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**Priming Protectionism: 19th Century Tariff Exposure and
the Shape of Public Discourse in Newspapers**

Master's Thesis

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Study programme: Master in Economic Research

Supervisor: Christian Ochsner, Ph.D.

Year of the defense: 2026

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Abstract

This thesis examines the shape of public discourse on protectionism as gleaned through newspaper data as a function of increased tariff exposure from the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Situated in the window surrounding the start of the 1880s to the start of the 1890s, I model tariff-exposure using shift-share instruments which weight the industry-level changes in tariff rates and duty type counts from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 by county-level industry employment compositions. This cross-sectional analysis examines the average changes in protectionist newspaper slant and other tariff related term frequency outcomes on the county-level as a function of increased tariff exposure and explores differential correlations in above and below median manufacturing subsamples. Although the results are generally null and modest in magnitude across specifications, the direction of the correlations provides suggestive evidence that counties with above median manufacturing employment saw increases in protectionist slant in newspapers, reflective of a demand-side interpretation of newspaper content. On the other hand, low manufacturing counties produce conflicting estimates, suggesting a potential supply-side interpretation of changes protectionist newspaper content. Overall, tariff exposure does not appear to significantly predict changes in newspaper outcomes, but future work with more disaggregated and complete data could improve upon this model.¹

Abstrakt

Tato práce zkoumá podobu veřejné diskuse o protekcionismu, jak ji lze vyčíst z novinových údajů, v závislosti na zvýšené celní expozici vyplývající z McKinleyho celního zákona z roku 1890. V období od počátku 80. let do počátku 90. let 19. století modeluji celní expozici pomocí nástrojů shift-share, které váží změny celních sazeb a počtů typů cel na úrovni odvětví od Mongrelova celního zákona z roku 1883 po McKinleyho celní zákon z roku 1890 podle skladby zaměstnanosti v odvětvích na úrovni okresů. Tato průřezová analýza zkoumá průměrné změny protekcionistického zaměření novin a další výsledky týkající se frekvence termínů souvisejících s cly na úrovni okresů jako funkci zvýšené celní expozice a zkoumá rozdílné korelace v podvzorech

¹ Disclaimer: Parts of this thesis have been previously submitted to CERGE-EI as a part of my study (Research Writing II and Economic History I) as part of the Master in Economic Research program. Footnotes in this thesis indicate where such brief portions appear.

okresů s nadmediánovým a podmediánovým podílem zpracovatelského průmyslu. Ačkoli jsou výsledky obecně nulové a jejich velikost je napříč specifikacemi skromná, směr korelací poskytuje sugestivní důkazy o tom, že v okresech s nadmediánovou zaměstnaností ve zpracovatelském průmyslu došlo ke zvýšení protekcionistického zaměření novin, což odráží interpretaci obsahu novin z pohledu poptávky. Naproti tomu okresy s nízkou výrobní aktivitou poskytují protichůdné odhady, což naznačuje potenciální interpretaci změn protekcionistického obsahu novin z pohledu nabídky. Celkově se nezdá, že by celní expozice významně předpovídala změny v novinových výsledcích, ale budoucí práce s podrobnějšími a úplnějšími daty by tento model mohla vylepšit.

Keywords

protectionism; tariffs; United States; McKinley; newspapers

JEL Codes: C21, N41, F13, L82, D72

Klíčová slova

protekcionismus; cla; Spojené státy; McKinley; noviny

Title

Priming Protectionism: 19th Century Tariff Exposure and the Shape of Public Discourse in Newspapers

Název práce

Formování protekcionismu: vliv celních tarifů v 19. století na podobu veřejné debaty v novinách

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Introduction

Tariffs, or taxes on imported goods, have in recent years returned to the forefront of US trade policy. Representing a departure from the post-World War II consensus on multilateral, free trade provisions through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and subsequently the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Trump Administration's tenure is marked by several significant tariff episodes (Hopewell, 2021). Notable ones include the 2018 US-China Trade War and the introduction of so-called "reciprocal tariffs" in April of 2025 on "Liberation Day" (Ignatenko et al., 2025). Large-scale support for such overt proclamations of protectionism may seem counterintuitive (Ponzetto et al., 2020), given the consensus among many economists that trade barriers can lead to inefficiencies and misallocation of resources through reduced competition (Klein & Meissner, 2024). What is more, empirical evidence indicates that protectionist policies produce ambiguous or adverse effects in the historical (Irwin, 2001; Klein & Meissner, 2024) and modern settings (Fajgelbaum & Khandelwal, 2022; Flaaen & Pierce, 2024). Despite this, appeals to weak correlational evidence of tariffs and 19th century US industrial growth can be powerful in promoting protectionist agendas, even in the modern context (Irwin, 2001; Fajgelbaum & Khandelwal, 2022). For example, President Trump has in passing invoked the purported success of 19th century President William McKinley's protectionism to justify instituting his own tariffs (Mosvick, 2025). Therefore, understanding what can drive shifts in support for protectionism is important for determining the degree to which political elites can advance potentially adverse trade policies for gains in public sentiment.²

Contemporary evidence from the 2018 US-China trade wars shows that import tariffs targeted politically important counties to appeal to voters (Fajgelbaum et al., 2020). Blanchard et al. (2024) provide evidence that retaliatory tariff exposure had detectable adverse effects on electoral outcomes for Republicans in the 2018 midterm elections which protective tariff exposure did not compensate for. On the other hand, Autor et al. (2024) show that tariff exposed areas would go on to lean Republican in subsequent elections. The late 19th century US exhibits a loosely similar parallel, where Republican losses in 1890 midterms are at times credited to backlash from the controversial McKinley Tariff of 1890 (Taussig, 1910). Aside from electoral outcomes,

² Portion of text adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

individual level preferences for protection as a function of tariff exposure in the modern setting are gleaned through survey experiments, for example (Stantcheva, 2022), but these results may lack ecological validity. Given the saturation of the modern media environment, the 19th century setting uniquely offers both a localized media environment in the form of newspapers concentrated in cities (Petrova, 2011) and is also situated in a time when the tariff issue was one of the most salient, central debates (Irwin, 2017). Exploiting this, I aim to isolate public responses to tariff exposure through a media channel where the modern setting may fail to.

Therefore, this thesis turns to a portion of US history where public tolerance for the post-Civil War protectionist paradigm, characterized by wide-reaching, high duties, was tested through frequent increases and only modest reductions to the tariff schedule (Taussig, 1910). I focus on the evolution of public discourse on the county level, as gleaned through newspapers from the start of the 1880s to the start of the 1890s, to examine how the McKinley Tariff of 1890 may have shifted newspaper slant in favor of protectionism as a function of local tariff exposure. I measure tariff exposure through shift-share instruments leveraging local industry employment compositions as weights, interacted with the tariff increments. Data limitations and endogeneity concerns limit this to a correlational, rather than causal estimation. Where changes in ad valorem tariff magnitude fail to capture the majority of tariff lines, I turn to estimating how the duty types assigned to tariff lines,³ which may vary in their interpretability, can potentially differentially affect newspaper slant. In both cases, I also split the sample by counties with below and above median manufacturing employment shares to examine heterogeneity which would attenuate the pooled estimates. In complementing the analysis with alternative newspaper outcomes indicative of the frequency of certain rhetoric of newspapers, I speculate on the demand and supply side mechanisms that could plausibly drive changes in protectionist content.

Tariffs as trade policy tools are of interest for this thesis because in imposing them, policymakers attempt to strike a balance between potential consumer backlash through increased prices and producer/lobbying interests (Irwin, 2017; Kusch, 2025b). It is of course not limited to these groups, as there are fiscal aspects and foreign policy perspectives to consider, among others (Irwin, 2017). What is more, the prominence of the tariff, as a national policy with heterogeneous effects across the country according to industrial compositions, gives rise to the question of the

3 Duty types include ad valorem, specific, and compound duties. I also briefly consider free list classifications.

political signal they emit in addition to the economic effects which are generally difficult to disentangle (Kono, 2006).⁴ This may interact with how the public perceives the institution of tariffs, and heuristics perhaps substitute for transparency on tariff incidence. This intuition is supported by 19th century perspectives represented in Irwin (2017), where for example, even chairman of the revenue commission in 1866, David A. Wells, known as a staunch protectionist, eventually railed against tariffs, noting that the schedules were “exceedingly complicated and difficult of comprehension” (pp. 223-224).

The political effects of tariffs and retaliatory tariffs have been explored at length in the modern context of the US-China trade wars (Blanchard et al., 2024; Fajgelbaum et al., 2020; Autor et al., 2024). Autor et al. (2020) notably connect trade exposure from the China Shock to political polarization by examining cable news viewership and ratings. Scheve and Serlin (2023) investigate the effect of exposure to German import competition in England and Wales in the 19th and 20th centuries, using newspaper term frequency data to corroborate mechanisms related to observed political outcomes. This thesis applies the shift-share frameworks employed in this literature to the late 19th century US setting with a focus on newspaper slant as the primary outcome of interest, as opposed to party vote shares and electoral outcomes.

