Local News, Partisanship, and Perceptions about Election Administration

Supplementary Information

Contents

Appendix A Choropleth Maps

A.1 Newspaper Circulation, 2016–2020

In this section, we present the newspaper circulation per capita for the sample of countries based on the SPAE. In the main text, we presented bivariate maps that included these data. Here, they are presented as the sole variable mapped. Figure 1 maps the per capita newspaper circulation for 2016, and figure 2 maps the values for 2020. Although we have data on the universe of newspaper circulation, the maps reflect the coverage of counties where SPAE surveys were administered.

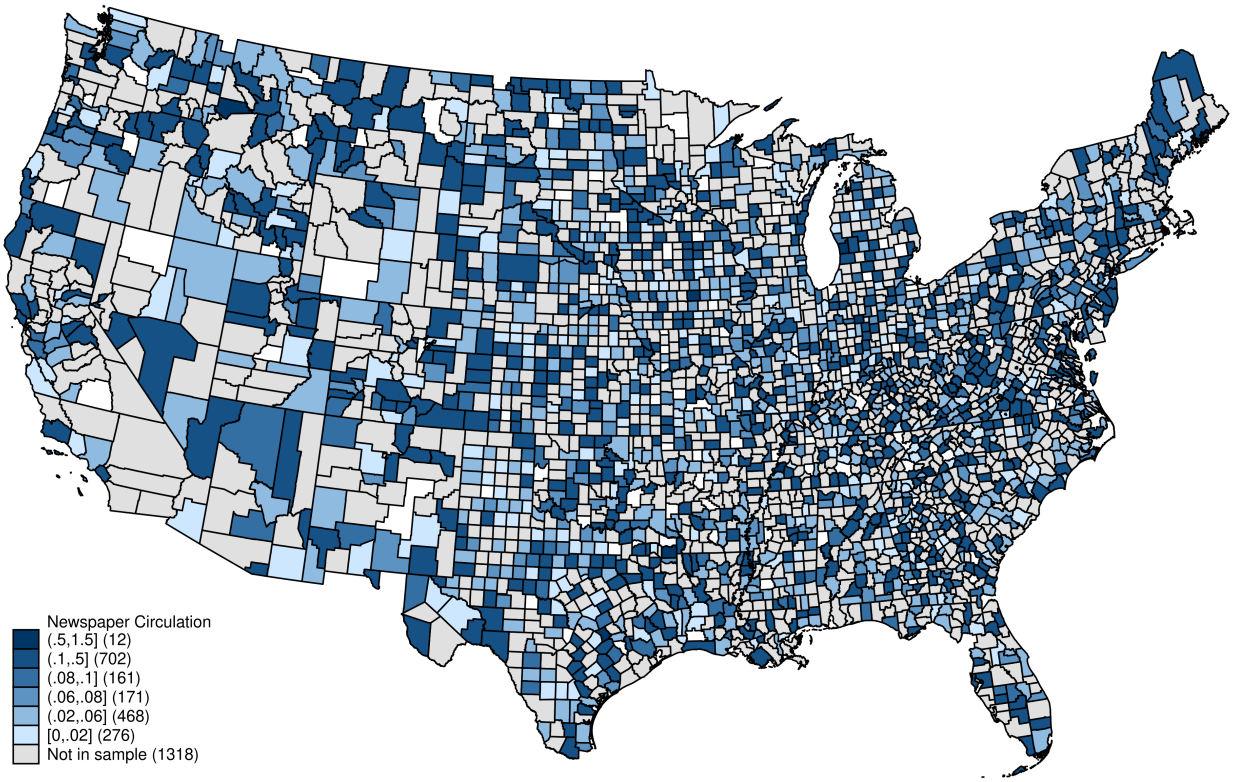

Figure 1: Newspaper Circulation, 2016
Note: The map shows the per capita newspaper circulation at the county level. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.
Source: Editor & Publisher.

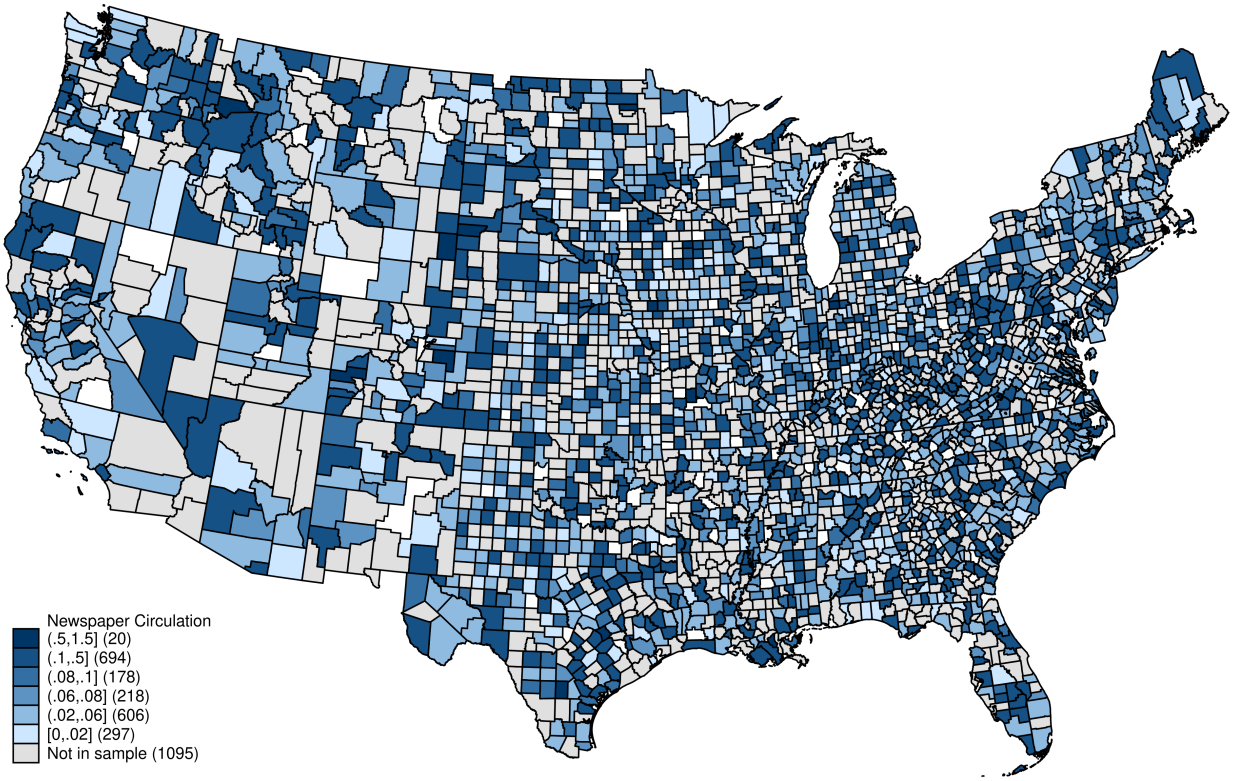

Figure 2: Newspaper Circulation, 2020

Note: The map shows the per capita newspaper circulation at the county level. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.

Source: Editor & Publisher.

