

The Effect of the Partisan Press on U.S. House Elections, 1800-1820

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In the contemporary era, it has become fashionable to claim that the national media “tilt” left or right in the political realm depending upon one’s ideological perspective. Indeed, some suggest that journalists assume an intervening role in shaping the political agenda as a result of the amount or degree of coverage of certain political events. While it is difficult to find objective evidence of bias in the contemporary media, we turn to the past to gain additional leverage on this important debate. In particular, we revisit the era of the “partisan press” where newspapers were really the only source of news for American voters and they were typically operated by one of the two major party organizations. Using a new dataset linking the geographic location of partisan newspapers during the early nineteenth century with recently collected electoral data, we investigate the effect of partisan newspapers on the outcome of U.S. House races. The results confirm our theoretical expectations and offer definitive evidence of media “bias” in the context of historical elections.

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Is there a discernible bias in the national media? Does the amount or degree of coverage by the local or national press influence outcomes in the political process? Within the past few decades, it has become fashionable to argue that the media tilt in a liberal direction reflecting the bias of the reporters covering the beat (Anderson 2005; Hamilton 2004; Kahn and Kenney 2002; Sutter 2001). More recently, the rise of conservative talk radio and the growing influence of Fox News in political circles have led to allegations of bias from the right aimed at counter-balancing the perceived leftist slant in the media (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007). In a period characterized by bitter division and party polarization, it is no wonder that both politicians and pundits place a significant emphasis on the role of the media in contributing to increased levels of discord within the American electorate. This is especially true in light of the media's growing attention to both controversy and sensationalism in political affairs (Kellner 2003; West 2001).

In recent years, there has been no shortage of attempts among social scientists to evaluate what bias, if any, exists in the national media (Alterman 2003; Groeling and Kernell 1998; Sutter 2001). At the same time, a wide variety of studies have sought to better understand how such bias might impact political outcomes (see, e.g., Druckman and Parkin 2005; Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan 2007). Yet, for all the attempts to examine this question systematically, we are really no closer to resolving this perennial debate. Conventional wisdom certainly holds that media bias exists, yet it is increasingly difficult to find evidence for it given the various problems associated with accurately measuring bias (Groseclose and Milyo 2005; Ho and Quinn 2007). Moreover, what makes this discussion so difficult to nail down objectively is that bias is often in the eyes of the beholder. Those representing the ideological left will readily criticize Fox News as anything but "fair and balanced," whereas those on the right will easily dismiss assertions that most of the mainstream media is not trying to advance a leftist agenda.

Given the inherent difficulties associated with finding objective evidence of bias in the contemporary media, we turn to the past to gain additional leverage on this important debate. How can history help us better understand whether media bias influences political outcomes? We revisit the era of the “partisan press” during the first two decades of the nineteenth century when newspapers were operated almost exclusively by the two major party organizations and were the only source of news for American voters. In particular, we investigate whether the geographic location of partisan newspapers influenced congressional election outcomes during this era. If we uncover evidence of media bias in these elections, then this will be instructive in helping us understand the potential for bias in the contemporary era. If we fail to find an effect, however, that will cast doubt on the argument that more objective coverage today is unduly influencing outcomes in the political arena.

The organization of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we briefly discuss the history of the partisan press in America, especially in terms of its linkage to the major party organizations of the day. From there, we examine the politics of congressional elections during the early part of the nineteenth century and evaluate the geographic connection between partisan newspapers and election outcomes throughout this era. Then, we review the data used in this analysis before shifting the discussion to our results. In the concluding section of the paper, we discuss the implications of our findings and explore possible extensions in future work.

Brief History of the Partisan Press

While most modern mainstream media outlets attempt to at least appear *neutral* and *non-partisan*, this was in no way the case during the early Republic period. In fact, while not all newspapers were linked to a particular political party, the majority during the 1800-1820 time

period were associated directly with either the Federalist or Republican Parties (see Figure 4).¹

The economic realities of the early nineteenth century made it extremely difficult for newspapers to stay afloat financially without the aid and sponsorship of a political party. A second reality of the state of communication in early America concerns the fact that print media was the only source of political communication available for mass audiences and among printed items, newspapers—comparatively cheap to produce—dominated (Pasley 2001). In *The Tyranny of the Printers*, one of the most comprehensive accounts of newspaper politics in the early Republic, Pasley paints a picture of the pivotal political role newspapers played during early American history:

In nineteenth-century America...the newspaper press was the political system's central institution, not simply a forum or atmosphere in which politics took place. Instead, newspapers and their editors were purposeful actors in the political process, linking parties, voters, and the government together, and pursuing specific political goals. Newspapers were the "linchpin" of nineteenth-century party politics...This state of affairs held with particular force nationally from the 1790s to 1860s, but it remained strong long after the Civil War (2001:3-4).