The late 19th century US offers a worthwhile setting to investigate the effect of changes to the tariff schedule because of salience of the tariff debate at the time (Irwin, 2017; Conybeare, 1991). Infant industry support, anti-British imperialism, wages, consumer prices, concerns over the fiscal surplus, and more, factored into the debate between protectionist Republicans and their tariff-cautious Democratic counterparts in the Congressional setting (Irwin, 2017). Although research reports rising protectionism during this time, (Scheve & Serlin, 2025) narrative histories like that of Taussig (1910) only note general disappointment and episodes of consumer backlash to characterize momentary shifts in public sentiments. Kusch (2025a) notes that it is fundamentally difficult to glean the perspectives of individuals on protectionism in this setting. To the best of my knowledge, a systematic analysis of the change in tariff exposure from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 and its effects on protectionist newspaper slant specifically, represents a gap in the literature. This thesis is interested in whether the tariff shifts were strong

⁴ Irwin (2017) highlights that Chairman Wells, during the 1860s, noted the complexity of balancing tariffs on inputs and outputs, as tariff can imply increase in protection for one, and a reduction in protection for the other (p. 226).

enough to generate a detectable change in the character of newspaper content in relatively more affected counties, in light of the general rising protectionism reported by Scheve and Serlin (2025).

One of the closer preceding approaches comes from Conybeare (1991) who examines the change in manufacturing industry employment weighted tariff exposure from the Mongrel to McKinley Tariff on votes for incumbents in an electoral model. By leveraging data on newspaper slant for protectionism, as derived through a machine learning driven approach by Scheve and Serlin (2025), I focus not on direct political outcomes. Although Irwin (2017) notes that the election of 1888 was essentially a “national referendum on the country’s tariff policy,” there is arguably value in examining newspapers insofar as one assumes that they reflect local demand for content rather than political lobbying for electoral support (p. 262).⁵ What is more, loosening this strict assumption of demand driven content can spur discussion of supply side mechanisms reflecting elite capture of news media (Besley & Prat, 2006; Masera & Rosenberg, 2021; Ottinger & Posch, 2025). Considering that voting rights were still limited during this time, newspaper data can potentially provide insights not reflected in electoral models.

Rather than apply a rigorous assessment of the concrete distributional impacts of the tariff and model them directly, this thesis focuses on public signaling effects.⁶ I do this through examining a narrow window, 1880 to 1890 (where newspaper data is scraped for 1878-1882 and 1888-1892 for the respective decades), where two changes to the tariff schedule were made, the latter representing a more controversial spike in tariff rates: The Mongrel Tariff of 1883 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Using the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 as a baseline, changes in tariff exposure from the McKinley Tariff are calculated relative to the Mongrel baseline for us in a cross-sectional model. This partially follows Conybeare (1991) who develops a manufacturing-only employment weighted tariff exposure index, holding 1880 employment shares constant due to data

⁵ Petrova (2011) demonstrates that even though Republican and Democratic party affiliated newspapers were abundant during the late 19th century, the increasingly emerging independent newspapers began to adhere to market principles as advertising revenue reduced reliance on funding from lobbyists. The implication is that content, to some extent, had to reflect local demand to maintain advertising revenue. Scheve and Serlin (2025) and Scheve and Serlin (2023) echo this appeal to Petrova’s (2011) work.

⁶ For quantitative assessments of 19th century tariffs, see Klein and Meissner (2024), Irwin (2000), and Irwin (2001). For the early 20th century, see Greenland and Lopresti (2024).

limitations and endogeneity concerns, with updated methodological considerations following Blanchard et al. (2024) and Borusyak et al. (2025).⁷

Due to limitations in obtaining granular product-level price data for the over 1,800 tariff lines to estimate an ad valorem equivalent for specific and compound tariffs, my baseline estimation examines effects of ad valorem tariffs only, before then using changes in the counts of duty types by industry as regressors in subsequent specifications. Using ad valorem equivalents would be ideal in that they would model the complete set of tariff increments that in turn may affect public perceptions of increased or decreased tariff exposure.⁸ In light of this limitation, I also briefly investigate how net changes in the count of the various duty types affects the outcome, motivated in part by the modern political economy research examining the effects and determinants of salience, transparency, and complexity of tariff and non-tariff barriers (Kono, 2006; Levy, 2009; Mangini, 2023; Taylor, 2015) and notes from Taussig (1910) on the implications of the various duty types.

I acknowledge the limitations of my approach which stem primarily from a lack of clean causal identification. I likely do not identify truly quasi-random variation in tariff exposure due to endogenous tariff setting noted by Klein and Meissner (2024) and Greenland and Lopresti (2024) and reflected in models such as that of Grossman and Helpman (1994). The influence of lobbying organizations particularly confounds the relationship between the tariff exposure variable and the newspaper outcomes. I also rely on insufficiently many “shifts” which interferes with exogeneity assumptions and statistical inference (Borusyak et al., 2025). Nonetheless, I present descriptive evidence to the bridge understanding of correlations between exposure to tariff changes with newspaper slant in this setting while also addressing the threats to identification systematically.

A generous interpretation of the results in light of identification and statistical inference issues finds an overall small, positive correlation between tariff exposure and increases in

⁷ Contrasting Conybeare (1991), I include even the broad agricultural employment category, in addition to the durable manufacturing, non-durable manufacturing, construction, and mining industries to weight product-level changes to the tariff schedule and omit agricultural components in a robustness check.

⁸ Ad valorem equivalents are also useful in the literature in that specific tariffs, which fluctuate in their realized protection according to exogenous price changes, can be used in instrumental variable (IV) strategies as in Klein and Meissner (2024) who examine labor productivity effects of tariffs and as in Greenland and Lopresti (2024) who study a host of economic outcomes, to deal with endogenous tariff setting. Such an IV could be useful, but arguably does not capture the aspect of tariffs that produce a public signaling effect in the narrow time range I study. Crucini (1994) notes that tariff indexes vary in their usefulness.

protectionist slant in newspapers which diverges in above and below median manufacturing employment subsamples, conditional on controls. Although estimates are generally not robust to the inclusion of state fixed effects, compared to high manufacturing counties for whom the positive coefficient is consistent, counties with below median manufacturing employment exhibit decreases in the protectionist slant, consistent with theoretical expectations of perceived benefits from expansion of protective duties being concentrated among manufacturing dominant regions (Irwin, 2017; Kusch, 2025a).⁹ With state fixed effects however, the correlation between tariff exposure and protectionist slant becomes positive in the low manufacturing subsample. Examining alternative term frequency based outcomes indicative of protectionist rhetoric in newspapers, I speculate on potential supply side explanations for changes in protectionism newspaper slant in this subsample. I also examine the effects of the various duty types on newspaper slant and find diverging relationships. Still, seeing as the coefficients are generally null, the overall findings align with the conclusion of Irwin (2020) that the economic geography of protectionism during the late 19th century was largely fixed, the finding of Conybeare (1991) that the observed anti-Republican backlash following the McKinley Tariff of 1890 was likely not due in large part to the tariff itself, and the explanation of Scheve and Serlin (2025), that rising protectionism is explained more strongly by worker migration patterns. Although the results are ultimately inconclusive due to endogeneity concerns and data constraints, I combine novel newspaper data from Scheve and Serlin (2024) with tariff data in the spirit of Conybeare (1991) and Blanchard et al. (2024) to investigate the shape of protectionist discourse in newspapers as a function of tariff exposure.¹⁰

The thesis proceeds as follows. Section 1 provides historical context on late 19th century tariffs, the Congressional debates, the broader public debates, and the character of 19th century newspapers. Section 2 provides a literature review of some of the work most closely related to this thesis in Scheve and Serlin's (2025) approach and Conybeare's (1991) electoral model, the behavioral political economy research which forms the basis for the conceptual framework, as well as the trade war and trade shock literature which informs the use of shift-share instruments. Section 3 describes the data and shift-share variable construction. Section 4 explains the empirical

⁹ A similar pattern is observed for the shift-share instrument which weights employment shares by the net change in specific duties.

¹⁰ Note that from this point, Scheve and Serlin (2025) refers to the journal article and Scheve and Serlin (2024) refers to the corresponding replication data, which is employed in this thesis. The years referenced correspond to the recommended citation and are consistent with the references list.

approach and addresses identification. Section 5 presents the main results and robustness exercises. Section 6 contains a discussion of the results. Section 7 is a critical evaluation of the approach and provides caveats for interpretation of the results. The final section concludes.

1. Historical Context

Protectionism can crudely be defined as the ideology that supports the use and maintenance of trade barriers, such as tariffs, for ends such as protecting domestic industry from foreign competition. Based on the historical context provided by Irwin (2017) of the congressional discourse between Republicans and Democrats in what is known as the “Great Tariff Debate of 1888,” there is clear nuance beyond a free trade versus protectionist dichotomy (p. 260). In fact, Democrats, who appealed to agrarian interests, generally agreed that complete regression of tariffs was unfavorable and instead pushed for moderate reforms (Irwin, 2017). Republicans on the other hand, who adopted and held to the protectionist paradigm while maintaining support from industrial interests, were willing to maintain protective tariffs at essentially all costs (Irwin, 2017). Irwin (2017) notes that during this time, no industries were clear “infant industry” candidates and casts doubt that protection was targeted to these industries (pp. 270-271). Instead, the tariffs provided “across-the-board protection to every industry facing foreign competition, whether it produced raw materials, capital goods, or final goods” (Irwin, 2017, p. 270). This context more accurately defines protectionist preferences as not simply the expression of anti-free trade sentiments, but rather an expression of a willingness to bear the potential consumer costs of the tariff in favor of (perhaps naively) expected benefits, whether in terms of domestic industry protection, controlling the fiscal surplus, wages, or otherwise.