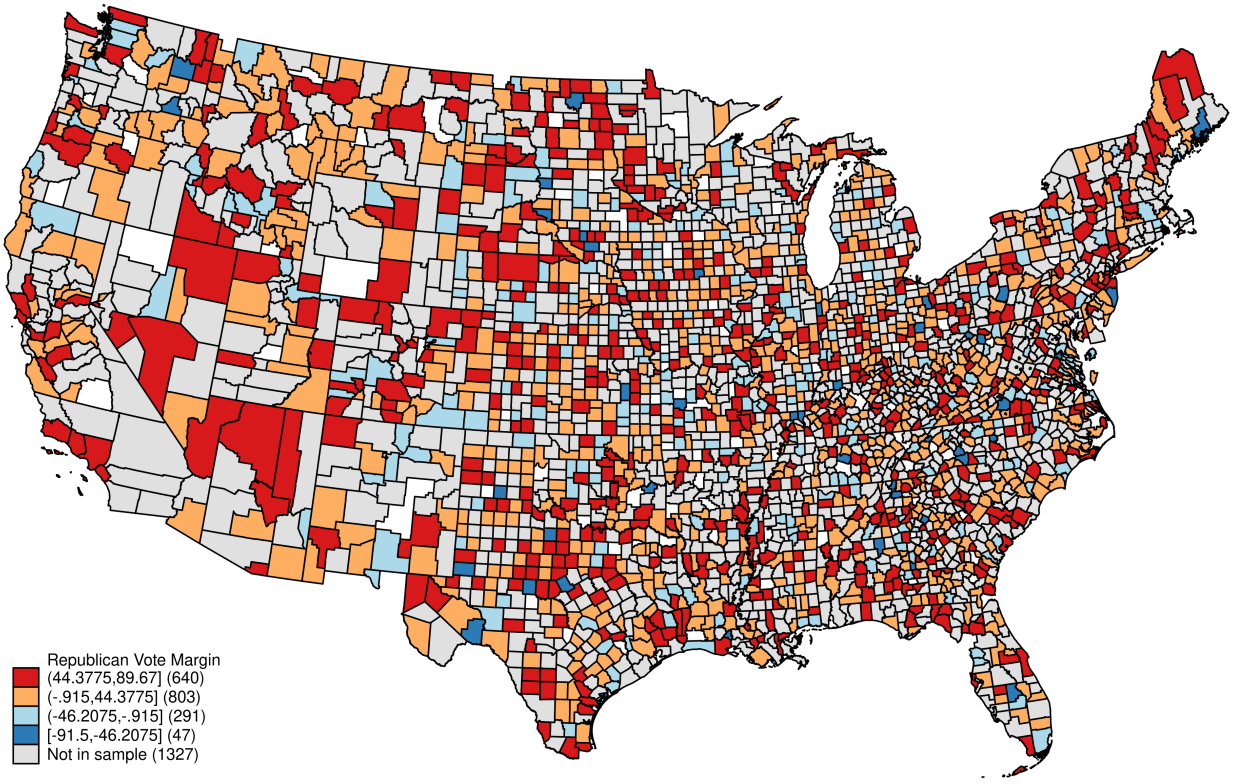

Figure 3: Republican Party Vote Margin, 2016
Note: The map shows the Republican Party vote margin (the difference between the Republican and Democrat Party shares of the two-party vote) at the county level. Shades of red denote counties where Republican vote share is higher than Democrat Party vote share and shades of blue denote counties where Democrat Party vote share is greater than Republican Party vote share. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.
Source: https://github.com/tonmcg/US_County_Level_Election_Results_08-20.

A.2 Republican Party Vote Margin, 2016–2020

In this section, we present the Republican Party vote margin for the sample of counties based on the SPAE. In the main text, we presented bivariate maps that included these data. Here, they are presented as the sole variable mapped. Figure 3 maps the Republican Party vote margin for 2016, and figure 4 maps the values for 2020.

A.3 Polling Place Evaluation, 2016–2020

In this section, we present polling place evaluation for the sample of counties based on the SPAE. In the main text, we presented bivariate maps that included these data. Here, they are presented as the sole

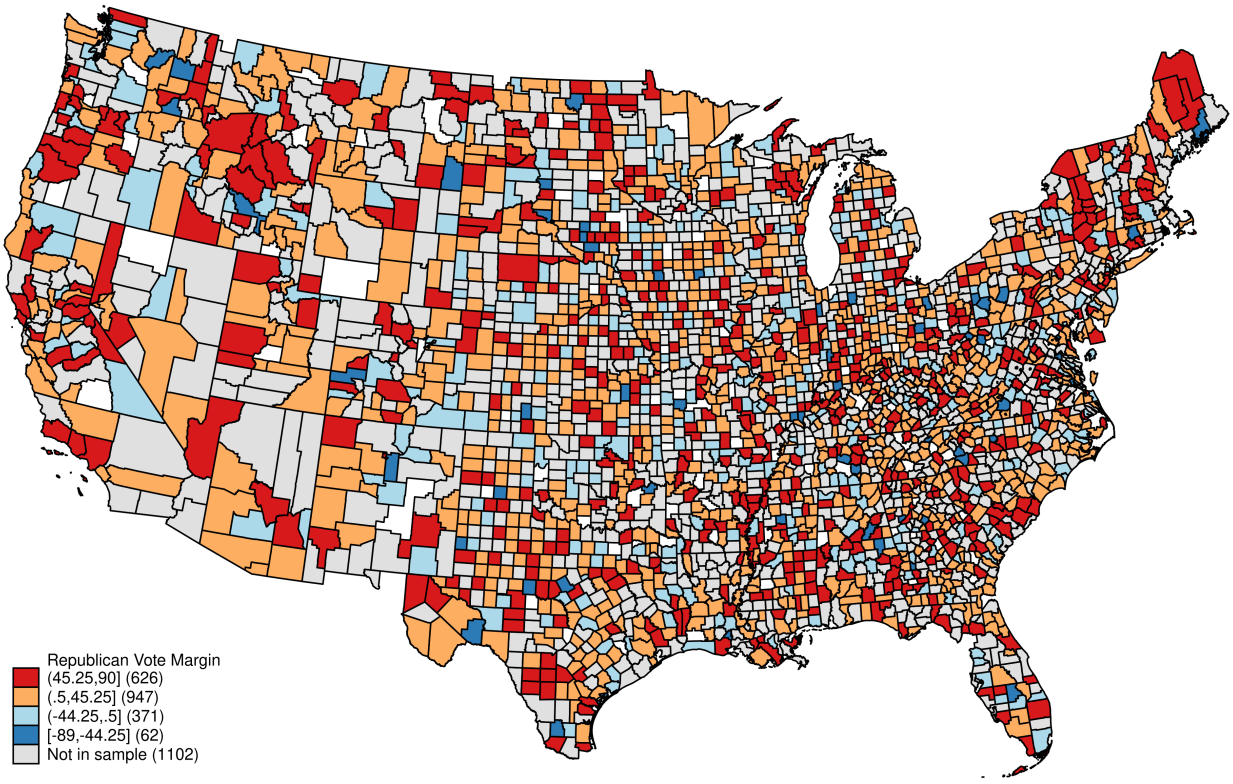

Figure 4: Republican Party Vote Margin, 2020

Note: The map shows the Republican Party vote margin (the difference between the Republican and Democrat Party shares of the two-party vote) at the county level. Shades of red denote counties where Republican vote share is higher than Democrat Party vote share and shades of blue denote counties where Democrat Party vote share is greater than Republican Party vote share. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.

Source: https://github.com/tonmcg/US_County_Level_Election_Results_08-20.