Newspapers in the early nineteenth century had a near lock on political communication and it was political parties who controlled the message. In this manner, newspapers and parties were integrally tied together in a manner not seen today. In fact, newspapers actually carried out many of the functions directly relegated to political parties in later points of time including voter mobilization, platform/policy dissemination, and candidate advertising. As Sloan (1982) argues, the newspaper editors during this era played a surprisingly similar role to the party bosses of the late nineteenth century.² Additionally, Pasley writes:

Newspapers filled many of the gaps left by the party system's uneven development, providing a fabric that held the parties together between elections and conventions,

¹We use the terms Republican, Jeffersonian Republican, or Democratic-Republican interchangeably.

² On this point, see also Sloan (1987, 1988, 1989) and Leonard (1986).

connected voters and activists to the larger party, and linked the different political levels and geographic regions of the country. Party newspapers thus contributed in fundamental ways to the very existence of the parties and to the creation of a sense of membership, identity, and common cause among political activists and voters (2001:11).

Newspapers also found themselves in a privileged economic situation, enjoying a close relationship with postmasters and the postal service. In effect, postmasters were responsible for establishing many newspapers during this period of time (Kielbowicz 1983). Early policies formulated by Congress, including subsidized postal rates, were designed to boost newspaper circulation and, in turn, provide support for the new American government dominated by the Federalists. There is little doubt that such measures had a substantial impact on circulation rates for many of these early newspapers. One source indicates “an estimated 1.8 million newspapers and 1.9 million letters were mailed in 1799. Both newspaper and letter postage, as well as the number of pieces mailed, grew about 270 percent between 1799 and 1814” (Kielbowicz 1983: 270).

These policies also had the unintended consequence of benefiting the opposition press and, later, the opposition Republican Party. As Pasley (2001: 8) explains:

Such geographic linkage was facilitated by heavily subsidized postal rates for newspapers (including the privilege of exchanging newspapers between publishers for free). The early Congresses established these policies (many of which were based on preexisting customs) in the hope that extensive newspaper circulation would help maintain public support for the new government. But the newspaper subsidies quite inadvertently fostered the development of first an opposition movement and then an opposition political party of national scope (Pasley 2001: 8).

Along these lines, Kielbowicz (1983) reports “most Republicans also rallied behind a policy of low newspaper postage. Distrustful of the new central government, Republicans hoped that

distribution of their party papers through the mails would inform constituents of Federalist abuses” (1983: 279).

The overt connection of newspapers in the early nineteenth century with political parties coupled with the fact that newspapers were also the only major form of political communication for American citizens creates an ideal situation to test the effects of partisan communication on vote choice in congressional elections. As eligible voters were only able to vote for members of the U.S. House of Representatives during this period of time, our analysis will focus on what effects, if any, the presence of a partisan paper or papers produced on these elections. The next section details the state of congressional elections during the early Republic period.

Congressional Elections in the Early Nineteenth Century

Little systematic attention has been given to congressional elections in the early part of the nineteenth century. To a considerable extent, the emphasis in the congressional elections literature has largely, and naturally, been on U.S. House races in the post-WWII era. On one level, this should not come as a surprise. Until recently, historical data on elections throughout the nineteenth century were not readily available in machine-readable form and there was little reason to think that analyses with existing data would yield new or interesting results. The received wisdom concerning elections from this period was that candidate-specific factors would not be especially salient in a largely party-centered era (Jacobson 1989). Because the parties directly controlled nominations, mobilized voters, and decided the format of the ballot used at various polling places, one might assume that there was little room left for candidate behavior or partisan newspapers to exert an independent influence on voter decision-making.

In many respects, elections held in the early 1800s were very different affairs from what we are accustomed to today. As Kernell (1977: 672) explains, “Our image of congressional elections during this period is one of fiercely combative affairs which by modern standards produced intense voter interest, large turnout, and close elections.” Unlike the modern era, relatively few legislators during this period viewed service in the U.S. House as a long-term career. Following the norm or practice of “rotation” in office, most legislators would serve one or two terms in the House before exiting the chamber (Kernell 1977; Struble 1979). As such, it was not uncommon for each election cycle during this period to dramatically reconstitute the membership of Congress (Polsby 1968). In the words of one historian writing about this era of politics, “For the first four decades of national government between one third and two thirds of the congressional community left every two years not to return” (Young 1966: 89).

Candidate recruitment practices in the early nineteenth century were starkly different as well. In contrast to the familiar candidate-centered era of politics today, elections during this era were largely influenced by the political parties (Jacobson 2009). Prior to the appearance of the first primaries in the early twentieth century, House candidates were chosen exclusively by party caucuses (Dallinger 1897; Ostrogorski 1964). These caucuses were typically dominated by loose coalitions of state and local parties, who attempted to recruit candidates that were both loyal to the party’s cause and able to enlist other followers for the party (Swenson 1982). Given that congressional districts typically represented a number of distinct communities with disparate interests, the nominating process was often arduous and cumbersome. “With few political organizations extending beyond their local towns and counties, district nominating caucuses were pluralistic, frequently fragmented affairs with each local organization sponsoring its own candidate” (Kernell 1977: 675).

