*	82716.18
	0.50	0.64	0.89	0.71	0.67	1.78	80490.82
N	19	19	18	19	19	19	1938
R²	0.15	0.36	0.49	0.38	0.43	0.54	0.50

Note: Columns 1-6 use a dependent variable that is a relative measure of the changes in the two types of papers' circulations over time as a percentage of all circulations. Column 7 uses the alternative specification with the change in circulations for party j 's paper as the dependent variable. Table entry is the OLS regression coefficient with robust standard error below. † $p < 0.12$; * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

FIGURES

Figure 1 Relationship Between GOP Vote Margin and Relative Changes in Circulations for Tampa Bay Partisan Papers

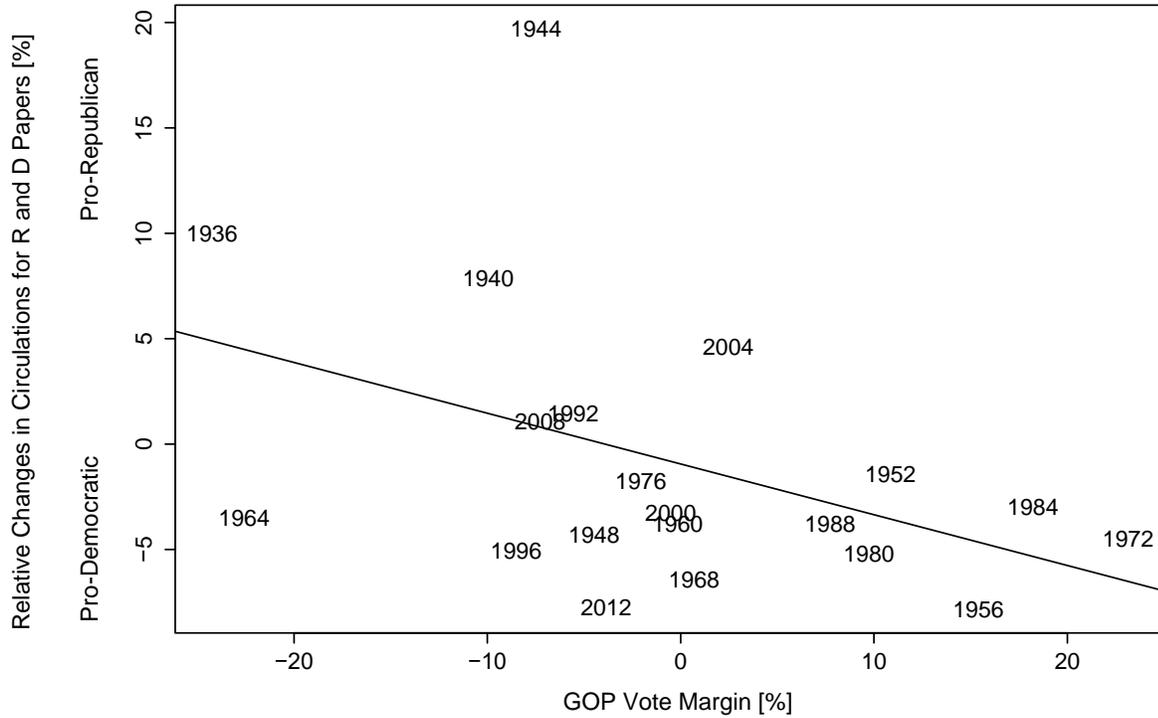


Figure 2 Relationship Between GOP Vote Margin and Relative Changes in Circulations for All Local Partisan Papers