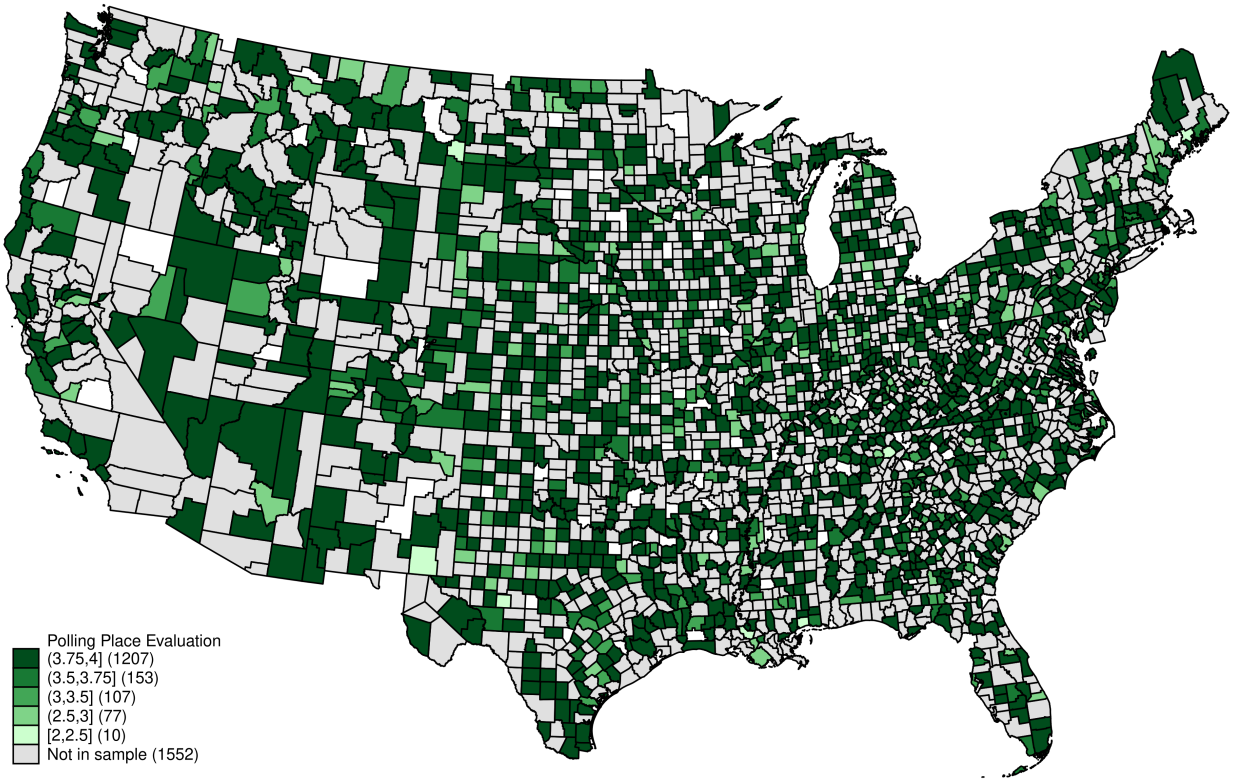

Figure 5: Polling Place Evaluation, 2016
Note: The map shows polling place evaluation at the county level. The range of evaluation is from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest level of positive evaluation. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.
Source: Survey of the Performance of American Elections.

variable mapped. Figure 5 maps the average polling place evaluation for 2016, and figure 6 maps the values for 2020. The maps reflect the coverage of counties where SPAE surveys were administered.

A.4 County Election Administration (CEA) Index, 2016–2020

In this section, we present county election administration index for the sample of counties based on the SPAE. In the main text, we presented bivariate maps that included these data for the counties that are available in the SPAE sample. Here, the index is presented as the sole variable mapped. Figure 7 maps the CEA values for 2016, and figure 8 maps the values for 2020. The maps reflect the coverage of counties where SPAE surveys were administered.

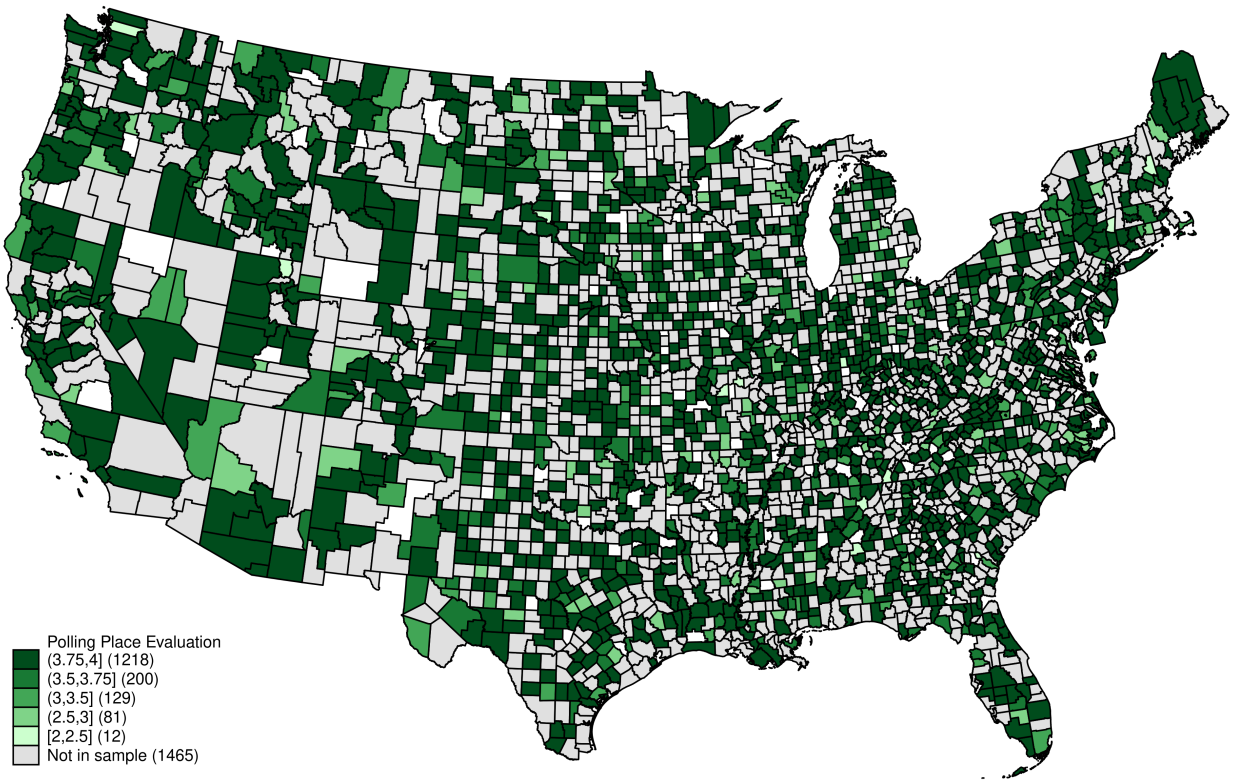

Figure 6: Polling Place Evaluation, 2020

Note: The map shows polling place evaluation at the county level. The range of evaluation is from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest level of positive evaluation. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.

Source: Survey of the Performance of American Elections.

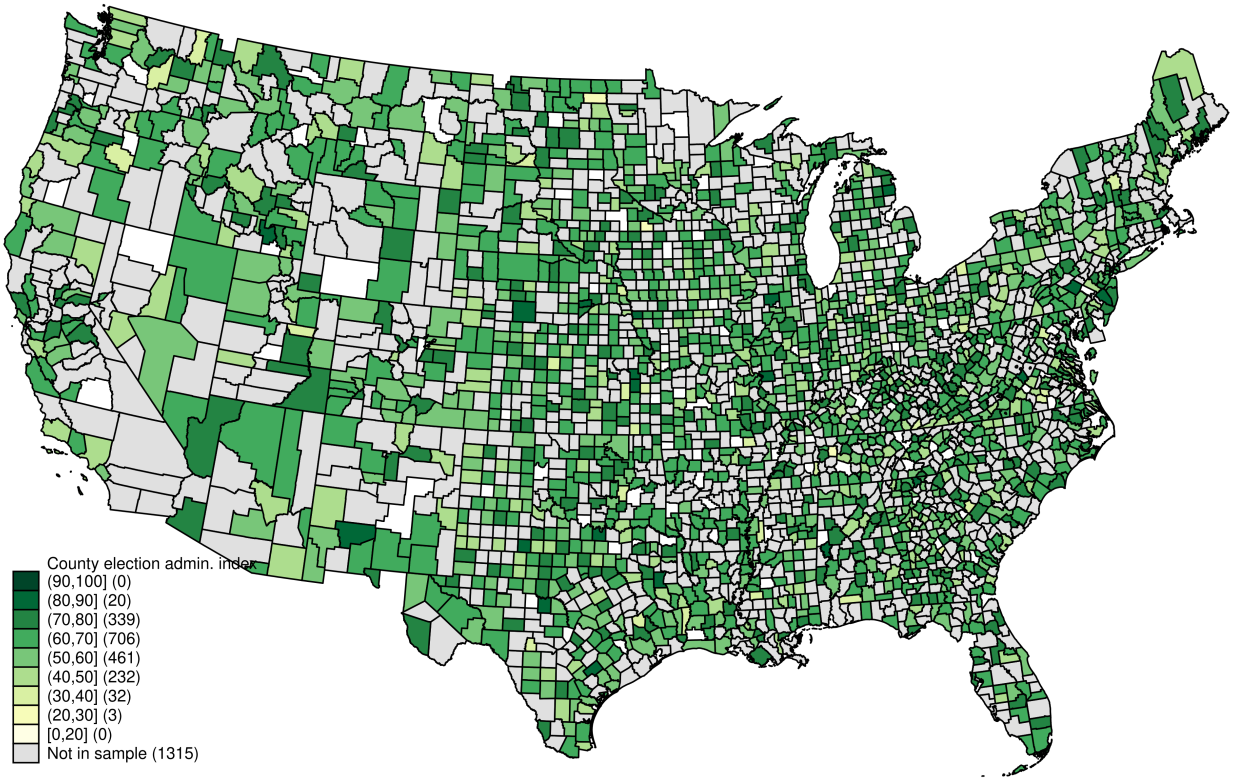

Figure 7: County Election Administration Index, 2016

Note: The map shows CEA index at the county level. The index ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values denoting higher election administration quality. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.