Another major difference in the conduct of elections during this era involved the norms associated with political campaigning. Unlike the seemingly endless campaigning by candidates in the months preceding the November election during the contemporary era, candidates for elective office in the nineteenth century behaved very differently and relied more extensively on external outlets to convey their messages to potential voters. As one historian writing about this era notes:

During much of the nineteenth century, prevailing political mores forbade candidates from campaigning for themselves. There were usually no lengthy speaking tours and few if any other public events directly involving the candidate. In this situation, newspapers conducted many if not most of the opinion-shaping activities we now call campaigning: communicating a party's message, promoting its candidates, attacking their opponents, and encouraging voters to turn out at the polls (Pasley 2001: 4).

Given the intensely partisan nature of newspaper politics during this era, it is not surprising that the rhetoric exchanged by the party newspapers on behalf of the candidates could be described as heated, acerbic, or even vitriolic at times.³

In light of the obvious differences between contemporary elections and those during the early nineteenth century, are there specific reasons we might expect candidate-specific factors as reflected in the newspapers of the day to directly affect elections during this era? Indeed, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that these types of effects may be present as far back as the early 1800s. First, previous research has found support for an electoral connection between legislators and their constituents similar to that described by Mayhew (1974) at various points throughout the nineteenth century. Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson (1996), for instance, find strong evidence of an electoral connection as early as 1816 in the context of House consideration of a congressional pay raise. Additionally, Carson and Engstrom (2005) find that incumbents

³ For a revealing case study of the use of rhetoric by partisan newspapers in the Election of 1800, see Lerche (1948).

who voted for John Quincy Adams in the disputed 1824 presidential election, but came from districts that had supported Andrew Jackson, were more likely to suffer at the polls in the 1826-27 midterm congressional elections.

Second, newspapers during this era played a critical role in informing citizens about important issues of the day including upcoming elections and the candidates running under the party banner. The reach of the party press was extensive in the nineteenth century (Smith 1977), and events in Congress, including elections, were covered in great detail (Kernell 1986; Kernell and Jacobson 1987). Indeed, as Kernell and Jacobson (1987) have shown, Congress typically received a greater degree of day-to-day coverage in newspapers than the president during the nineteenth century. Moreover, there is little doubt that citizens were regularly exposed to these partisan news outlets as evidenced by research on nineteenth century newspapers:

Neighbors often shared newspapers with each other, or even subscribed jointly. Information and ideas contained in newspapers moved by word of mouth, and passed hand to hand in clippings and letters. In a time when most people were still conducting most of their daily affairs through face-to-face exchanges, even a few newspaper subscribers were enough to spread the word to entire neighborhoods (Pasley 2001: 7-8).

Third, there is a well-established literature demonstrating that incumbent politicians in the nineteenth century acted strategically in their decisions to run or retire from Congress (see, e.g., Price 1975; Fiorina, Rohde, and Wissell 1975; Kernell 1977; Aldrich 1995; Brady, Buckley, and Rivers 1999). While this literature has consistently found nineteenth century incumbents respond rationally to changes in their incentive structure when deciding to remain in Congress, there has been comparatively less work on the role of challengers during this period.⁴ Given that the contemporary congressional elections literature (Jacobson and Kernell 1983; Jacobson 1989)

⁴ For evidence of strategic challenger behavior during the postbellum era, see Carson and Roberts (2005).

has consistently found that it almost always takes a strong challenger to unseat an incumbent, a number of questions emerge: is the impact of quality challengers on House races a modern phenomenon or is it a pattern that can be found more generally throughout American political history? What effects did the partisan press have on congressional elections during the early part of the nineteenth century? Was there a geographic component to the relationship? It is to these questions that we turn our attention in the remainder of the paper.

Data and Methods

The manuscript endeavors to explore the effects, if any, that the partisan press may have exerted on congressional elections during the early Republic period. In order to analyze this question, we rely on a methodology that can simultaneously take into account both the temporal and cross-sectional variation present in our dataset. For this study, House races occurring from 1800 through 1820 serve as our unit of analysis. The dependent variable, *Federalist Vote*, is the share of the vote by House election won by the Federalist candidate. Parameter estimates are generated using OLS and we control for autocorrelation via the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable, $Federalist\ Vote_{(t-1)}$, in the model. In addition to the methodological concern mentioned, including a lagged measure of the Federalist vote share also helps to establish a baseline measure of partisan support in each congressional district in an era where alternative measures (i.e. presidential vote) are not readily available. The issue of heteroskedasticity is addressed via the use of panel-corrected standard errors.