Irwin (2020) presents a three stage framework of US tariff history: revenue, restriction, and reciprocity. The second is where the post-Civil War United States sits, characterized by high tariffs that resisted major reform (Taussig, 1910), upheld by arguments of infant industry protection, anti-British imperialism, diverging opinions on fiscal surplus control, among others (Irwin, 2017; Kusch, 2025a). Overall, a transition from agricultural to manufacturing employment over the late 19th century implied changing economic incentives to support protectionism and either political party’s approach to tariffs (Scheve & Serlin, 2025; Kusch, 2025b). Although my analysis focuses on the narrow window of the 1880s and early 1890s which includes only the Mongrel Tariff of

1883 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890 as the major pieces of tariff legislation, the debate on and the institution of tariff acts is certainly not limited to this time frame. The heterogeneity of local sectoral compositions against a national tariff change provides a setting for the shift-share centered approach that I take in this thesis to assess how the salient changes to the tariff schedule brought about by the infamous McKinley Tariff of 1890 affected short-term public responses. Newspaper content, although possibly capturing supply-side lobbying and political interests meant to influence public support for protectionism, potentially offers a window into the public demand for more or less protectionist slant as a function of the salience of tariff changes.

1.1 Late 19th Century Tariffs

Average tariff rates on dutiable imports remained consistently high throughout the late 19th century, generally exceeding 40% (Taussig, 1910). Changes in duties on products were governed by tariff acts with Bordo et al. (1999) noting that revisions to the tariff code were made, on average, every seven years and only when both legislative chambers and the executive were majority Republican or Democrat.¹¹

Tariff acts assigned ad valorem, specific, or compound duties to imported products which were collected as customs revenue. The Mongrel Tariff and the McKinley Tariff also detailed products to be placed on the duty free list, indicating that no import tax would be collected for the listed products. Klein and Meissner (2024) estimate the effects of tariffs on labor productivity, providing also an overview of protection enjoyed by manufacturing industries over the period 1870 to 1900. According to Klein and Meissner (2024), among the recipients of higher tariff protection were textile and apparel manufacturers who saw average ad valorem equivalent tariffs for woolen products fluctuate from 70% in 1870 and 1880, with a reduction to 62% in 1890, and another jump to 94% in 1900. Additionally, transportation equipment manufacturers saw average tariffs increase. Among those with lower tariff protection were chemicals, petroleum, and coal in addition to metal foundries which saw rates decrease from 1870 to 1900. For some products, such as cottons, average ad valorem equivalent tariffs remained nearly constant.¹² My approach attempts to exploit the

¹¹ Portion of text adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

¹² Portion of text adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

cross-industry variation in tariff rates, with the qualification that due to data and feasibility constraints, I map highly aggregated industry categorizations to average tariff rates and duty type counts in my estimation. For example, I distinguish only non-durable goods from durable goods manufacturing and additionally, due to limitations in obtaining product level price data, I do not compute the ad valorem equivalents for specific and compound duties as Klein and Meissner (2024) do. I address this limitation in subsequent sections.

Table 1

Summary of Tariff Shifts by Industry

		McKinley minus Mongrel (Δ)				
Industry	Weight	1	2	3	4	5
		Δ Av. Rate	Δ Specific	Δ Compound	Δ Ad Val.	Δ Total
Agriculture	0.6	0.02	30	0	7	42
Construction	0.04	-0.01	-7	0	13	8
Mining	0.02	0	-1	0	-2	-9
Durable manuf.	0.04	0.04	56	26	5	106
Non-durable manuf.	0.04	0.06	40	9	-51	-17

Notes: Importance weights are mean 1880 employment shares across the 561-county analysis sample. The five industries correspond to IPUMS NHGIS 1950 occupation codes (IND1950): agriculture, forestry and fishing (105-126); construction (246); mining (206-239); durable goods manufacturing (306-399) non-durable goods manufacturing (406-499) obtained via and aggregated by Scheve and Serlin (2024). Importance weights sum to less than one because only five of the nine aggregated industry categories are included in the shift-share. The Δ columns report net changes from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Δ Av. Rate is the change in the mean ad valorem rate among ad valorem and compound duty lines, expressed as a proportion. Δ Specific, Δ Compound, and Δ Ad Val. are net changes in the count of tariff lines of each duty type. Δ Total is the net change in protective lines, computed as Δ Specific + Δ Compound + Δ Ad Val. – Δ Free.

Table 1 shows the change in average ad valorem tariff rates by industry across the Mongrel and McKinley Tariffs, in addition to the change in duty type counts which are later used to estimate alternative shift-share tariff exposure measures. This table also reports the average importance weights of the 1880 employment shares, showing the dominance of agricultural employment across counties during this period. The changes in the average ad valorem tariff rates as computed in Column 1 of Table 1, which also include the ad valorem components of compound tariffs,

exhibit some heterogeneity by industry, with the largest positive shift occurring for non-durable manufacturing products, followed by durable manufacturing. Agricultural products also saw increases to the average ad valorem rate, while construction saw a reduction, and mining saw no change. In terms of the net change in number of tariff lines for each duty type (reported in Columns 2-4 of Table 1), the largest expansion in specific duties occurred for durable manufacturing products with 56 more specific tariffs compared to the Mongrel Tariff, followed by non-durable manufacturing with 40, and then agricultural with 30. Construction and mining by contrast saw a reduction in specific duties. Only the durable and non-durable manufacturing industries saw changes to the number of compound duties, seeing as no compound duties were applied to agriculture, construction, or mining in either the Mongrel or McKinley Tariff. For completeness I report the change in the number of ad valorem tariff lines in Column 4 of Table 1. The largest increase in ad valorem tariff lines occurred for construction related products, with a net increase of 13 tariff lines, followed by 7 for agricultural products and 5 for durable manufacturing products. Non-durable manufacturing by contrast saw a net decrease in ad valorem tariff lines of 51, despite the overall increase in the average ad valorem tariff rate. As in Column 5 of Table 1, the largest increase in net protection in terms of duty type counts was in durable manufacturing with 106 additional protective lines, followed by agriculture with only 42 and construction with only 8. Mining saw a decrease in protective lines, but the largest decrease was for non-durable manufacturing, with 17 fewer protective lines.

1.2 Congressional Debates on Tariffs

The Congressional debates over reductions versus maintenance of high tariffs encompassed not only concerns for shielding domestic industry, but were also fiscally motivated (Irwin, 1998). Although a clean Democratic and Republican split on the tariff issue would be convenient, Irwin (2017) quotes the Republican representative from West Virginia, George Atkinson as saying that “the Democratic doctrine is a tariff for revenue with incidental protection, while the Republicans advocate a tariff protection with incidental revenue” (p. 237).

Revenues from the Morrill Tariff of 1861, enacted prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, importantly funded wartime deficits. The Tariffs of 1872 and 1875 reduced rates and then reversed these changes, respectively (Barnichon & Singh, 2025). The Mongrel Tariff of 1883 represented

yet another attempt at reform, resulting in only modest reductions to the schedule, and in this thesis, serves as the baseline against which changes from the McKinley Tariff of 1890 are measured against (Taussig, 1910). In the lead up to the Mongrel Tariff, Republicans were aware of the adverse effects from tariffs on public sentiment, and therefore sought a strategy of “protection through reduction,”¹³ making concessions on some products to preserve the more consequential duties such as those on woolen products (Irwin, 2017, pp. 234-235). Concerns of subsequent fiscal surpluses in the 1880s led to divergence between Democrats who demanded tariff reductions to decrease government revenue and Republicans who warned that such reductions would flood the US with imported goods and increase tariff revenues further (Irwin, 1998). Despite efforts to pass the Mills Bill which would reduce tariff rates, the election of 1888 resulted in a Republican control of the House, Senate, and Presidency (Taussig, 1910).

The subsequent McKinley Tariff of 1890 explicitly sought to protect infant industries (Barnichon & Singh, 2025). The quickly composed schedule generally increased tariff rates, while also removing duties on sugar (Irwin, 1998), a major source of customs revenue at the time (Taussig, 1910, p. 235). The backlash to the McKinley Tariff just a month after its passing is described by Republican losses in the 1890 congressional elections even in Republican states like Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan (Taussig, 1910; Conybeare, 1991). A Democratic victory in the 1892 presidency further signaled widespread dissatisfaction with the McKinley Tariff (Taussig, 1910). Later efforts to reduce tariffs under a Democratic majority through the Wilson-Gorman Tariff of 1894 however, failed to radically alter the protectionist paradigm to the dismay of the general public, as Taussig (1910) notes.

In 1896, Republican William McKinley, the proponent behind the McKinley Tariff of 1890, was elected president. The return to high tariffs under his administration with the Dingley Tariff of 1897 represented yet another shift toward protectionism which Taussig (1910) describes as “the outcome of an aggressive spirit of protection” which may have generated doubt in its soundness, even among protectionists (pp. 302-303). The Dingley Tariff would remain in effect until 1909 when the persistent tariffs began to be associated with concerns of market power (Taussig, 1910). The Payne-Aldrich Tariff of 1909, with goals to introduce moderation in the protective paradigm, failed to substantially change tariff rates, but as Taussig (1910) notes, “increases of duty were more

¹³ Quote from chairman of the Tariff commission, John Hayes, as quoted in Irwin (2017, pp. 234-235).

furtive, the reductions were more loudly proclaimed” (pp. 343-344). He argues that this signaled a relaxation of aggressive protectionism.¹⁴

The McKinley Tariff of 1890 is of interest for this thesis despite the seemingly repetitive patterns of tariff increases and reform over the period because it is situated after 1880 when tariffs were not central for revenue and when concerns of patriotism related to the Civil War were no longer considered a valid point of contention between the parties (Conybeare, 1991). Also, it is just prior to the point in the 1890s when concerns of silver and market power began to overpower the tariff debate to a greater extent (Irwin, 2017). Although clean causal identification is still questionable, the salience of the tariff issue during this period and the controversial nature of the McKinley Tariff offer a setting to speculate on how tariff exposure could shape public discourse, whether from a supply or demand perspective.

