

Hayes, Danny, and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2015. “As Local News Goes, So Goes Citizen Engagement: Media, Knowledge, and Participation in U.S. House Elections.” *Journal of Politics* 77(2).

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Appendix A

Newspaper Selection

Very little political science research has sought to analyze media coverage of House elections from more than a handful of districts. Thus, there is no accepted method of identifying the local news outlets that serve a particular House contest. To identify the appropriate newspaper for each House race, we first consulted maps of each congressional district and identified the largest city in each district. We then determined whether the city had a daily newspaper that we could access through one of several electronic databases or the newspaper’s online archives. In the vast majority of cases, this was a straightforward, though time-consuming, task. In the few cases for which we could not gain access to newspaper coverage from the district’s largest-circulation daily paper, we relied on coverage from the next largest paper.

We identified every news story in each congressional district from October 2 through November 2, 2010 (Election Day) that mentioned at least one of the two major party candidates. We included in the sample straight news reports, news analyses, editorials, and op-ed columns. We did not code letters to the editor. We did not restrict the analysis strictly to “campaign” stories because we assume that any information about the House candidates is potentially relevant for voters. As a result, our coding includes a comprehensive analysis of the media coverage to which voters could have been exposed in the lead-up to the election. Our analyses do not include independent and minor-party candidates.

Table A1 provides an overview of our media data. The figures in the table represent summary statistics on the circulation size of the newspapers in our sample, the number of stories about the congressional race, and the length of those stories. The circulation of the newspapers and the amount of attention to the House race varies quite a bit, as one would expect, given differences in district composition and competitiveness.

Table A1. Summary Statistics on Newspaper Sample and News Stories

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Daily circulation of newspaper	195,149	202,379	6,772	876,638
Number of stories	14	13	1	81
Average number of words in a story	696	274	34	3,275

Notes—Circulation and number of stories reflect data from all 435 congressional districts. Average number of words reflects the 405 districts with at least one story mentioning a major-party candidate. The total number of stories is 6,003.

News Content Analysis

Coders read the full text of each article, recording a number of pieces of information. The key variables for the purposes of this article were references to issues in connection with a candidate. (Before undertaking the content analysis, two coders participated in several hours of practice coding, using news stories from House elections in previous years. This allowed us to refine the coding scheme and to minimize confusion and maximize consistency between the coders.)

We tracked every time an issue was mentioned, beginning with a list of issues commonly included in previous studies and then recording references to additional issues as they were encountered in the coverage. We then classified each issue into eight broad categories following previous scholars' coding schemes: (1) Civil and Social Order, (2) Defense, Security, and Military, (3) Social Welfare, (4) Taxes and Spending, (5) Foreign Affairs, (6) Race and Social Groups, (7) Government Functioning, and (8) Economy. Table A2 presents a list of the 173 issues we identified.