To empirically test our expectations regarding the geographic effects of newspapers on elections to the U.S. House, it was necessary to track down a considerable amount of historical elections data. Our search for such data was largely facilitated by Dubin's (1998) *United States*

Congressional Elections, 1788-1997, the most comprehensive source for electoral data over time. Using this invaluable source of candidate information, we were able to collect relevant information on the names of the incumbent and related challengers, the vote totals on which percentages of the two-party vote were computed, as well as the partisan affiliation for each candidate. Moreover, the latter was supplemented with information contained in Martis (1989) to fill in any gaps in party identification.

The primary data of interest come directly from the work of historian Jeffrey Pasley (2001) published in *The Tyranny of Printers*. For this research, Pasley compiled a database of 1,067 newspapers during the early Republic which included the name of the paper, the city and state/territory in which the paper was located, the year in which the paper was founded and in which it folded (if applicable), and the partisan affiliation of the paper coded as Federalist, Republican, or no partisan affiliation. In addition to his own primary research in categorizing the partisan leanings of these newspapers, Pasley also relied on a number of other published sources that included surveys of newspapers from this period of time. Pasley states that his newspaper database is a *conservative* estimate of the size of the partisan press during this period of time given problems associated with data availability.⁵

Figures 1-3 plot the distribution of newspapers by type across states (and the District of Columbia) during 1800, 1810, and 1820 respectively. Looking at these figures, one can note a great deal of variation both between and within states across time. In 1800, New York contained the highest number of Federalist papers at 31, while the highest number of Republican papers (24), were located in Pennsylvania. Ten years later, New York still led all other states in the

⁵ The other published sources that Pasley reports using are *History of Printing in America*, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period*, and *Revolution of American Conservatism*. For more detailed information about the sources Pasley (2001) used to construct his database of early American newspapers, see Appendix I in *The Tyranny of Printers*.

number of Federalist papers at 28, but Republican papers actually outnumbered their partisan rival, growing from 16 in 1800 to 31 in 1810. By 1820, the number of partisan papers had declined across all states. Nevertheless, the drop in the number of Federalist papers is even more pronounced compared to those in the Republican camp with fewer than 20 newspapers in New York and Pennsylvania respectively.

<Figures 1, 2, and 3 about here>

Figure 4 plots the total number of newspapers by type from 1800 through 1820. From this figure, the dominance of the partisan presence is evident as both the total numbers of Federalist and Republican papers outstrip those of newspapers with no partisan affiliation during the 1800 to 1820 period. Another prominent trend present in these time series shows the initial gap in the numbers of Federalist and Republican papers in 1800 and the subsequent surge in the number of Republican papers to completely close the gap by 1807. Following this time period, the numbers of both Federalist and Republican newspapers closely track with one another, peaking in 1810 and declining in the decade thereafter. The number of non-partisan papers shows a later peak in 1814 with an even steeper rate of decline in the following five years.

<Figure 4 about here>

In order to place these newspapers within their corresponding congressional district, we assigned each paper to its respective historical county or counties (if changes occurred to county boundaries during the 1800-1820 time period). Using geographic boundary information for congressional districts gathered by Parsons, Beach, and Hermann (1978) for this era, it was then possible to assign the county in which each newspaper resided to the proper district boundary for the twenty year timeframe of our study. Once each newspaper was spatially and temporally plotted, we created two independent variables to be used in our analysis of House elections.

Federalist Paper in District and *Republican Paper in District* are count variables that measure the number of Federalist and Republican papers respectively contained within the boundaries of each congressional district by election cycle.

Given our interest in examining the impact of candidate quality as well as the effects of partisan newspapers on incumbent electoral performance, it was also necessary to collect data on candidates' political backgrounds. While most scholars of congressional elections agree that the "quality" of the congressional challenger plays an important role in affecting elections in the contemporary era, we know far less about its effect on elections prior to the mid-twentieth century (but see Carson, Jenkins, Rohde, and Souva 2001; Carson and Roberts 2005). This is due largely to the lack of sufficient data on candidates' political backgrounds prior to this time, thus making it more difficult to offer broad generalizations on the effects of candidate quality in elections across time.

In an attempt to overcome this limitation, we took advantage of the increased amount of turnover in the House during this era by utilizing the online *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774 to Present*.⁶ This resource allowed us to obtain relevant background information on candidates who defeated congressional incumbents as well as candidates who served prior to, or after, the election in question. We supplemented this data with information found on "The Political Graveyard's" website,⁷ which often provides extensive background information on politicians from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (in addition to where they are buried). Background information for a few candidates was also collected from the New York Times Historical Index and *Google*.⁸

⁶ The congressional biographical directory can be accessed at <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>.

⁷ The Political Graveyard web site can be accessed at <http://www.politicalgraveyard.com>.