1.3 Broader Tariff Debate and Lobbying Perspective

Turning to the public’s perspective on protectionism, less is known beyond narrative histories which tend to focus more on elite perspectives (Kusch, 2025a; Taussig, 1910; Klein & Meissner, 2024) or assessments of electoral outcomes (Conybeare, 1991; Scheve & Serlin, 2025).¹⁵ The broader American public, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s, was deeply and persistently invested in the tariff debate – Kusch (2025b) notes that “most Americans regarded tariff policy as the central instrument with which the federal government could influence the trajectory of the United States’ general economic development” (p. 432).

Naturally, the level of protection from tariffs potentially experienced by workers (if at all) varied widely seeing as rates varied across products and could change with each tariff act (Kusch, 2025a, p. 171). Irwin (2017) characterizes the economic geography of support for Republicans through protectionist appeals as largely fixed and limited, seeing as they drew support from densely populated strongholds in cotton and woolen manufacturing in New England and iron and steel producers in Pennsylvania and Ohio, in addition to “sheep farmers (wool), sugarcane and beet growers” (p. 238). Democrats by contrast appealed to the domestically focused Midwestern

¹⁴ Text from this section is adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

¹⁵ With the exception that Scheve and Serlin (2025), from whom I rely on their newspaper dataset for this thesis, use newspaper protectionist scores and term frequency measures to corroborate election outcomes.

farmers and the export oriented South, which focused on cotton and wheat (Irwin, 2017, p. 238). What is more, the post-Civil War period brought about a wave of producer interest organizations which “made campaign contributions, distributed informational literature, pressured congressional committees, and the like,” including the National Association of Wool Manufacturers and the American Iron and Steel Association, among others (Irwin, 2017, pp. 238-239). This introduces a likely omitted variable bias problem in the sense that I fail to directly control for lobbying presence in my analysis. This endogeneity, where the unobserved lobbying intensity may significantly predict the protectionist slant of the newspaper, can bias the estimates.

The strategies of the American Protective Tariff League (APTL), one of the most influential (and technically non-partisan) protectionist organizations, responsible for dissemination of protectionist propaganda in print and cartoon form, illustrate how protectionists attempted to broadly appeal to the interests of labor (Kusch, 2025b). Despite highlighting that gleaned the worker’s perspective on the tariff issue is inherently difficult, Kusch (2025a) suggests that workers ultimately held to their implied economic interests regardless of APTL propaganda and that protectionism was naturally most appealing to those employed in protected industries, primarily in the Northeast, in line with Irwin’s (2017) perspective. Still, to demonstrate the validity of estimating a county’s exposure to changes in the tariff schedule and the implied salience of tariff changes applied to its industries through my shift-share instruments, I note some features of the APTL’s arguments for protectionism as they apply to workers at large.

Kusch (2025a) highlights that the APTL, founded in 1885, heavily promulgated the “wage argument” that any reductions in tariffs would spell catastrophe for American wages relative to European pauper labor (p. 158). Simultaneously, the APTL attempted to quell fears of consumer price increases by assuring that such phenomena were merely transitory and would be followed by adjustments resulting in higher wages and lower consumer prices, implicitly enabled by infant industry protection (Kusch, 2025a, p. 163). Bridging the interests of labor by way of the wage argument with the interests of capital by way of the infant industry argument lent itself to an overall appeal to harmony and unity between industrial, agricultural, and commercial interests alike in the latter half of the 1880s (Kusch, 2025a, p. 166). However, whether such messaging was effective is unclear, in fact, the lack of labor representation in the APTL and the official neutrality of organized labor on the tariff issues speaks for itself to an extent (Kusch, 2025a). This attempt to provide a

broader protectionist appeal is the motivation behind constructing shift-share instruments that include agricultural tariffs and their employment shares. Heterogeneity in the effect of tariff exposure on the change in newspaper slant between manufacturing and agricultural counties can indicate for which subsample public responses were stronger or weaker, speaking to the effectiveness of tariffs as signals attempting to appeal to a broad audience.

1.4 19th Century Newspapers

Ryfe (2006) asserts that newspapers in the 19th century US were generally characterized by calls to participate in public culture which leveraged first person reporting, chronological narratives, and common symbols to appeal to broader audiences. Despite the broader transition to independence of newspapers at the tail end of the 19th century, most newspapers were affiliated with either the Republican or Democratic party which in exchange for funding and access to congressional hearings, for example, were restricted in the content and opinions they could express in print (Petrova, 2011). Turning to the size of the newspaper market, Petrova (2011) reports that during the first half of the 1880s, about 2,900 new newspapers entered the market and about 2,800 exited, with 515 existing newspapers explicitly changing their party affiliation. An almost equal number of about 280 newspapers switched from partisan to independent affiliations and vice versa, with a small number, about 30 each switching party affiliations entirely (Petrova, 2011, p. 795). Petrova's (2011) research finds that the growth of press independence was correlated with increased advertising revenues, demonstrating the market driven nature of newspapers. However, political factors can interfere with these forces, especially in county seat cities and during presidential election years where incentives to control press narratives are highest for political elites (Petrova, 2011). Although I am unable to directly account for the confounding factor of political affiliations of newspapers in my analysis, Scheve and Serlin (2025) explicitly cite the market-driven nature of newspaper content as demonstrated by Petrova (2011) to support the argument that newspaper content captured by their machine learning derived measure of a newspaper's protectionist slant, which I use as the outcome variable, is to some extent reflective of local demand.

Masera and Rosenberg (2021) demonstrate how the character of newspaper content can reflect changing economic incentives to support slavery in the 19th century. Their working paper

partly explores the mechanism of elite capture, wherein special interest groups sustain unfavorable institutions by influencing media content, but their capacity to do so decreases with the decline of said institutions (Masera & Rosenberg, 2021). In the latter half of the 19th century, there is reason to believe that content could be more demand driven, as newspapers were becoming increasingly independent as advertising revenues reduced reliance on political and special interest group funding (Petrova, 2011).¹⁶

On the other hand, Ottinger and Posch (2025) use high frequency newspaper data in the setting of the 1890s Reconstruction South to examine the potentially deliberate supply of anti-racial propaganda for political ends, challenging demand-side explanations through investigation of political incentives to manipulate media. Gentzkow et al. (2006) examine the causes of the rise in independent press from 1870 to 1920 and present a version of a model of the political economy of media capture by Besley and Prat (2006) where:

newspapers weigh the rewards of bias—politicians’ bribes or personal pleasure—against the costs of bias—lost circulation from providing faulty news. The key predictions of the model are that as the size of the market for newspapers rises and as the marginal cost of producing a paper falls, newspapers will become less biased and invest more in gathering information. The model also suggests that increased competition may further reduce bias. (Gentzkow et al., 2006, p. 189)

Insights from this literature motivate the considerations that the estimated effects of tariff exposure on protectionist slant may come from different sources. Therefore, a discussion of both the demand side and supply side mechanism of protectionist slant are warranted in the discussion of the results, given that I do not successfully rule out reverse causality in the context of endogenous tariff setting, nor directly control for lobbying intensity.

Transparent term-frequency based measures in the data are suitable for these ends. Scheve and Serlin’s (2023) other work examining the effects of the German trade shock in England and Wales in the 19th and 20th centuries gleans qualitative insights from term frequency based newspaper outcomes to support the mechanism that the trade shock affected support for the welfare state, showing how changing beliefs about the unemployed are reflected in newspaper rhetoric.

¹⁶ Again, Scheve and Serlin (2025) echo this justification for the demand side argument of newspaper content, also supported by the literature on newspaper slant by Gentzkow and Shapiro in the modern setting (2010).

This is however underpinned by assumptions of demand-driven content. Hirano and Snyder's (2024) work using term frequency based measures of the tariff issue's salience show a steady decline in the differential use of pro and anti tariff phrases by partisan newspapers from 1888 onward. Although I do not account for partisan affiliation of newspapers in my approach, these uses of term frequency-based newspaper outcomes motivates the discussion of mechanisms related to differences in the use of pro and anti-tariff phrases in light of potential supply and demand side explanations of protectionist content.

Based on exploration of digitized newspapers through the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* collection in the select time period (1878 to 1892),¹⁷ newspapers at the time appeared to report on the congressional tariff debates in anticipation of new tariff schedules, excerpts of the duties enumerated in the tariff schedules, and discussions of the projected effects of the tariff, while also discussing the arguments of the opposing side. In Appendix no. 7 are selected excerpts from newspapers at the time which illustrate certain aspects of the debate. On the anti-protectionist side, articles show emphasis on consumer prices, unjust tariff taxes, and critiques of the wage argument and special interests (see Figures A11 and A12 in Appendix no. 7). Conversely, the protectionist side shows appeals to the wage argument and infant industry protection (see Figures A13 and A14 in Appendix no. 7). Some newspapers appeared to explicitly list the tariff lines present in the legislation, particularly with the McKinley Tariff of 1890, and editors seemed to attempt to distill the economic mechanisms to readers in an interpretable manner, for example by listing prices and rates before and after the tariff, as in Figures 1 and 2. On the protectionist side, Kusch (2025a) highlights that the APTL would rely not on economic explanations, but rather emotional and fear mongering based appeals. However, advertisements from the APTL, encouraging readers to purchase informational protectionist leaflets also appear in publications, showing that appeals to the economic logic of tariffs were also leveraged to garner protectionist support (See Figure A15 of Appendix no. 7).

