DO NEWSPAPERS SERVE THE STATE?
INCUMBENT PARTY INFLUENCE ON THE US PRESS, 1869-1928

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Abstract
Using data from 1869 to 1928, we estimate the effect of party control of state governments on the entry, exit, circulation, prices, number of pages, and content of Republican and Democratic daily newspapers. We exploit changes over time in party control of the governorship and state legislatures in a differences-in-differences design. We exploit close gubernatorial elections and state legislatures with small majorities in a parallel regression-discontinuity design. Neither method reveals evidence that the party in power affects the partisan composition of the press. Our confidence intervals rule out modest effects, and we find little evidence of incumbent party influence even in times and places with high political stakes or low commercial stakes. The one exception is the Reconstruction South, an episode that we discuss in detail. (JEL: D72, L82, N41)