Table A2. Specific Issue References Coded from News Coverage

Civil and Social Order	Defense, Security, Military	Taxes and Spending	Race and Social Groups
<p>abortion, alcohol, assisted suicide, bullying, civil liberties, crime, criminal justice system, death penalty, domestic violence, English as the national language, gambling and casinos, guns, hate crimes, hunting rights, illegal drugs, immigration, police or fire funding, pornography, privacy, public safety, religion/religious issues/creationism taught in schools, school prayer, securing the border, separation of church and state, social issues, stem cell research</p>	<p>Afghanistan, defense, defense spending, GI bill, Guantanamo Bay, intelligence, Iran, Iraq, military issues (bases, benefits, health care, pay), NASA/space, national security, nuclear weapons, Pakistan, Patriot Act, security, veterans' affairs, war</p>	<p>arts programs, balanced budget, budget/spending, Bush tax cuts, business, debt ceiling, debt or deficit, earmarks/pork, funding for local projects, government size/power, oil subsidies, other program funding, research and development, spending, taxes/tax breaks</p>	<p>advocacy for women, affirmative action, civil rights, Don't Ask, Don't Tell, ERA/pay equity, gay rights, marriage equality, Native American issues, race advocacy, racial equality, seniors, workplace discrimination, workplace diversity</p>
Social Welfare	Economy	Foreign Affairs	Government Functioning
<p>9/11 workers health plan, birth control/contraception, BP oil spill, cap and trade, children's issues/child care, climate change, education, energy/electricity/coal/nuclear power, entitlements, environment, family planning, health care/health insurance/Obamacare, homelessness, Medicaid, medical research, Medicare, mining, natural gas, oil drilling, oil pipelines, prescription drugs, school vouchers, social security, social services, student loans, teacher salaries, utilities, water, welfare, wildlife/forests, women's health, women's issues (not abortion, contraception), work safety, workers' compensation</p>	<p>agriculture, auto industry, bailout, banks, business, Cash for Clunkers, consumer protection, credit card reform, economy, ethanol subsidies, farms, federal employee wages, Freddie Mac/Fannie Mae, free enterprise, gas prices, global currency, housing/foreclosures, inequality (economic), infrastructure, jobs, labor, manufacturing, minimum wage, mortgage rates, net neutrality, outsourcing, personal finances, poverty, redistribution of wealth, regulations, retirement, stimulus, TARP, technology, tourism, transportation, unemployment, unions, Wall Street reform</p>	<p>Africa, China, diplomacy, foreign policy, human rights, international issues in health, Israel, Mexico, Middle East, other specific country, spending on foreign aid, trade</p>	<p>campaign finance reform, constitutional amendments, decreasing partisanship in Congress, disaster relief/ FEMA, ethics, FDA, government reform/transparency, insurance reform (not health care), lobbying, PACs, personal scandal, reforms to congressional campaigns, term limits, tort reform, wages for members of Congress and other elected officials</p>

Appendix B. Variable Description, Newspaper Content Analysis

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Dependent Variables				
Number of stories	1 – 81	14.41	13.20	Indicates, among districts that received any coverage of the House race, the total number of stories that mentioned at least one of the major-party candidates.
Both candidates mentioned	0 – 60	7.65	9.55	Indicates, among contested districts that received any coverage of the House race, the total number of stories that mentioned both major-party candidates.
Number of issue mentions	0 – 409	48.61	6.46	Indicates, among districts that received any coverage of the House race, the total number of mentions that substantive issues received in the overall amount of coverage of the House race (see Table A2 for a full list of issues that were mentioned).
Number of different issues mentioned	0 – 8	4.30	2.27	Indicates, among districts that received any coverage of the House race, the total number of issue categories addressed at least once in the overall amount of coverage the House race received. The categories are: (1) Civil and Social Order, (2) Defense, Security, and Military, (3) Social Welfare, (4) Taxes and Spending, (5) Foreign Affairs, (6) Race and Social Groups, (7) Government Functioning, and (8) Economy.
Independent Variables – Competitiveness and News Outlet Size				
Cook rating	0 – 3	0.58	1.03	Indicates the <i>Cook Political Report's</i> rating of the competitiveness of the race as of October 5, 2010. It varies from safe seat (0) to toss-up (3).
Circulation	0.68 – 87.66	19.51	20.24	Indicates the circulation size of the newspaper (in 10,000s).
Independent Variables – Electoral Context				
Open seat	0, 1	0.10	0.30	Indicates whether the race is for an open seat (1) or not (0).
Uncontested	0, 1	0.07	0.25	Indicates whether the race is uncontested (1) or not (0).