Source: Ritter and Tolbert (2024).

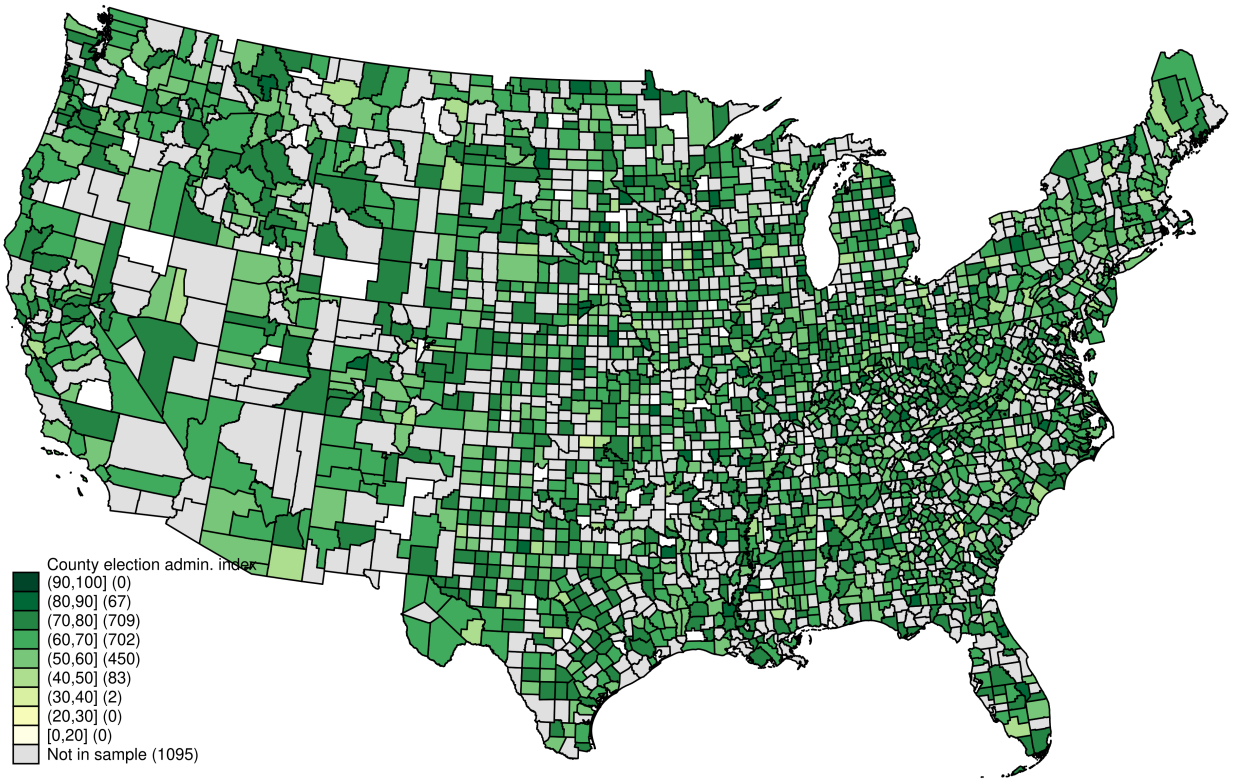

Figure 8: County Election Administration Index, 2020
Note: The map shows CEA index at the county level. The index ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values denoting higher election administration quality. The sample is based on SPAE. The map is drawn with Albers projection.
Source: Ritter and Tolbert (2024).

A.5 County Level Administration (CEA) Index and Polling Place Evaluation, 2016–2020

In this section, we present a bivariate map that shows the co-occurrence of county election index and polling place evaluation for the sample of counties based on the SPAE. Figure 9 maps the values for 2016 and 2020.

A.6 Elections Performance Index (EPI), 2016–2020

As a supplement, in this section we present visualization of EPI for all states for the period 2008–2020. Figure 10 maps the EPI for 2016, and figure 11 maps the values for 2020.

Appendix B Robustness Check with Original Coding of the Dependent Variable

Due to the distribution of the values of the dependent variable, we employ a dummy version. While the distribution of the values justifies this choice, the reader might want to see the results without collapsing the categories into binary ones. In this section, we present the most fundamental robustness check by using the original coding of the dependent variable as a four-item ordered category. We estimate the models through ordered logit. If our results in the paper are not a result of our coding of the dependent variable, we should observe largely similar results in these models.

Table 1 lists the estimation results. The results are virtually identical with the main models in the paper. This suggests that the results we reported in the paper are not due to our choice of dependent variable coding.

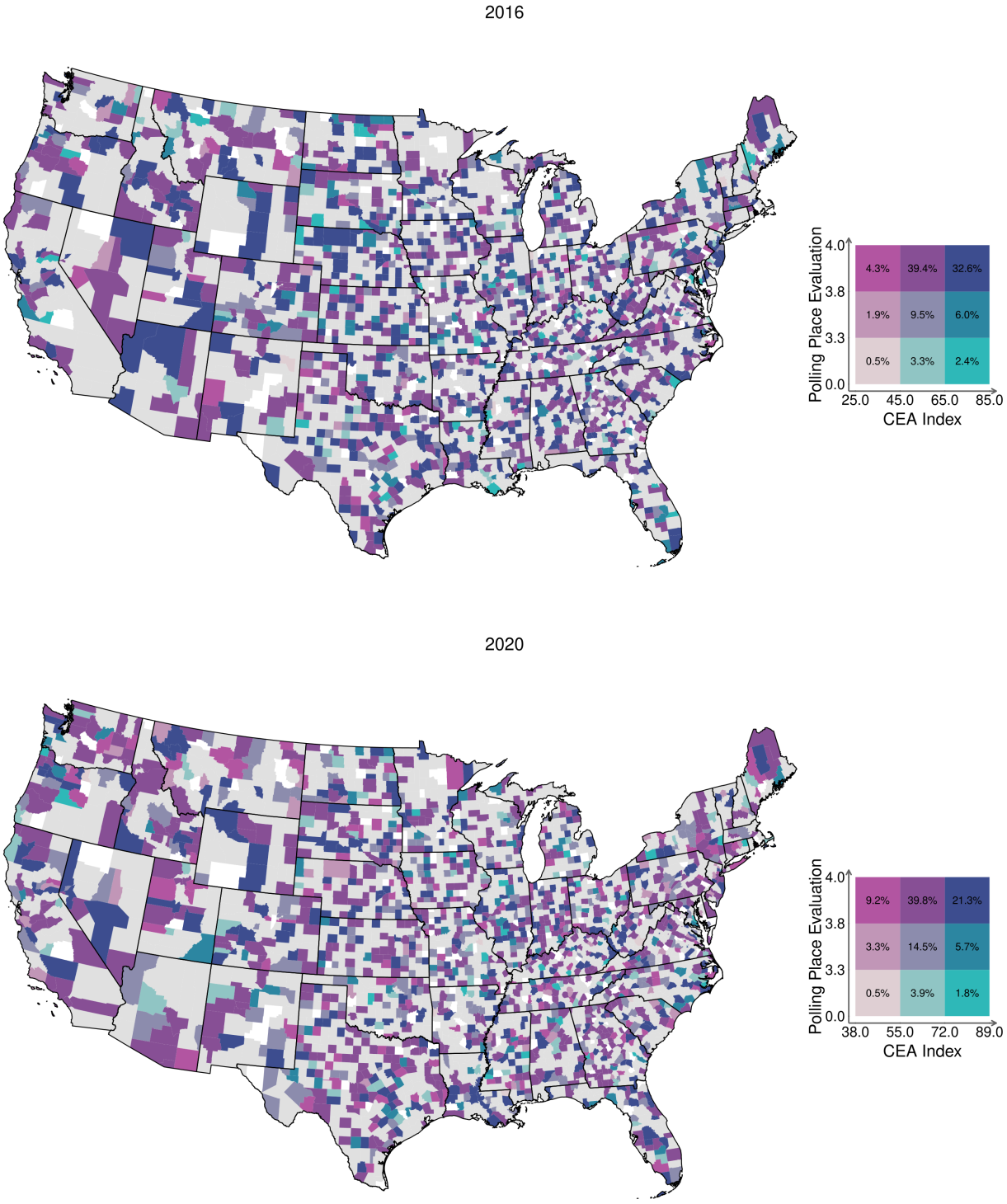

Figure 9: County Election Administration Index and Polling Place Evaluation, 2016 – 2020
Note: The bivariate maps show the co-occurrence of County Election Administration index and newspaper circulation per capita at the county level for presidential elections of 2016 and 2020. The maps are drawn with Albers projection.
Source: Ritter and Tolbert (2024) for CEA index, and Editor & Publisher for newspaper circulation.