⁸ Utilizing each of these sources, we managed to collect background information on approximately 73 percent of the candidates seeking office in the 1800-1820 congressional elections. Following the lead of Jacobson (1989), we code

Data on candidate quality by political party and election cycle is presented in Table 1. For the Federalist Party, the prevalent trend is a decline in experienced candidates over time with the proportion of candidates with prior political experience slipping from a high of 70 percent in 1800 to a low of 28 percent by 1820. This pattern tracks closely and, indeed, may be causally linked to the decline and eventual disappearance of the Federalist Party from the American political scene. It is also interesting to note the similar slide in the number of Federalist-leaning newspapers from 1810 to 1820 (see again Figure 4), a pattern worthy of more systematic investigation. Conversely, during this same period of time, the Republicans consistently fielded higher percentages of experienced candidates, with the percentage peaking at 82 percent during the 1820 election cycle.

<Table 1 about here>

Other control variables included in our analysis include a measure of legislator ideology as reflected by Poole and Rosenthal's (1997) first dimension DW-Nominate scores. Including this measure in our regression analysis allows us to control for the ideological extremity of each legislator in the House since this could be a factor in their expected vote share in the subsequent election. We also include an indicator of incumbent seniority measured as the number of years served since the legislator was first elected to Congress.

Results

The results of our multivariate model are presented below in Table 2. Our two primary variables of interest, *Federalist Newspaper* and *Republican Newspaper*, are both statistically significant and signed in the hypothesized direction. Again, these indicators are count variables

candidates for whom we could not find any background information as non-quality in our dataset. Additionally, we have tried restricting the sample to only those candidates for which we could find background information and the substantive interpretation remains the same.

measuring the number of each type of newspaper present within the district. For each additional Federalist newspaper, the model predicts the share of the Federalist vote to increase by roughly 1 percent. Any gains in Federalist vote share from the presence of a Federalist-leaning newspaper are more than offset, however, by the establishment of paper connected to the Republican cause which the model predicts will diminish the Federalist vote share by approximately 1.1 percent. Although modest in scope, one should remember that most elections during this era were highly competitive, which means such effects would be more pronounced in hotly contested races. Additionally, our model of election outcomes does lend support to the proposition that voters appear to be responding to cues in the form of partisan information conveyed by newspapers of the day.

<Table 2 about here>

Other results from Table 2 indicate that the presence of a quality Republican candidate in a race has a decisive and negative impact on the vote share of the Federalist candidate. The magnitude of this effect, at -3.3 percent, is over three times the size of that found for *Republican Paper*. This finding is both informative and counter-intuitive in terms of the manner in which political scientists have typically viewed elections from this era. Jacobson (1989), for instance, argues that candidate quality should be of little consequence during the nineteenth century when party organizations were primarily in control of candidate selection mechanisms. Nevertheless, such a finding is consistent with previous work by Carson and Engstrom (2005) regarding this era as they also found that candidate quality was an important predictor of election outcomes in the early nineteenth century.

While legislator seniority does not exert a statistically significant effect on our dependent variable, ideology as defined by the DW-Nominate Score (1st Dimension) is positively related to

the Federalist vote share in a district. The lagged share of the Federalist vote from the preceding election cycle was also a fairly strong predictor of the vote share for the Federalist candidate in the current election. The model predicts that for every percentage point of the vote earned by the Federalist Party in the previous House election, one can expect to see half a percentage point return in the current election cycle. Finally, it should be noted that this parsimonious six variable model explains almost 50% of the variance in the Federalist share of the two-party vote, which is encouraging given the data constraints associated with studying historical political eras.

Discussion

We began our discussion at the outset of the paper by focusing on the difficulties that are inherent in studying the effects of media bias in contemporary politics. While many Americans believe media outlets are biased in one direction or another, it is difficult to find objective and verifiable evidence of bias using conventional measures. By turning to the past, we have sought to gain leverage on this important question by focusing on a political era where the only major source of political news for citizens came in the form of partisan newspapers. Without multiple, competing sources for news coverage, we can be reasonably confident that voters during this era were responding primarily to the only cue that was available to them. In particular, we examined whether the geographic location of partisan newspapers within congressional districts during the early decades of the 1800s influenced elections to the U.S. House of Representatives.

At first glance, the effects of partisan newspapers on election outcomes during this era appear relatively modest. For each newspaper within a district, candidate vote share was either helped or hindered by only about one percent. While this effect may seem small by modern standards, one needs to consider how competitive and hotly contested congressional elections

from this period actually were. More than half of the congressional races during the 1800-1820 era were decided by five percentage points or less, which meant legislators had far less margin of error in terms of their electoral fortunes than their modern counterparts. Furthermore, districts with multiple partisan newspapers made it increasingly difficult for opposing party candidates to win elections since they would presumably have a harder time getting their message out to the eligible voters.