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Independent Variables – Electoral Context continued				
Quality candidate	0, 1	0.25	0.44	Indicates whether the race includes a challenger or open seat candidate with previous electoral experience (1) or not (0).
Candidate spending	0 – 163.43	21.26	18.24	Indicates the total amount of money (in \$100,000 units) both major-party candidates, combined, spent on the race.
Independent Variables – District Features				
Percent white	7.90 – 99.20	77.36	20.09	Indicates the percentage of the district that is White (based on 2000 census data).
Median income	20,924 – 91,571	51,186	12,765	Indicates the district’s median income (based on 2000 census data).
Percent college educated	6 – 51	21.67	7.31	Indicates the percentage of residents in the district who have earned at least a Bachelor’s degree (based on 2010 Kids Count data).
Corporate ownership	0, 1	0.80	0.40	Indicates whether the newspaper serving the district is corporately-owned (1) or independent or family-owned (0).
Market convergence	0.03 – 1.00	0.16	0.10	A ratio that represents the number of media markets covering any part of the district divided by the total number of districts covered by those markets.

Appendix C. Variable Description, CCES Common Content Analysis
(CCES Data are available at <http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cces/home>)

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Dependent Variables				
Know House majority	0, 1	0.70	0.37	Indicates whether respondent knew that the Democrats held a majority of seats in the US House of Representatives (1) or not (0).
Rate Congress	0, 1	0.90	0.19	Indicates whether respondent offered an answer to a question asking him/her to evaluate the way the US Congress is doing its job (1) or not (0).
Rate House incumbent	0, 1	0.81	0.30	Indicates whether respondent offered an answer to a question asking him/her to evaluate the member of Congress serving the district (1) or not (0).
Rate Democrat's ideology	0, 1	0.64	0.48	Indicates whether respondent offered a rating of the Democratic House candidate's ideology (on the liberal – conservative spectrum) (1) or not (0).
Rate Republican's ideology	0, 1	0.64	0.48	Indicates whether respondent offered a rating of the Republican House candidate's ideology (on the liberal – conservative spectrum) (1) or not (0).
House vote intention	0, 1	0.79	0.41	Indicates whether respondent indicated a preference for a candidate in the general election to the US House of Representatives (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables – Information Environment				
Number of stories	0 – 81	14.89	13.47	Indicates the total number of stories that mentioned at least one of the major-party candidates running for the US House in the district.
High media use	0, 1	0.43	0.49	Indicates whether respondent reported getting news from three or more sources (1) or fewer (0).
Independent Variables – Political Context				
Competitiveness	0 – 3	0.61	1.05	Indicates the <i>Cook Political Report's</i> rating of the competitiveness of the race as of October 5, 2010. It varies from safe seat (0) to toss-up (3).

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Independent Variables – Political Context (continued)				
Open seat	0, 1	0.11	0.31	Indicates whether the district features an open seat (1) or not (0).
Uncontested	0, 1	0.69	0.25	Indicates whether the race is uncontested (1) or not (0).
Quality candidate	0, 1	0.27	0.44	Indicates whether the race included a challenger or open seat candidate with previous electoral experience (1) or not (0).
Democratic spending	0 – 55.73	11.38	11.70	Indicates the total amount of money (in \$100,000 units) the Democratic candidate spent on the race.
Republican spending	0 – 116.53	10.45	11.48	Indicates the total amount of money (in \$100,000 units) the Republican candidate spent on the race.
Market convergence	0.03 – 1.00	0.16	0.10	A ratio that represents the number of media markets covering any part of the district divided by the total number of districts covered by those markets.
Democratic incumbent	0, 1	0.55	0.50	Indicates whether the Democratic candidate in respondent's district is an incumbent (1) or not (0).
Republican incumbent	0, 1	0.36	0.48	Indicates whether the Republican candidate in respondent's district is an incumbent (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables – Demographics				
Strength of partisanship	0 – 3	2.00	1.06	Indicates how strongly respondent identifies with a political party. Ranges from pure independent (0) to strong party identifier (3).
Education	1 – 6	3.80	1.41	Indicates the highest level of education respondent completed. Ranges from less than high school (1) to postgraduate degree (6).
Age	18 – 91	53.00	14.30	Indicates respondent's age.

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Independent Variables – Demographics (continued)				
Income	1 – 14	8.32	3.48	Respondent’s annual household income. Ranges from less than \$10,000 (1) to more than \$150,000 (14).
White	0, 1	0.78	0.42	Indicates whether respondent is white (1) or not (0).