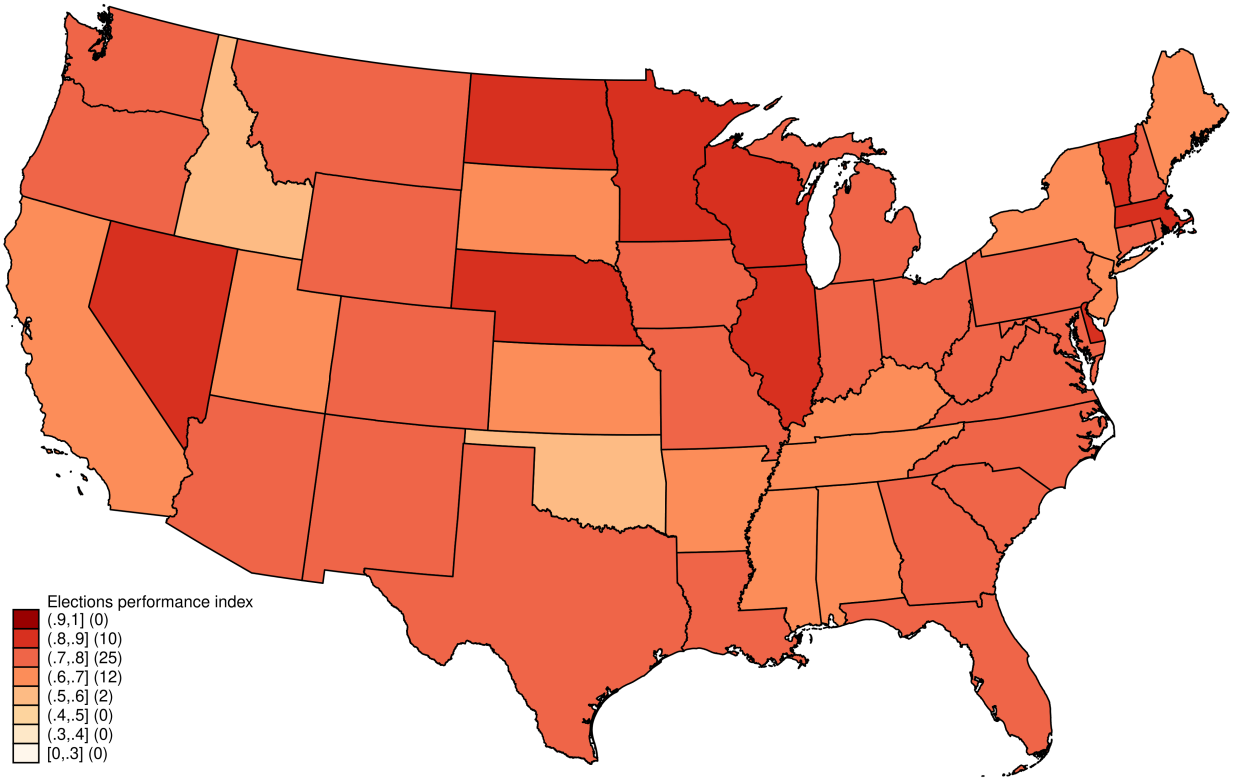

Figure 10: Elections Performance Index, 2016
Note: The map shows EPI at the state level. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values denoting better electoral performance at the state level. The map is drawn with Albers projection.
Source: MIT.

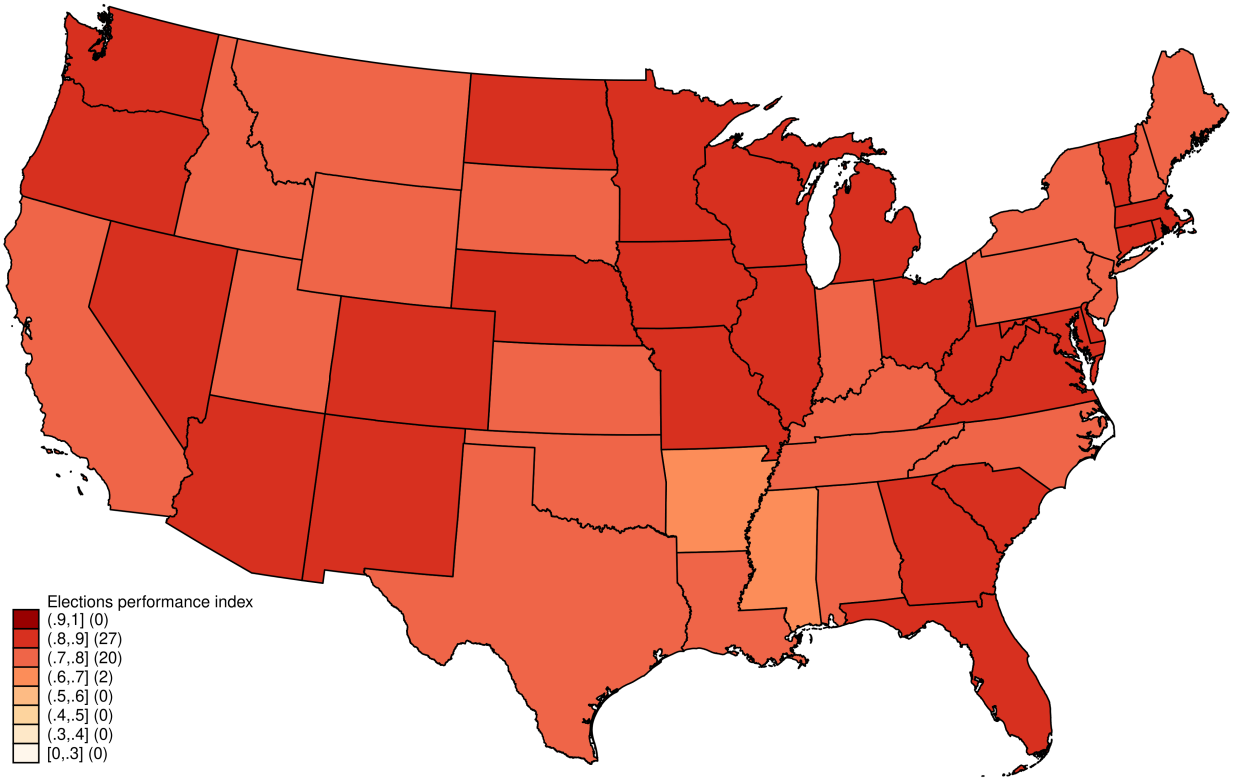

Figure 11: Elections Performance Index, 2020
Note: The map shows EPI at the state level. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values denoting better electoral performance at the state level. The map is drawn with Albers projection.
Source: MIT.