Another interesting finding from the above results is the effect of candidate quality on election outcomes during the early 1800s. In contrast to what conventional wisdom might lead us to expect, we found that the presence of an experienced challenger had a substantial, negative effect on candidate vote margins. Indeed, the effect of challenger quality was more than three times as great as that of the presence of a partisan newspaper. While other studies have begun to uncover evidence of candidate quality effects in the latter part of the nineteenth century (see, e.g., Carson and Roberts 2005), to our knowledge, this is the earliest such example of candidate effects in the context of American congressional elections.

Based on our findings, what are the implications for studying the effects of media bias in the modern era? To a considerable extent, the results are not encouraging. Given that the effects we identified were relatively modest even during an overtly partisan era of politics, it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine finding such effects in the contemporary era. Even if one could replicate our research design using modern House elections data, incumbents today are much safer than they were in the past, which would make it virtually impossible to uncover similar effects today. Moreover, with multiple sources of news available to American citizens in the modern era, it would be difficult to find systematic evidence that a single source of news was somehow trumping the remaining media outlets. Indeed, it is actually the pluralistic nature of

modern news coverage that most likely helps to mitigate the effects of any bias that may exist in the modern media age.

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Table 1 – Proportion of Quality Candidates Running by Party and Election Year

Election Year	% of Federalist Quality Candidates	Total	% of Republican Quality Candidates	Total
1800	70.2	80	66.7	76
1802	51.8	58	74.1	83
1804	51.0	75	76.9	113
1806	37.2	55	79.7	118
1808	38.5	57	80.4	119
1810	50.6	78	73.4	113
1812	39.7	58	69.2	101
1814	40.9	81	68.7	136
1816	46.2	90	67.7	132
1818	37.9	74	72.3	141
1820	28.1	56	81.9	163

Source: Data collected by authors.

Table 2 – Congressional Election Results, 1800-1820

Independent Variables	Coefficients
Federalist Vote Share _(t-1)	.502* (.030)
Candidate Quality (Republican)	-3.397* (1.447)
Federalist Paper in District	.935* (.301)
Republican Paper in District	-1.049* (.477)
Seniority	-.139 (.279)
First Dimension DW-Nominate	14.863* (1.957)
Constant	17.638* (1.859)
<i>N</i>	1,409
<i>R</i> ²	.47

Notes: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the Federalist vote share in the current election (t).
* p < .05