In general, the tariff acts came in the form of long lists of goods and their respective ad valorem, specific, or compound duties (or free list classifications),¹⁸ which may have been abstract

¹⁷ I employed a simple keyword search of the terms "tariff," "industry," "McKinley," and "Mongrel" for 1872 to 1892 and explored articles containing the term in headlines. These are selected excerpts and do not claim to be representative of all newspapers at this time, nor the newspaper data that the main outcome variable was trained on.

¹⁸ The Mongrel Tariff of 1883 is about 39 pages long. The McKinley Tariff of 1890 is about 59 pages long.

or unclear in the actual level of protection, necessitating the employment of political cartoons by lobbying organizations for example, to leverage for propaganda (Kusch, 2025b). However, it is arguably unclear how and in what direction changes to the tariff schedule should affect the protectionist slant of newspapers, assuming that content is demand driven, at least to an extent. Counties receiving relatively more protection under a new tariff act, whether it be through the increase in rates or the expansion of protected goods may respond positively and demand more protectionist content while also simultaneously having more reason to publish tariff-related materials. On the other hand, increases in protection may not be well received universally, prompting a decrease in the demand for protectionist content, also spurred by the increased salience of locally relevant tariffs. Whether the signals to certain sectoral interests emitted from the tariff legislation are strong enough to be reflected in public demand for protectionist content is a channel I aim to explore. To the best of my knowledge a systematic analysis of short-term newspaper responses to tariff legislation changes as a function of shift-share tariff exposure in this setting represents a gap in the literature which I discuss further in the following section.

Figure 1

Newspaper Excerpt Detailing Aspects of the McKinley Tariff, 1890

That's the Effect of the McKinley Bill, Lately Passed by the Republicans.

Interesting Information for the Voters—Read, then Rally to the Support of Paynter.

“How will the **McKinley** Tariff bill affect the price of plows?” was the question put to a member of the James H. Hall Plow Company a few day ago.

“It will make them cost more,” was the reply. “We have to pay more for the iron and steel now, and, of course, that naturally will add to the cost of the plows. This increased cost, however, will not be fully realized until next season.”

Mr. H. R. Bierbower, of the firm of Bierbower & Co., dealers in stoves, tinware, stoneware, &c, handed the **BULLETIN** the following a few days ago. It explains itself:

The **McKinley** Tariff bill increases the duty on tin plates 120 per cent., making a difference of \$2.19 per box on 16 28x20 Tene, (roofing tin) weighing 216 pounds, as follows:

New duty, 2 2-10 ct. per lb.....	\$4 75
Old duty, 1 ct. per lb.....	2 16
Increase.....	\$2 59

Four dollars and eighty cents per box on 4x 28x20 bright charcoal tin, (such as tinware is made of) weighing 400 pounds as follows:

New duty, 2 2-10 cts. per lb.....	\$8 80
Old duty, 1 ct. per lb.....	4 00
Increase.....	\$4 80

Notes: Newspaper excerpt from "Putting up prices", *The Evening Bulletin*, November 3, 1890, p. 3 (Chronicling America, Library of Congress; <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn87060190/1890-11-03/ed-1/?sp=3>). In the public domain. Highlighted text in red from keyword search of “McKinley”.

Figure 2

Newspaper Excerpt Detailing the McKinley Tariff's Effect on Hosiery and Gloves, 1890

By the average purchaser of cotton hosiery the difference between the old and new rates is not easily arrived at owing to the former rate being ad valorem and the new rates partly ad valorem and partly specific. A large dealer in this class of goods has figured it out and constructed a table that can be easily understood. It shows that there has been a large increase throughout and that the lower grades show the highest increase of duty. Hose costing abroad, say 80 cents, would formerly pay a duty of 40 per cent., or 32 cents, while now it must pay a duty of 92½ per cent. or about 74 cents. The following table shows the changes in the old rates made by the law on cotton hosiery costing a specified sum abroad.

Costing.	Old Tariff.	New Tariff.
\$ 80	40 per cent.	92½ per cent
1 00	40 per cent.	80 per cent.
1 20	40 per cent.	72 per cent.
1 80	40 per cent.	57 per cent.
2 00	40 per cent.	55 per cent.
2 05	40 per cent.	76 per cent.
3 00	40 per cent.	65 per cent
4 00	40 per cent.	59 per cent
4 05	40 per cent.	64 per cent
5 00	40 per cent.	60 per cent

The following is the paragraph relating to gloves in the old **tariff**:

426. Gloves, kid or leather, of all descriptions, wholly or partially manufactured, 50 per cent. ad valorem.

The glove paragraph in the **McKinley tariff** bill, like that relating to hosiery, is so complicated in its definitions that it requires an expert to ascertain the exact effect of the changes. Here is the text of the bill:

Notes: Newspaper excerpt from "How the new tariff affects hosiery and gloves", from *Washington Standard*, October 31, 1890, p. 1 (Chronicling America, Library of Congress; <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84022770/1890-10-31/ed-1/?sp=1>). In the public domain. Highlighted text in red from keyword search of “tariff”.

2. Literature Review

In this section, I outline the three key areas of the literature that I draw on. Overall, in this thesis I attempt to bridge a behavioral political economy conceptual framework to support the proposed mechanism that county-level sectoral compositions, weighted by tariff changes, can identify a perceived exposure to protection which is ultimately reflected in demand for protectionist newspaper content. First, I discuss the research of Scheve and Serlin (2025) from whom I have sourced the majority of data in this thesis, and then I discuss the approach of Conybeare (1991) whose research is similarly situated in the Mongrel to McKinley Tariff setting. I then detail the established trade literature from which I motivate my use of shift-share instruments. Lastly, I highlight features of behavioral political economy research that support loosening assumptions of rational choice among individuals and focusing on how individuals perceive trade exposure through their understanding of their economic interests.

2.1 Political Economy of Tariff Preferences in the 19th Century Setting

Conybeare (1991) examines the so-called “cross-sectional structure of protection,” investigating the question of whether the backlash to the McKinley Tariff plausibly caused Republican losses in 1890 midterm elections as reported by Taussig (1910). His research models tariff increments from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 as applied to the top seven manufacturing industries’¹⁹ employment shares for use in a structural model. I borrow some assumptions of this model, including that for majority manufacturing subsamples, demand for tariff protection is positive and individuals more heavily regard their interests as employees than as consumers, which I hypothesize should reflect greater demand for protectionist newspaper content as tariff exposure increases (Conybeare, 1991). When estimating the effects on vote shares for incumbents in 1890, the assumption is that politicians provide protection in exchange for votes, but that there is a declining marginal utility of tariffs for voters, wherein “higher tariff levels may

¹⁹ Notably, Conybeare (1991) omits agricultural tariffs and agricultural employment shares from the model for being inconsequential, highlighting that agricultural tariff provisions stood to benefit only a subset of farmers near the Canadian border. This lends itself to an investigation of heterogeneity by agricultural and manufacturing counties in the signaling effects of tariffs. A robustness check also drops agricultural tariffs and agricultural employment shares from the shift-share estimation to investigate this.

induce a withdrawal of electoral support” and “voters may be wary of a high tariff level but nevertheless still be happy to accept incremental local benefits” (Conybeare, 1991, p. 79). In the end, he argues that the tariff itself likely does not explain the Republican backlash in 1890 elections, citing wider party-related and possibly recession related factors. Still, he shows that congressional tariff setting was targeted to appeal to constituencies who in turn rewarded incumbents with votes which introduces obvious endogeneity in the tariff “shift” component of the shift-share instrument I primarily use for my analysis.²⁰ By examining newspaper slant for or against protectionism as an outcome variable, I apply the logic of modeling tariff exposure in this setting by the employment weighted index of the tariff increment, and perhaps more precisely isolate the public response to the particular tariff issue.

Measuring potential trade exposure and tariff exposure through a county’s industry employment mix is well established in the literature, but the implications arguably vary depending on the historical setting (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001).²¹ Broadly, the Ricardo-Viner model, or the specific factors model, as described by Mansfield and Mutz (2009), posits that trade attitudes are a function of one’s industry of employment, contrasted with the factor endowments model which posits that they are a function of the impact of trade on one’s income. In general, assumptions of the economic interests of agricultural versus manufacturing intense regions for or against trade as it relates to political power follow from foundational research by Rogowski (1987, 1990) as cited in Scheve and Serlin (2025). The “winners” as opposed to the “losers” from trade are expected to leverage their gains to assert political power – a pattern that Scheve and Serlin (2025) reveal does not appear to hold in the case of the late 19th century US, where Republicans captured votes despite overall decreases in transport costs, measured through port access. Crucially, they suggest that given that port access is correlated with a decrease in Democratic party vote shares and coefficients associated with pro- and anti-tariff term frequency measures are significant in the 1880 to 1890 window, then it is likely that the tariff issue in some way affected the observed electoral

20 I note that Grossman and Helpman’s (1994) seminal “Protection for Sale” framework also demonstrates the complexities of endogenous protection through the lens of lobbying, political, and public interests. Such complexities are unaccounted for in my approach, and the discussion of mechanisms driving newspaper slant necessarily consider this endogeneity of tariff setting.