Table 1: Polling Place Evaluation, 2016–2020

	I	II	III	IV
Newspaper circ	-.355***	-1.12***		
	(.128)	(.328)		
CEA index	.02***	.018***	.027***	.015*
	(.005)	(.005)	(.007)	(.008)
Newspaper circ ×		.015**		
CEA index		(.007)		
Democrat	.314***	.314***	.545***	.244**
	(.07)	(.07)	(.127)	(.103)
Republican	.063	.063	.146	-.033
	(.062)	(.062)	(.108)	(.088)
GOP vote margin	-.0007	-.0006	.001	.002
	(.002)	(.002)	(.004)	(.003)
Democrat ×	-.003*	-.003*	-.004	-.004
GOP vote margin	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)	(.003)
Republican ×	.006***	.006***	.005**	.004*
GOP vote margin	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.002)
Age	.021***	.021***	.023***	.0226***
	(.001)	(.0016)	(.002)	(.002)
Female	.036	.035	.023	-.017
	(.055)	(.055)	(.095)	(.079)
Education	-.016	-.016	-.006	.0007
	(.018)	(.018)	(.031)	(.025)
Non-white	-.063	-.061	-.29**	.037
	(.069)	(.069)	(.133)	(.083)
Interest in news and	-.014	-.013	-.057	.011
public affairs	(.036)	(.036)	(.062)	(.053)
Percent minority	-.328	-.34	-.092	-.646
	(.353)	(.353)	(.657)	(.494)
ln(Median household income)	-.135	-.111	.236	-.549*
	(.177)	(.178)	(.312)	(.305)
Suburban	-.083	-.092	-.056	-.193
	(.074)	(.074)	(.126)	(.121)
Rural	.143	.142	.247	.014
	(.108)	(.107)	(.166)	(.183)
ln(Precinct population)	.083	.076	-.118	.13
	(.064)	(.064)	(.16)	(.097)
State fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 | 2	-4.37**	-4.23**	-.193	-9.49***
	(1.99)	(2)	(3.5)	(3.36)
2 | 3	-2.92	-2.78	1.38	-8.12**
	(2)	(2)	(3.52)	(3.36)
3 | 4	-.739	-.593	3.56	-5.91*
	(1.99)	(2)	(3.51)	(3.36)
N	15042	15042	5884	7083
AIC	15680	15678	5914	7611

Note: Ordered Logistic regression where a 4-category ordinal polling place evaluation is the dependent variable. County-clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses.
* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Appendix C Robustness Check with Alternative Specifications

The second robustness check centers on the partisanship variable. In the paper, we collapse the 7-point party identification variable into a three-category variable. In this section, first we relax this coding and run a model with a 5-point partisan identification variable (strong Democrat to strong Republican). Further, we substitute 5-point ideology variable (liberal to conservative) with the partisanship variable in another model. If what we are capturing in the main models regarding the interaction of partisanship, election administration, and local media access is true, then we should be observing similar results when we use alternatives to our partisanship variable in the paper.

Table 2 lists the estimation results. The results from models I and II show that we arrive at the same conclusion when we use a continuous measure of partisanship compared to the 3-item coding in the paper. Further, we see that newspaper circulation is especially effective on strong partisans in models III and IV. The results on partisanship we report in the paper are not due to specific coding choices.

Appendix D Robustness Check with Multi-Level Model Estimation

At first sight, the nested nature of the data suggests that a multi-level model is the correct choice for estimation. Due to the limitations in the SPAE dataset we elaborate on in the paper, we utilize a linear model in the paper. However, despite the theoretical reasoning not to use multi-level model, the reader might want to see the estimation from multi-level model estimation. If (a) the results we report in the paper and (b) the reasoning behind our use of linear model are sound, then we should observe similar results when we use multi-level approach. Therefore, in this section, we present the results from multi-level models.

Table 2: Polling Place Evaluation, 2016–2020

	I	II	III	IV
Newspaper circ	-.393**	-1.5***		
	(.167)	(.349)		
CEA index	.0208***	.017***	.027***	.016**
	(.005)	(.005)	(.007)	(.008)
Newspaper circ ×		.021***		
CEA index		(.007)		
5-point party ID	-.058**			
	(.023)			
GOP vote margin	-.009***	-.013***	.0007	.002
	(.002)	(.003)	(.003)	(.002)
5-point party ID ×	.003***			
GOP vote margin	(.0006)			
Ideology		-.027		
		(.024)		
Ideology ×		.004***		
GOP vote margin		(.0007)		
Strong Democrat			.57***	.189
			(.133)	(.115)
Not very strong Democrat			.418**	.359**
			(.191)	(.148)
Not very strong Republican			.096	-.204
			(.148)	(.133)
Strong Republican			.142	.047
			(.123)	(.116)
Strong Democrat ×			-.007**	-.007*
GOP vote margin			(.003)	(.004)
Not very strong Democrat ×			.0001	.0008
GOP vote margin			(.003)	(.003)
Not very strong Republican ×			.002	.003
GOP vote margin			(.003)	(.003)
Strong Republican ×			.006**	.004
GOP vote margin			(.003)	(.003)
Individual controls (from table 1)	✓	✓	✓	✓
County controls (from table 1)	✓	✓	✓	✓
State fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15042	14666	5884	7083
AIC	13222	12896	4992	6414

Note: Logistic regression estimates where a dichotomous polling place evaluation is the dependent variable, with the main category as an evaluation that polling place was "very well" run. County-clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses. Control variables are the same as in table 1 and not shown to save space.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

We specify our full model as:

$$
\begin{aligned}
Polling\ Place\ Evaluation_{ijt} =& \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}(Partisanship) + \gamma_{01}(Republican\ vote\ margin) \\
&+ \gamma_{11}(Partisanship\ x\ Republican\ vote\ margin) \\
&+ \gamma_{02}(County\ election\ administration\ index) + \gamma_{03}(Media\ access) \\
&+ \gamma_{12}(Media\ access\ x\ County\ election\ administration\ index) \\
&+ \gamma_{04}(Precinct\ population) + \gamma_{05}(Percent\ minority) \\
&+ \gamma_{06}(Median\ household\ income) + \gamma_{07}(Rural\ urban\ code) \\
&+ x_i^{'}\beta + \gamma_j + \alpha_s + \theta_t + \epsilon,
\end{aligned}
$$

where Polling Place Evaluation represents the evaluation of polling place for individual i, at county j and in a given year t. $x_i^{'}\beta$ is a vector of individual level controls with parameter estimate β, γ_j is the county-level random intercept, α_s is state fixed effects and θ_t is time fixed effects.

Table 3 lists the estimation results. The results are virtually similar to the main models in the paper and show that our results are not an artifact of our choice of estimation model.

Appendix E Extra Analysis I: Substituting EPI for CEA Index

Although it is measured at the state level, Elections Performance Index (EPI) has been used to measure the quality of election administration. It is one of the main variables in Bowler and Brunell and Donovan and Gronke (2015). The authors find that elections performance index has an effect on individual level perceptions of electoral fairness. In an update to this work, Bowler and Donovan (2024) find that state level election administration quality is no longer significant for the 2020 election. However, as EPI is available for a longer period of time, we estimate our models with EPI instead of County Election Administration Index (Ritter and Tolbert, 2024) as an extra analysis for the interested reader.

Table 4 lists the estimation results.

Table 3: Polling Place Evaluation, 2016–2020

	I	II	III	IV
Newspaper circ	-.454**	-1.63***		
	(.189)	(.384)		
CEA index	.021***	.018***	.027***	.015*
	(.005)	(.005)	(.007)	(.008)
Newspaper circ ×		.023***		
CEA index		(.008)		
Democrat	.321***	.322***	.523***	.25**
	(.071)	(.07)	(.128)	(.105)
Republican	.054	.053	.131	-.038
	(.063)	(.063)	(.11)	(.089)
GOP vote margin	-.0007	-.0005	.001	.001
	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)	(.002)
Democrat ×	-.003*	-.004*	-.004	-.004
GOP vote margin	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)	(.003)
Republican ×	.005***	.006***	.005*	.004
GOP vote margin	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.002)
Individual controls				
Age	.022***	.0223***	.023***	.022***
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.002)
Female	.037	.036	.014	-.023
	(.056)	(.056)	(.098)	(.0786
Education	-.019	-.019	-.012	-.001
	(.018)	(.018)	(.031)	(.025)
Non-white	-.064	-.063	-.27**	.029
	(.068)	(.068)	(.129)	(.085)
Interest in news and	-.016	-.015	-.058	.013
public affairs	(.036)	(.036)	(.06)	(.052)
County controls				
Percent minority	-.421	-.432	-.189	-.713
	(.358)	(.357)	(.571)	(.531)
ln(Median household income)	-.121	-.096	.133	-.466
	(.19)	(.189)	(.29)	(.327)
Suburban	-.074	-.088	-.091	-.165
	(.08)	(.079)	(.126)	(.134)
Rural	.182	.175	.205	.077
	(.114)	(.113)	(.166)	(.205)
ln(Precinct population)	.078	.069	-.085	.123
	(.069)	(.068)	(.158)	(.094)
State fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15042	15042	5884	7066
AIC	13189	13186	4987	6407