Figure 1. Newspaper Distribution by State and Type, 1800

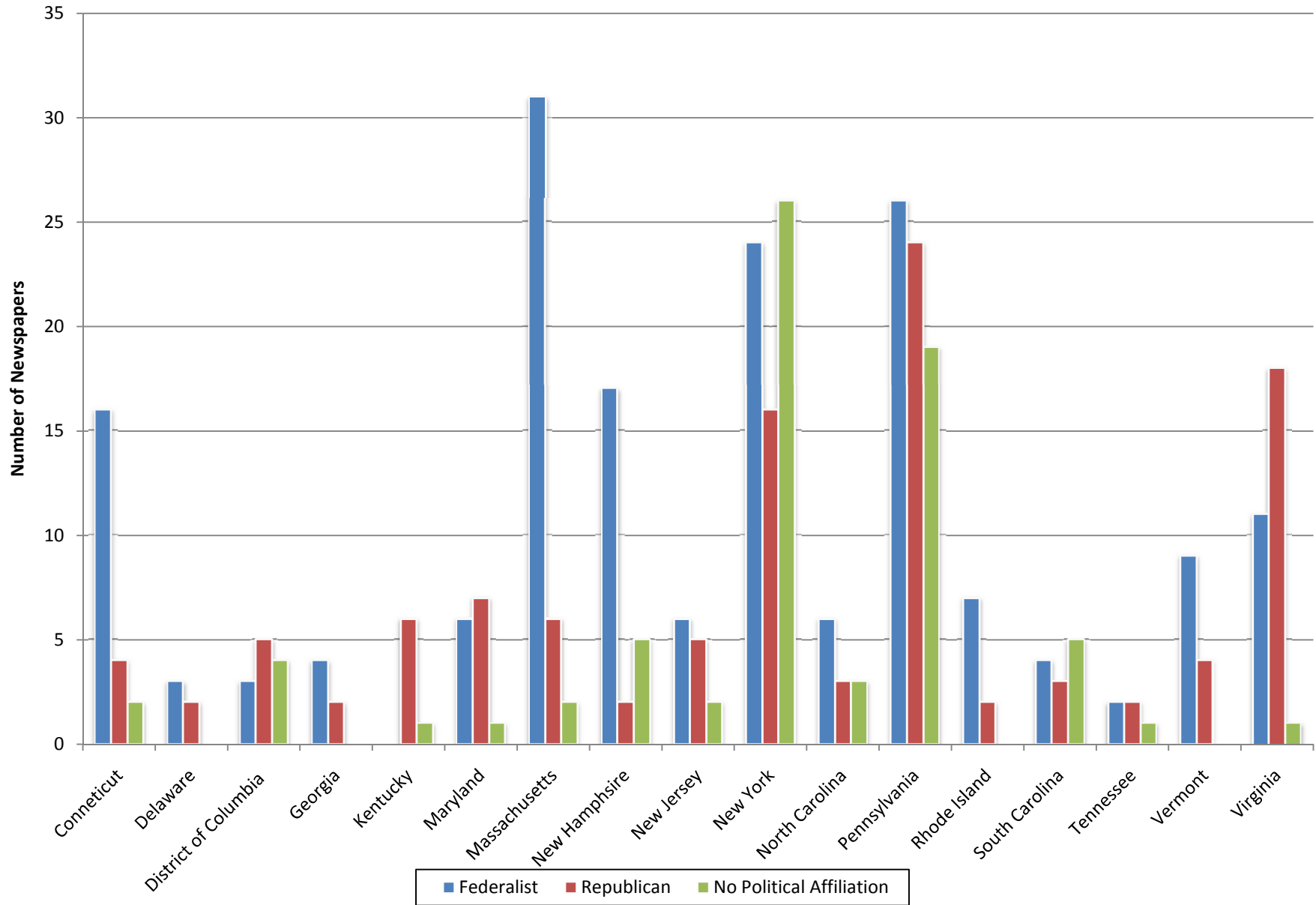


Figure 2. Newspaper Distribution by State and Type, 1810