21 Scheve and Slaughter’s (2001) survey research, modeling trade policy preferences as a function of one’s industry of employment and factor type, finds that the industry of employment is not strongly correlated with preferences, showing that asset ownership is more consequential in the US in 1992.

outcomes. Their spatial equilibrium model supports the argument that worker mobility and inflows of protectionist workers, enabled by reduced transportation costs, explain the dilution of free trade interests in agricultural regions (Scheve & Serlin, 2025, p. 916). Their primary outcome variables are related to economic development, in addition to Democratic party vote shares, and the novel measure of the predicted protectionism of newspapers is used to corroborate that the electoral outcomes are related to the issue of protectionism. Scheve and Serlin (2025) and Scheve and Slaughter (2001) in earlier work also assert the factor endowment explanation of trade policy preferences as opposed to the industry of employment argument in the historical and more modern settings, respectively.

Given their suggestion that decreased trade costs are associated with increased support for Republicans, increased protectionist slant in newspapers, and induced changes in the frequency of pro- and anti-tariff terms, implying that the tariff issue was consequential for domestic politics, I aim to extend their analysis by modeling tariff changes explicitly via shift share instruments and considering the industry of employment explanation of preferences. By providing correlational estimates of relative tariff exposure, I can contribute to their insights by showing how much differential salience of the tariff potentially contributes to changes in newspaper slant, and additionally how supply and demand side explanations of protectionist content are reflected in the direction of the estimates.

2.2 Political Economy of Tariffs in the Modern Setting

The empirical research from which I derive the methodological inspiration of shift-share estimations of tariff exposure and the effects of tariff protection on the public is concentrated mostly in the area of the 2018 US-China trade war.²² The broader trade war literature finds significant effects of tariff exposure on electoral outcomes. Fajgelbaum et al. (2020) found that swing counties enjoyed targeted import protection under Trump's tariff regime in 2018. Blanchard et al. (2024) who consider the electoral effects of protective tariffs in addition to foreign retaliatory tariffs (and agricultural subsidies, among other variables) uncovered that the purported benefits of protective tariffs did not compensate for foreign retaliatory tariffs, leading to Republican losses in

²² In the case of Autor et al. (2013), Autor et al. (2016), and Autor et al. (2020), the focus is on the rise of Chinese import competition and trade exposure.

2018 midterm elections. Still, the political signaling effects of tariffs appear powerful. Autor et al. (2024), found that tariff exposed areas in subsequent presidential and congressional elections were more likely to lean Republican, in spite of the only ambiguous benefits from tariff protection and harm from retaliatory tariffs.²³

I follow recent research from Blanchard et al. (2024) with respect to the modeling of tariff exposure and recent guidance on shift-share estimation from Borusyak et al. (2025), but apply it to the 19th century US setting with newspaper slant as the outcome.²⁴ Such guidance includes the use of incomplete share sum controls, balance tests, and controlling for pre-period shifts in the outcome, among others which I address in the identification and robustness sections.

2.3 Behavioral Political Economy Framework

The behavioral political economy literature provides insights on the demand for protectionism that is not explained by rational choice of individual constituents. Further, it can partially explain the efficacy of methods by elites for manufacturing support for protectionism from the supply side. Although mostly situated in modern trade policy settings, I argue that both sides of this literature are useful in speculating on mechanisms driving increases or decreases in protectionist slant in newspapers in the late 19th century, particularly by loosening assumptions of perfect rationality on the expected benefits from tariff protection while also showing that modeling perceptions of tariff exposure by industry employment is a worthwhile approach.

Van Aaken and Kurtz (2019) provide a conceptual framework for challenging the assumption of rational choice of voters in the political economy of trade models. They argue that assuming that individuals act in accordance with personal economic incentives ignores potentially consequential distortions in preferences stemming from cognitive biases. Such cognitive biases that they describe include loss aversion and perceived threats, among others, which in

23 Portion of text adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

24 Scheve and Serlin's (2023) work modeling the exposure to German import competition through a shift-share instrument and examining newspaper-based outcome variables approximates this thesis's approach as well, in terms of gleaning qualitative insights from the dependent variable and employment of shift-share methods.

contemporary settings can be exploited to gain political leverage.^{25 26} These concepts potentially relate to accounts of propaganda strategies by protectionist organizations highlighted by Kusch (2025b), where the author asserts that the APTL relied more on polemic and fear-mongering-based representations of free trade juxtaposed with a simple and rational protectionism, rather than discussions of the economic mechanisms of tariffs (pp. 452-453). Studying correlations between tariff exposure and newspaper slant can therefore point to a demand side mechanism where distortions in the expected benefits from tariff protection drive increased demand for protectionist content, or a supply side mechanism where any detected increases in protectionist slant are concentrated in areas susceptible to these biases.

Taylor (2015) asserts that the electoral salience of a tariff policy, for example, is dependent on transparency. More clearly, the public responds more strongly when the welfare effects of a policy are clear, but less so when the effects are not clear (Taylor, 2015). Although the 1880s reflect an exception since the tariff issue was at the forefront of public and congressional debates, the point that transparency may be correlated with tariff setting and by extension, may affect the public's perceptions of the impacts of policy, is important for speculating on how the various duty types (ad valorem, specific, compound) may differentially affect public sentiments (Taylor, 2015). This relates to Kono's (2006) cross-county research on "optimal obfuscation," where in democracies, non-tariff barriers are inherently obscure in their effects and difficult to communicate, relative to ad valorem tariffs, for example. Mangini (2023) notes that in the modern setting, even the language of product descriptions determine the flexibility offered to firms and are therefore consequential. Levy's (2009) stylized argument is that protectionism itself can come in many forms, whether overtly as in the "Buy American" example, under the guise of alternative goals such as public safety relating to product quality, or potentially as a foreign policy lever. Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to explore these mechanisms properly in the 19th

25 Blanchard et al. (2024) reference loss aversion, drawing on insights from Freund and Özden (2008) and Tovar (2009), in their explanation of the effects of 2018 trade war exposure on voting behavior when additionally taking into account retaliatory tariffs which I do not account for in this thesis: "One hypothesis is that the economic losses from the retaliatory tariffs may have weighed more heavily on voters' minds compared to the potential gains offered by protection against imports; this would be in line with a body of evidence on loss aversion in how the public perceives the gains and losses from trade" (p. 12). Loss aversion is related more so to how protection is concreted in industries with declining profitability.

26 A portion of this text is adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

century setting, I hypothesize that the various duty types and the expansion of related tariff lines may reflect differential protectionist slant in regions receiving protection via specific tariffs, compared to ad valorem tariffs, for example. Taussig (1910) notes that ad valorem duties were implicitly subject to fraudulent manipulation, where goods could be undervalued to evade the full duty and states that “some of these provisions were framed in ambiguous language, giving occasion for troublesome litigation and uncertainty as to the real effect of the legislation” (pp. 221-222).

More recent survey experiment research from Stantcheva (2022) is consistent with industry employment interests being strong determinants of trade policy preferences, with a focus on perceptions of an individual's exposure to trade. Stantcheva (2022) asserts that an individual's occupation represents their direct self-interest and their indirect perceptions about the implications of trade exposure, which both shape policy views.

Ponzetto et al. (2020) also add empirical insights with a focus on how public awareness of an industry affects support for protectionism for that industry. In their working paper, they consider information asymmetries among voters in the 1990s on trade barriers and posit that individuals have greater awareness of the benefits as opposed to the costs of protectionism, but “people are systematically more aware of the trade barriers that benefit them as producers than of those that harm them as consumers” (Ponzetto et al., 2020, p. 3). Increased media coverage of an industry which counteracts these information asymmetries lowers support for trade barriers (Ponzetto et al., 2020).²⁷ This introduces implications for interpretations of the effects of employment-weighted tariff exposure on newspaper slant, in that greater tariff exposure could increase demand for protectionism if employment interests outweigh consumer interests, but increased salience of tariffs for an industry could also lower support for tariffs. Investigating the effects on different newspaper outcome measures, such as pro- and anti- tariff term frequency can reveal aspects of these dynamics.

Overall, insights from the behavioral political economy literature provide the basis for investigating various mechanisms that drive changes in the protectionist slant of newspapers and

²⁷ Portions of text in this section adapted from the author's research proposal submitted to Economic History I, CERGE-EI, 2026 and Research Writing II, CERGE-EI, 2025.

potentially pro- and anti- tariff term frequency. Although concentrated in modern settings, I consider these mechanisms with respect to the historical context as well.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

This thesis considers the industry of employment as a determinant of perceptions of tariff exposure, with the hypothesis that increased perception of tariff exposure through this channel may have an effect of increased demand for protectionist content in local newspapers. Drawing data and context from Scheve and Serlin (2024), Scheve and Serlin (2025),²⁸ Conybeare (1991), and Taussig (1910), the methodological guidance of shift-share instruments from the trade war and trade shock literature (Autor et al., 2013; Autor et al., 2016; Autor et al., 2020; Autor et al., 2024; Borusyak et al., 2022; Borusyak et al., 2025; Blanchard et al., 2024; Fajgelbaum et al., 2020; Flaaen & Pierce, 2024; Scheve & Serlin, 2023), and insights on potential mechanisms that explain the outcomes from the behavioral and adjacent literature (Kono, 2006; Levy, 2009; Mangini, 2023; Ponzetto et al., 2020; Stantcheva, 2022; Taylor, 2015; van Aaken & Kurtz, 2019), I attempt to explain how increased tariff exposure under the McKinley Tariff of 1890 relative to the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 is correlated with changes in the protectionist slant of newspapers. Although the McKinley Tariff per se did not appear to be the primary determinant of electoral backlash in 1890 midterm elections according to Conybeare (1991), examining newspaper slant as the primary outcome may produce different insights, particularly in line with the scholarship on news media bias (Ottinger & Posch, 2025; Masera & Rosenberg, 2021; Petrova, 2011; Gentzkow et al., 2006; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010; Besley & Prat, 2006; Hirano & Snyder, 2024). To the best of my knowledge, directly linking changes in protectionist newspaper slant to tariff changes as a measure of perceived protection in this setting represents a research gap.