Note: Multi-level logistic regression estimates where a dichotomous polling place evaluation is the dependent variable, with the main category as an evaluation that polling place was "very well" run. County-clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses.
$^{*}\ p < 0.1, ^{**}\ p < 0.05, ^{***}\ p < 0.01$

Table 4: Polling Place Evaluation, 2008–2020

	I	II	III	IV
Newspaper circ	-.338*	-3.72***		
	(.184)	(.762)		
EPI	1.59*	.301	1.04	2.08
	(.966)	(.814)	(1.32)	(1.44)
Newspaper circ × EPI		4.74***		
		(1.01)		
Democrat	.201***	.202***	.399***	.132
	(.056)	(.056)	(.103)	(.08)
Republican	.122**	.122**	.132	.116
	(.056)	(.056)	(.089)	(.076)
GOP vote margin	-.0005	-.0002	.002	-.001
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.002)
Democrat ×	-.004***	-.004***	-.006**	-.004**
GOP vote margin	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.002)
Republican ×	.004***	.004***	.004*	.003
GOP vote margin	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.002)
Age	.021***	.022***	.022***	.022***
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.001)
Female	.056	.0564	-.005	.036
	(.045)	(.045)	(.078)	(.063)
Education	-.041***	-.041***	-.021	-.029
	(.015)	(.015)	(.026)	(.02)
Non-white	.004	.009	-.213*	.133*
	(.058)	(.058)	(.112)	(.074)
Interest in news and	.015	.016	-.026	.045
public affairs	(.029)	(.029)	(.049)	(.042)
Percent minority	-.841***	-.798***	-.525	-1.39***
	(.261)	(.26)	(.427)	(.392)
ln(Median household income)	.011	.036	.324	-.318
	(.151)	(.148)	(.214)	(.264)
Suburban	-.036	-.037	.015	-.033
	(.062)	(.062)	(.107)	(.102)
Rural	.208**	.213**	.296**	.182
	(.089)	(.088)	(.135)	(.148)
ln(Precinct population)	.058	.053	-.069	.059
	(.063)	(.064)	(.125)	(.082)
State fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	22012	22012	8098	11107
AIC	19884	19864	6906	10372

Note: Logistic regression estimates where a dichotomous polling place evaluation is the dependent variable, with the main category as an evaluation that polling place was "very well" run. County-clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses.
$^{*}\ p < 0.1, ^{**}\ p < 0.05, ^{***}\ p < 0.01$

Appendix F Extra Analysis II: Using "Voting Experiences Index" as Dependent Variable

There are five individual level variables in the SPAE dataset that track respondents' experience with components of election administration at the polling place. These are all components of the wider Elections Performance Index. However, as these are individual level variables, it makes theoretical sense to use them as a separate dependent variable. The individual-level evaluation variables are as follows: Difficulty in finding polling place which is coded with higher values denoting ease of finding the place; problem with voter registration which is coded with higher values denoting absence of registration problems; line length which is coded with higher values denoting shorter waiting times; voting equipment problems which is coded with higher values denoting absence of problems; and finally poll worker performance which is coded with higher values denoting satisfaction with the poll worker. We rescale each of these individual evaluation variables to range from 0 to 1 and create an additive index variable with a range of values between 0 and 5, with 5 depicting total voter satisfaction based on their experience with the components laid out above.

Table 5 lists the estimation results from models where the "voting experiences index" is the dependent variable.

Appendix G Change in the Dependent Variable

In this section, we provide a .dot plot of the dependent variable as it is utilized in the main analysis. In addition to the choropleth maps, this plot provides an easy visualization of the trends in voter evaluation of election administration. In order to have a longer view of the dependent variable, figure 12 shows the changes between 2008–2020. We can see that there is a variation across states on the percentage of voters expressing the highest level of satisfaction with election administration.

Table 5: Polling Place Experiences, 2016–2020

	I	II	III	IV
Newspaper circ	-.039	-.179***		
	(.032)	(.065)		
CEA index	.0101***	.009***	.011***	.009***
	(.0009)	(.0009)	(.001)	(.001)
Newspaper circ ×		.002*		
CEA index		(.001)		
Democrat	-.004	-.003	.029	.005
	(.011)	(.011)	(.019)	(.015)
Republican	.002	.002	.006	.012
	(.01)	(.01)	(.019)	(.013)
GOP vote margin	.0007	.0007	.001	.0003
	(.0004)	(.0004)	(.0009)	(.0005)
Democrat ×	-.0008**	-.0008**	-.001***	-.0007
GOP vote margin	(.0003)	(.0003)	(.0005)	(.0005)
Republican ×	.00004	.00005	-.0002	.0003
GOP vote margin	(.0002)	(.0002)	(.0005)	(.0003)
Age	.004***	.003***	.004***	.003***
	(.0003)	(.0003)	(.0004)	(.0004)
Female	.023***	.023***	.034**	.01
	(.008)	(.008)	(.013)	(.012)
Education	-.0002	-.0002	.004	-.003
	(.003)	(.003)	(.005)	(.004)
Non-white	-.049***	-.049***	-.068***	-.038**
	(.013)	(.014)	(.023)	(.017)
Interest in news and	.001	.002	-.003	.012
public affairs	(.006)	(.005)	(.009)	(.009)
Percent minority	-.048	-.049	.031	-.182**
	(.071)	(.071)	(.134)	(.085)
ln(Median household income)	-.081**	-.079**	-.034	-.131**
	(.039)	(.034)	(.057)	(.055)
Suburban	.003	.002	.021	-.006
	(.014)	(.014)	(.023)	(.022)
Rural	.061***	.061***	.069**	.051*
	(.019)	(.019)	(.027)	(.03)
ln(Precinct population)	.0002	-.0004	-.037	.033**
	(.012)	(.013)	(.03)	(.015)
State fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	14984	14984	5869	7036
R^2	0.108	0.108	0.133	0.113

Note: OLS estimates where an index of polling place experiences is the dependent variable, with increasing values denoting increasingly positive experience at the polling place. County-clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