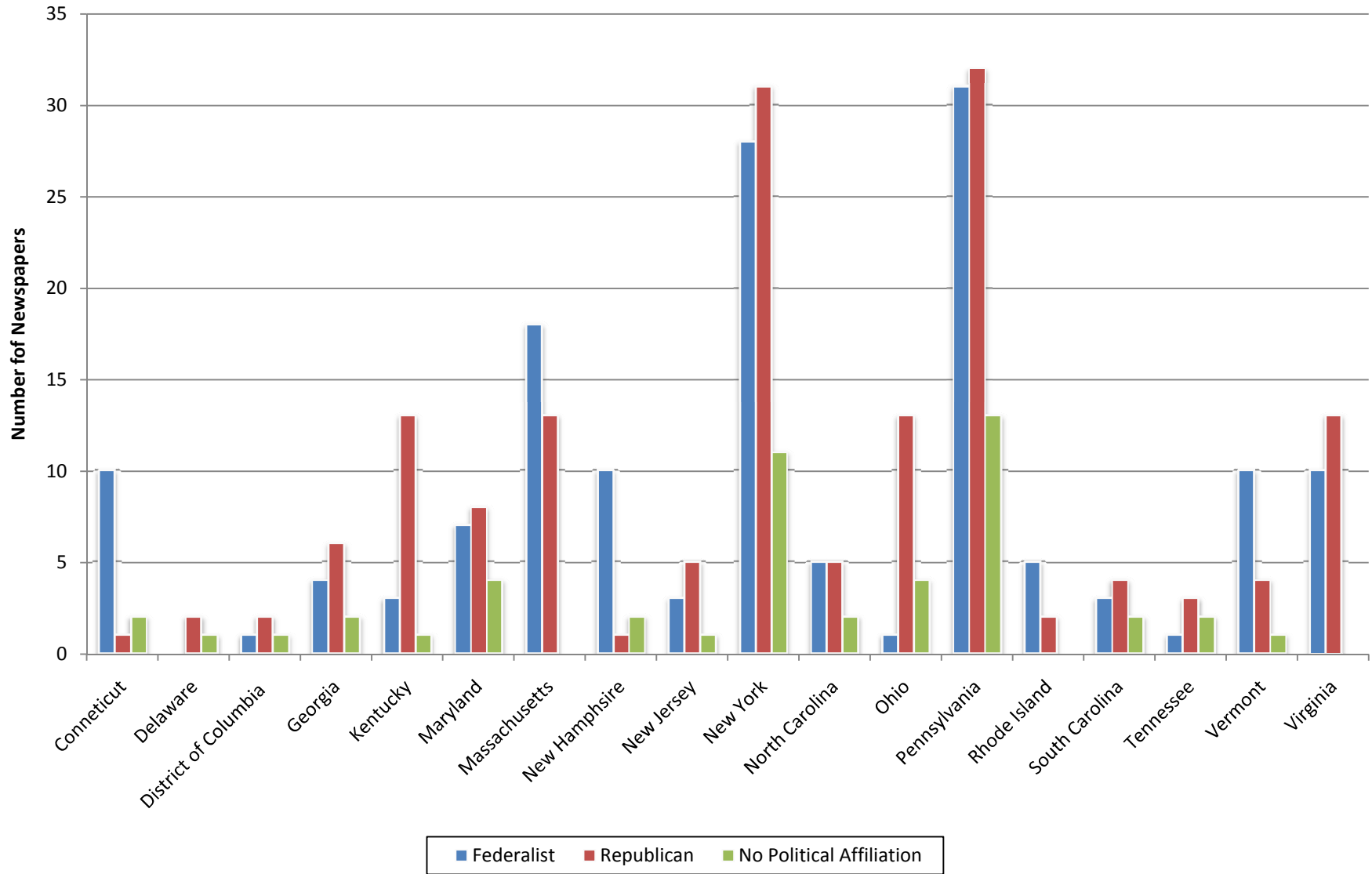


Figure 3. Newspaper Distribution by State, 1820

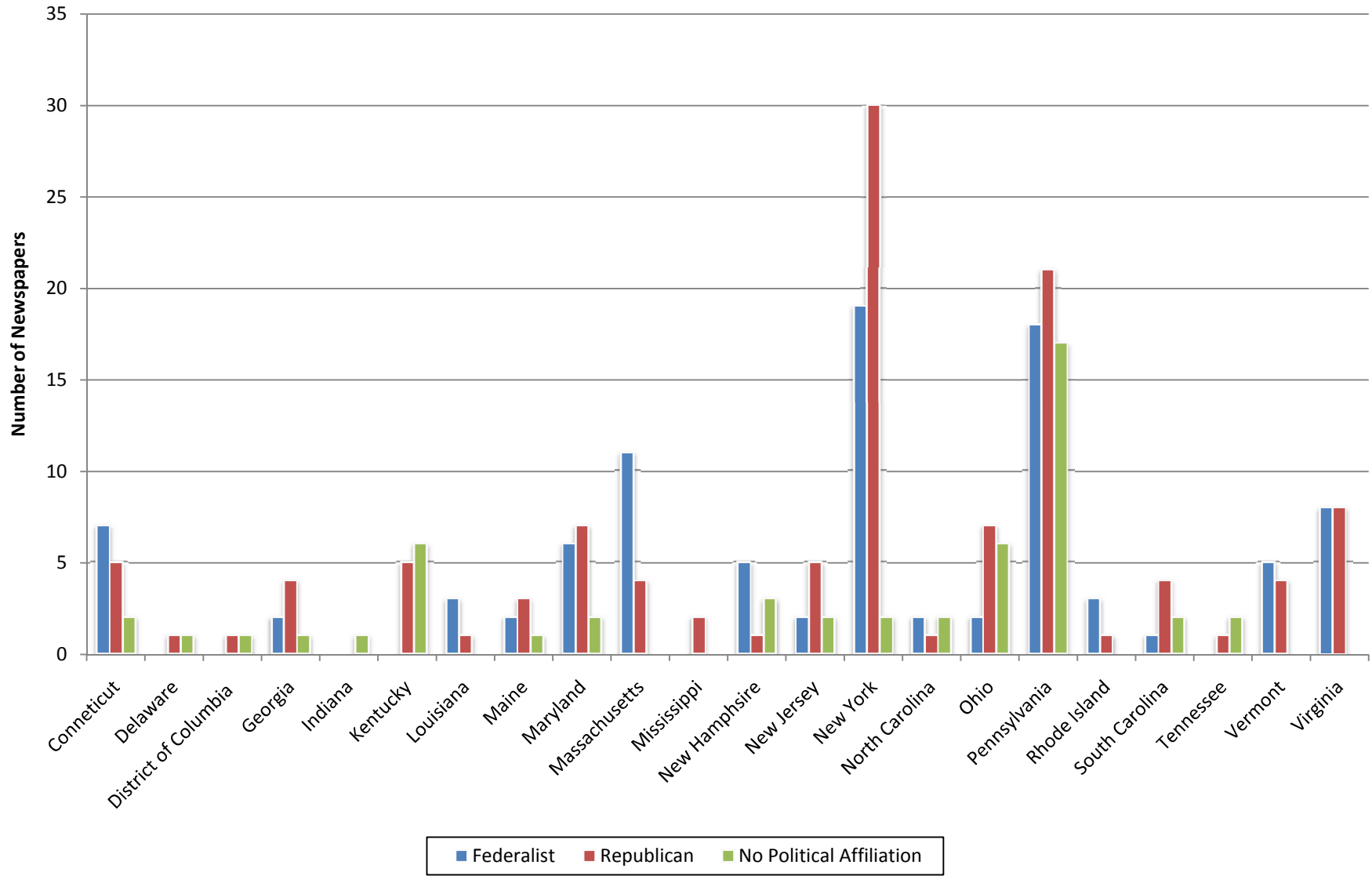


Figure 4. U.S. Newspapers by Type, 1800-1820