3. Data

This thesis relies heavily on replication package data from Scheve and Serlin (2024) from their paper, “Trains, Trade, and Transformation: A Spatial Rogowski Theory of America’s 19th Century Protectionism,” published in the *American Journal of Political Science* (Scheve & Serlin,

²⁸ Scheve and Serlin (2024) refers to the replication data that I employ in this thesis and Scheve and Serlin (2025) refers to the corresponding published paper.

2025). Part of their data provides three key elements for my approach: (1) the dependent variable and alternatives which measure the protectionist slant of newspapers in counties in 1880 and 1890, using textual data scraped from Newspapers.com (n.d.), which I aggregate to the county level; (2) coarsely aggregated industry employment shares measured using county-level census tabulations harmonized to the 1950 industry classification (IND1950), drawn from IPUMS NHGIS and compiled by Scheve and Serlin (2024), which I match to tariff data to construct the shift share instruments; (3) a rich set of county-level control variables from IPUMS NHGIS,²⁹ average soil suitability data calculated from FAO GAEZ (Food and Agriculture Organization Global Agro-Ecological Zoning),³⁰ party votes shares from ICPSR 8611 (Clubb et al., 2006), and variables constructed from Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016) and Hornbeck and Rotemberg (2019), capturing market access.³¹

To measure variation in tariff exposure by county, I construct a new dataset of each tariff line listed in the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890 and map it to the coarse industry employment categories in Scheve and Serlin's (2024) dataset, using the AI tool, Claude Sonnet 4.6 (Extended) for both steps of the procedure. This dataset includes the duty types assigned to distinct products (specific, ad valorem, compound, or free) as well as the magnitude. Due to limitations in the feasibility of obtaining price data to construct ad valorem equivalents of specific and compound tariffs, only ad valorem and the ad valorem components of compound tariffs are used in estimating changes in the magnitude of tariff rate changes. This is a limitation I address and supplement by estimating the effect of changes in the count of specific, ad valorem, and compound duties, to investigate suggestive effects of the transparency of expected protection from tariffs.

29 County-level census tabulations are drawn from IPUMS NHGIS Version 15.0 (Manson et al., 2020), and are used here as compiled and harmonized in the replication materials of Scheve and Serlin (2024), which also incorporate aggregates derived from IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 census data with respect to industry employment shares and the literacy variable (Ruggles et al., 2021), compiled by Scheve and Serlin (2024). Historical state and county boundary files used to generate maps are sourced from IPUMS NHGIS Version 20.0 (Schroeder et al., 2025). These underlying datasets are listed in the references.

30 Soil suitability downloaded from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (n.d.) and calculated in QGIS by Scheve and Serlin (2024). I list the reference for clarity, but only use the data as calculated by Scheve and Serlin (2024).

31 To repeat, all data not related to the changes in tariff rates are obtained via Scheve and Serlin (2024). The separate references to data are included for transparency.

Merging the two datasets along the industry category dimension enables the construction of shift-share instruments which weight changes in tariff lines, whether the magnitude of the ad valorem rate or the count, by county-level industry employment shares. To the best of my knowledge, explicitly connecting this tariff data to county-level newspaper measures of protectionism in this setting represents a gap in the literature. I discuss the variables and some descriptive statistics in greater detail in the following subsections.

3.1 Newspaper Protectionism Measures

Textual data from newspapers are increasingly being used to measure public sentiments, media bias, and the like in economic research as digitization efforts expand (Gentzkow et al., 2019). The high-dimensional nature of text as data warrants the use of machine learning methods in this domain (Gentzkow et al., 2019). Motivated by concerns that electoral outcomes may not fully capture public attitudes toward trade policy and that interesting patterns may emerge when focusing on newspapers, I extend Scheve and Serlin's (2025) analysis and use their measure of the change in predicted protectionist slant of newspapers from 1880 to 1890 as the primary outcome variable of interest.

Scheve and Serlin's (2024) newspaper-decade level dataset provides several complementary measures of a newspaper's protectionist slant that I aggregate to the county-decade level. Based on textual data from the Newspapers.com database, the dataset covers 5,601 digitized newspapers across 1,246 counties from 1860 to 1900 (Scheve & Serlin, 2025, p. 3). Based on exclusion criteria for my cross-sectional estimation, my sample is reduced to the 561 counties which have the predicted newspaper protectionist slant score for both 1880 and 1890, as well as 1880 industry employment shares.³²

An important caveat is that newspaper data is scraped from Newspapers.com for the five years surrounding the start of the decade (Scheve & Serlin, 2025). This means that 1880 newspaper scores are based on textual data published in the window of 1878 to 1882 and 1890 scores are based on the 1888 to 1892 window. Considering that I aim to identify the response of a county's

³² Lack of newspaper data for both 1880 and 1890 to properly compute a change in the protectionist slant constitutes the majority of sample attrition. 1,983 counties are dropped solely for a lack of newspaper data for 1880. When using "hs_protectionism", a relative term frequency based outcome measure, the sample drops to 498 counties.

newspapers to the changes in tariff exposure brought upon by the McKinley Tariff of 1890 which went into effect in October of 1890, this complicates the interpretation of the estimates. The 1880 score captures the pre-period protectionist slant that predated the enactment of the Mongrel Tariff of 1883, although tariff debates were widespread leading up to it (Irwin, 2017). The 1890 score captures the debate in the lead up to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 which was dominated by Democratic proposals to reduce tariffs in the ultimately failed Mills Bill (Irwin, 2017), and the two years post enactment. This means that estimates of changes in the slant of newspapers may be attenuated. Therefore, although clean causal identification is likely not feasible with the current data and empirical strategy, my approach can provide at least correlational evidence to contextualize the tariff debates of the 19th century through the lens of tariff exposure.

3.1.1 Predicted Newspaper Protectionism

The primary dependent variable of choice is the change in the average predicted protectionism score of newspapers in a county, derived using a machine learning based approach by Scheve and Serlin (2025). I refer to this variable as “predicted newspaper protectionism,”³³ when referring to a single county-decade and “delta protectionism” when referring to the change from 1880 to 1890. To construct this variable, a first-stage LASSO model trained on protectionist publications, including those from the American Protective Tariff League (APTL), and free trade publications including those from the American Free Trade League, selects about 300 terms indicative of protectionist slant (see Figure 3) (Scheve & Serlin, 2025). Additionally including the terms “protectionist,” “protectionism,” “imports,” “exports,” “importing,” “exporting,” “tariff,” “foreign trade” or “international trade” to focus on trade-related content, these approximately 300 terms are used as search queries to scrape term frequencies, scaled by the number of articles using any of these terms, from Newspapers.com (Scheve & Serlin, 2025). A second-stage LASSO model uses these term frequencies to predict whether a newspaper was quoted in the *American Economist*³⁴ (an APTL publication), exploiting within-city variation by matching quoted newspapers to others published in the same city, and yielding about 60 weighted terms that are used to produce the final protectionism score (Scheve & Serlin, 2025). These approximately 60

³³ This follows the variable description in codebook of Scheve and Serlin (2024).

³⁴ Texts downloaded by Scheve and Serlin (2024) from Hathitrust.org are used in this procedure.

terms are listed in Table A6 of Appendix no. 6 with their respective LASSO coefficients indicating the weights. In the end, the 1880 predicted newspaper protectionism score is based on newspaper data scraped from 1878 to 1882 and 1888 to 1892 for 1890, and I use the scores as calculated by Scheve and Serlin (2024).³⁵ The word cloud in Figure 3 shows the approximately 300 first stage LASSO selected terms with the size of the word corresponding to the magnitude of the weight and the color corresponding to its sign, indicative of protectionism (in red) and free trade (in blue).

I construct the main dependent variable as the change in the predicted newspaper protectionism score from 1880 to 1890 as follows:

$$\Delta Protectionism = Newspaper Protectionism_{1890} - Newspaper Protectionism_{1880}$$

Delta protectionism has a mean of 0.099, indicating that the magnitude of the change in average protectionist slant of a county's newspapers is small nationally, but potentially heterogeneous, given the cross-county spread. The histogram in Figure 5 shows the distribution of delta protectionism in the 561 county analysis sample, with a minimum of -67, a maximum of 65, and median of 0.58. Table 2 presents the breakdown by region in delta protectionism and shows that the largest positive movement in newspaper slant occurs in the Midwest at 4.2, compared to -7.53 in South. Such behavior is expected given the historical context of import versus export oriented industry dominance in these regions. The sample split in Table 3, showing delta protectionism for above and below median manufacturing counties also show movement in the expected direction, with high manufacturing counties showing a mean increase of 1.5 in predicted newspaper protectionism relative to low manufacturing counties which show a mean decrease of 1.32. This motivates the sample splits in the regression analysis.