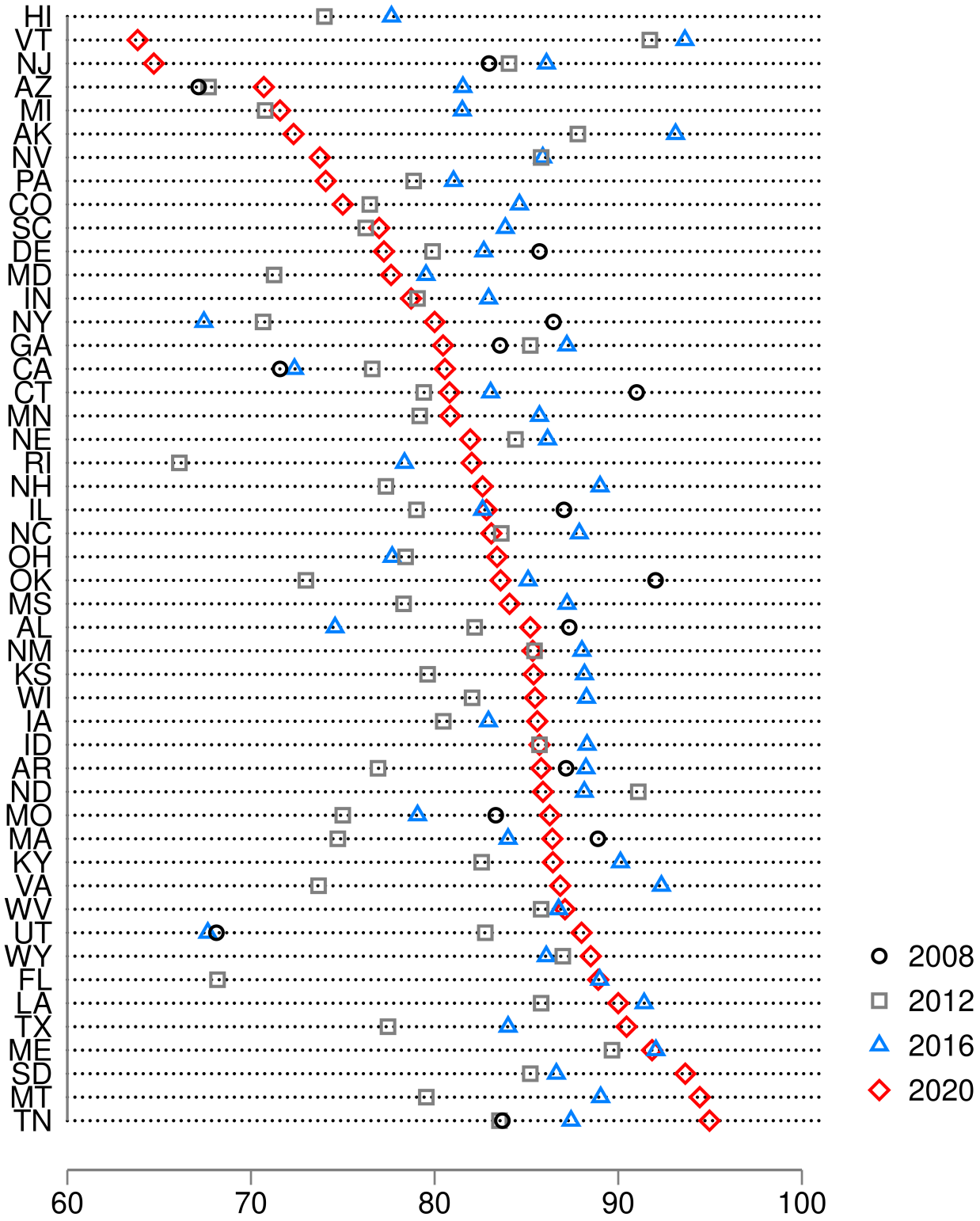

Figure 12: Polling Place Evaluation, 2008–2020

Table 6: Keywords for Content Search

Polling place
Voter fraud
Election official
Wait time
Voter suppression
Absentee ballot
In-person voting
Voting lines
Unofficial results

Appendix H Local News Coverage of Election Administration

In order to check local news coverage of election administration, we ran a keyword search on *Newsbank*. We ran the search to cover the week before and week after the presidential election in 2016 and 2020 (Nov.1–Nov.15, 2016 and Oct.27–Nov.10, 2020). After some preliminary searches, we chose 9 keywords that are closely related to election administration: polling place, voter fraud, election official, wait time, voter suppression, absentee ballot, in-person voting, voting lines, and unofficial results. We checked the validity of the search results by reading summaries of the articles. Table 6 lists the keywords selected for the context search and table 7 lists the results of the keyword search for 2016 and 2020 by state. For instance, we can see that in Florida, these keywords were mentioned in local newspapers 221 times in the two-week window around the 2016 presidential election. This search provides evidence that local media covers issues directly related to election administration.

Table 7: Local News Coverage of Election Administration, 2016-2020

State	2016 Count	2020 Count
Alabama	104	307
Arizona	158	224
Arkansas	115	343
California	440	1622
Colorado	117	269
Connecticut	281	895
Delaware	12	54
District of Columbia	24	93
Florida	221	1056
Georgia	202	835

(Continued)

Table 7 – *(Continued)*

State	2016 Count	2020 Count
Idaho	76	269
Illinois	608	1487
Indiana	193	420
Iowa	196	351
Kansas	87	288
Kentucky	117	249
Louisiana	67	246
Maine	64	147
Maryland	128	215
Massachusetts	249	706
Michigan	289	975
Minnesota	212	621
Mississippi	59	210
Missouri	237	401
Montana	59	193
Nebraska	120	287
Nevada	38	132
New Hampshire	131	160
New Jersey	163	321
New Mexico	43	115
New York	422	965
North Carolina	425	1181
North Dakota	46	62
Ohio	517	1329
Oklahoma	130	336
Oregon	187	160
Pennsylvania	700	1613
Rhode Island	54	196
South Carolina	116	573
Tennessee	79	228
Texas	237	956
Utah	104	53
Vermont	57	173
Virginia	280	764
Washington	85	523
West Virginia	61	71
Wisconsin	162	430
Wyoming	34	52

Note: The table lists the number of times keywords related to electrion administration appeared in the local news media within a tewo-week period around 2016 and 2020 presidential elections.

Appendix I Variables & Coding

In this section, we present a table (table 8) with summary statistics, names and coding for all variables that we refer to in the main analyses in the paper and the analyses in the appendices.

Table 8: Variables, Coding, and Sources

Variable and Summary Statistics	Label, Coding and Sources
Polling Place Evaluation (dummy): μ=0.821, σ=0.382, range=0–1, n=25801	`polplacelog`: The dependent variable in the main analysis is coded as a dummy variable due to the distribution of values (0=others, 1=very well). (SPAE)
Polling Place Evaluation: μ=3.787, σ=0.5, range=1–4, n=25801	`polplaceeval`: The original coding of the polling place evaluation is used in robustness checks. This is a 4-item scale capturing respondent's evaluation of how polling place was run (1=terrible, 4=very well). (SPAE)
Newspaper Circulation (Daily): μ=0.152, σ=0.217, range=0–4.134, n=41970	`per18daily`: Calculated by the authors as the ratio of newspaper circulation per day to county population aged 18 and above. (E & P)
County Election Administration Index: μ=64.297, σ=8.781, range=24.254–89.519, n=28179	`cea`: County election administration index is a comprehensive measure for the quality of election administration (Ritter and Tolbert, 2024).
Elections Performance Index: μ=.748, σ=.096, range=.42–.9, n=41974	`epi`: Elections perfomance index tracks the quality of election administration at the state level. (MIT)
Partisanship: μ=1.957, σ=0.839, range=1–3, n=41170	`pid3`: `pid7` (7-point party ID) variable is recoded into three categories (1=Democrat, 2=Republican, 3=Independent). (SPAE)
Republican Party Vote Margin: μ=1.064, σ=33.78, range=-91.5–98.86, n=41464	`votemargin`: Calculated as the difference between Republican and Democrat Party shares in the two-party vote at the county level. (MIT)
Voting Experiences Index: μ=2.789, σ=0.439, range=0–4.75, n=25640	`index`: The five evaluation variables included in the SPAE for individual aspects of election administration are rescaled to vary between 0 and 1 and an additive index was created to vary between 0 and 5 (1=worst evaluation, 5=best evaluation). (SPAE)

Continued

Table 8 – *Continued*

Variable and Summary Statistics	Label, Coding and Sources
Age: μ=51.094, σ=16.509 range=18–108, n=41924	`age`: Respondent age is recorded in years. (SPAE)
Gender: μ=0.55, σ=0.497, range=0–1, n=41964	`female`: Respondent gender is recorded as a dummy variable (0=male, 1=female). (SPAE)
Education: μ=3.678, σ=1.449, range=1–6, n=41955	`educ`: Respondent education level is captured by the standard 6-item scale (1=no high school, 6=post-grad). (SPAE)
Non-white: μ=.195, σ=.396, range==0–1, n=41974	`nowhite`: The `race` variable is recoded as a dummy variable (0=white, 1=others). (SPAE)
Interest in News and Public Affairs: μ=3.424, σ=.833, range=1–4, n=37310	`newsint`: This is the survey question that tracks respondent's interest in news and public affairs and is used in connection with the newspaper circulation measure. (SPAE)
Percent Minority: μ=.293, σ=.206, range=.006–.85, n=41974	`perc_minor`: The percentage of total minority in county population. (Census)
Median Household Income: μ=59928, σ=15433, range=22045–160305, n=41574	`medhhinc`: The median household income is measured at the county level. (Census)
Rural-Urban Code: μ=1.777, σ=.763, range=1–3, n=41733	`pew_rur_code`: The 9 point continuous rural-urban codes are recoded into a three-item scale following the methodology of PEW Research Center. (USDA)
Precinct Population (in thousands): μ=2.9, σ=5.09, range=0.016–246.247, n=41390	`precpop`: Calculated as the number of people per precinct in a county. We use the logged version in our analyses. (EAVS, Census)

Note: EAVS: Election Administration and Voting Survey; SPAE: Survey of the Performance of American Elections, E & P: Editor & Publisher, MIT: MIT Election Lab, Census: US Census, USDA: US Department of Agriculture.

Appendix J Bibliography

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