³⁵ See Scheve and Serlin (2025) supplementary materials for a more detailed description of the procedure and codebook of Scheve and Serlin (2024) for details of the textual data. Data scraped from Newspapers.com in 2021 as indicated by Scheve and Serlin (2024).

Table 2*Predicted Newspaper Protectionism and Tariff Exposure by Region*

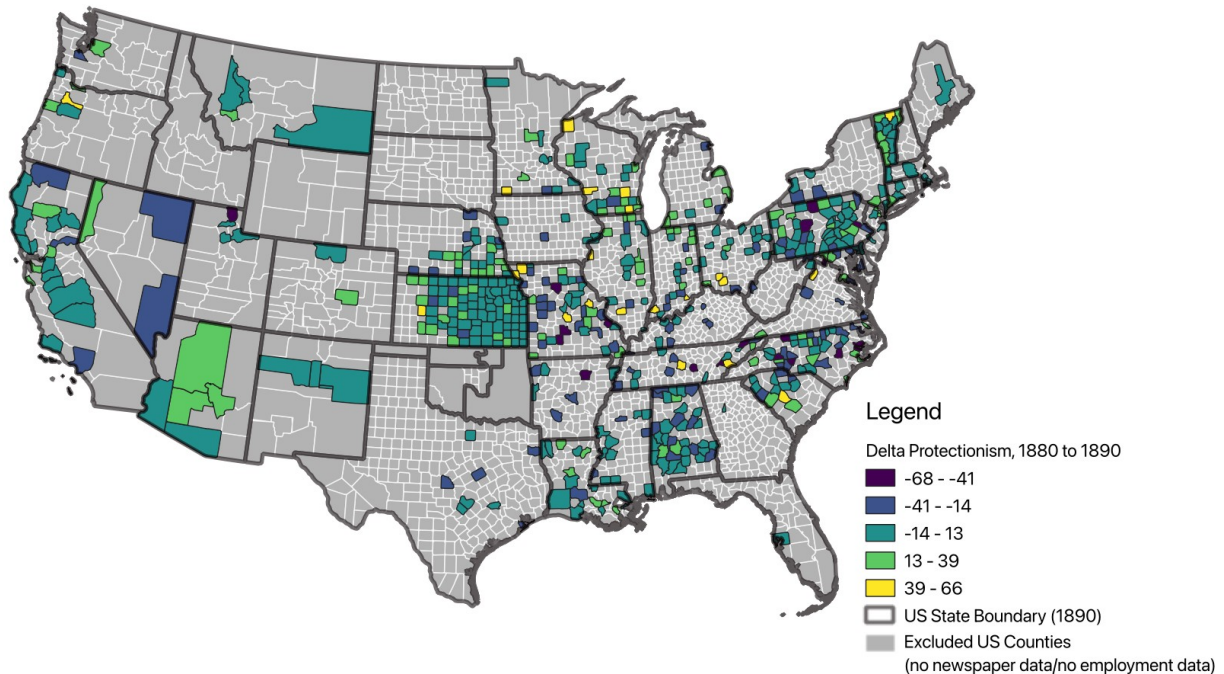
Region	N	Predicted Protectionism Score				Mean Tariff Exposure	
		1880	1890	Δ (SD)	% $\uparrow$	Ad Val. ($\times 100$)	Spec. Count
Midwest	253	41.8	46	+4.20 (21.2)	58.1	1.59	22
West	36	37.6	43.1	+5.45 (16.1)	66.7	1.22	16.2
Northeast	79	48.9	51.1	+2.20 (18.5)	57	1.58	19.1
South	181	38	30.5	-7.53 (21.1)	36.5	1.68	23.3
Territory	12	50.3	49.2	-1.15 (22.8)	58.3	0.94	12.4
Full sample	561	41.5	41.6	+0.10 (21.2)	50.6	1.58	21.5

Notes: Mean predicted newspaper protectionism scores in 1880 and 1890 and the mean change between decades by US region. Standard deviations of the change are in parentheses. % $\uparrow$ reports the share of counties in each region with a positive delta protectionism. Region classifications follow a five-region scheme applied to 1890 state boundaries, including territories as a separate category. Ad valorem exposure is the employment-weighted average ad valorem tariff rate change from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890, scaled by 100. Specific duty count exposure is the employment-weighted net change in specific duty lines.

Figure 4 presents the map of all 561 counties included in the sample and their delta protectionism score, using 1890 state and county boundary shape files from IPUMS NHGIS (Schroeder et al., 2025). Figure 5 presents the corresponding histogram where the bin color corresponds to map values. A visual inspection suggests that there is within-state variation in delta protectionism, motivating the use of state fixed effects in some model specifications to additionally difference out state level confounders.

Figure 4

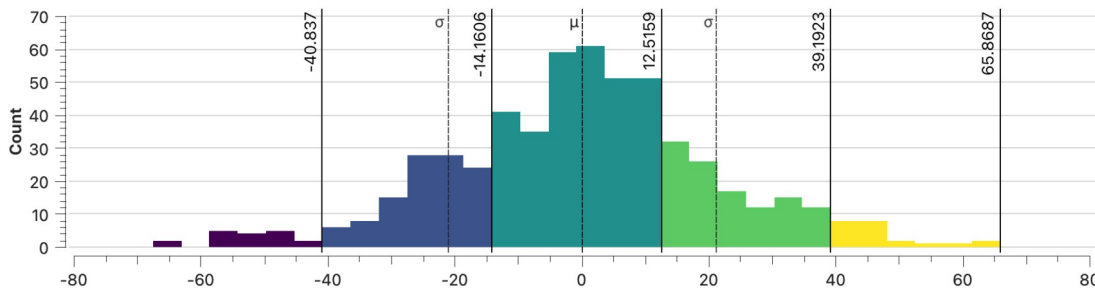
Map of Delta Protectionism



Notes: Map of 561 county sample and the respective delta protectionism score, denoted by the change in county newspapers' average predicted protectionism in 1890 minus that in 1880. Counties in gray are excluded due to lack of newspaper data to construct a score or lack of employment data for later shift-share analysis. Shape files from IPUMS NHGIS, 2000 TIGER/line (Schroeder et al., 2025). Map created by author using QGIS using predicted newspaper protectionism data from Scheve and Serlin (2024).

Figure 5

Histogram of the Distribution of Delta Protectionism, corresponds to map in Figure 4



Notes: Histogram generated in QGIS, 30 bins. Bin color corresponds to map values of delta protectionism in Figure 4. Includes 561 counties with newspaper scores and employment data. Created by author in QGIS using data on predicted newspaper protectionism from Scheve and Serlin (2024).

Table 3

Predicted Protectionism and Tariff Exposure by Manufacturing Intensity

Sample	N	Predicted Protectionism Score				Mean Exposure		Emp. Share	
		1880 (SD)	1890 (SD)	Δ (SD)	% ↑	Ad Val. (×100)	Spec. Count	Ag.	Manuf.
High manuf.	281	44.4 (15.3)	45.9 (22.5)	+1.52 (21.3)	56.2	1.5	19.4	0.45	0.13
Low manuf.	280	38.6 (14.8)	37.3 (19.2)	-1.32 (21.1)	46.8	1.66	23.6	0.75	0.03

Notes: Mean predicted protectionism scores in 1880 and 1890 and the mean change between decades by manufacturing intensity. Standard deviations in parentheses. % ↑ reports the share of counties with a positive delta protectionism. The sample is split at the median share of durable and non-durable manufacturing employment within the analysis sample. Ad valorem exposure is the employment-weighted average ad valorem tariff rate change from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890, scaled by 100. Specific duty count exposure is the employment-weighted net change in specific duty lines. Ag. and Manuf. report mean agricultural (Ind. 1) and combined durable and non-durable manufacturing (Ind. 3+4) employment shares in 1880. Industry employment shares are based on county-level census tabulations from IPUMS NHGIS, harmonized to 1950 industry classifications, and aggregated to coarser categories by Scheve and Serlin (2024).

3.1.2 Additional Newspaper Variables

Additional measures related to newspaper outcomes are available via Scheve and Serlin (2024). The relative frequency of pro-tariff terms, “HS Protectionism” captures a more transparent measure of newspaper slant, as calculated by Scheve and Serlin (2025) in the spirit of Hirano and Snyder (2024). This alternative dependent variable is a frequency-based ratio of pro-tariff to pro- and anti-tariff terms, normalized by the frequency of the word “and” (Scheve & Serlin, 2024). They follow Hirano and Snyder (2024) to define pro-tariff terms as: "protective tariff" or "tariff protection." Anti-tariff terms are: "high tariff", "monopoly tariff", "trust tariff" or "tariff tax." To compute a ratio, the denominator term is the frequency of the word “and” (Scheve & Serlin, 2024).³⁶

Additional measures calculated by Scheve and Serlin (2024) capturing term frequency that I use in alternative specifications include: *tariff mentions* which reports the number of references to "tariff" relative to "and" multiplied by 1000; *anti-tariff terms* which reports the number of references to "high tariff", "monopoly tariff", "trust tariff" or "tariff tax" relative to "and" multiplied by 1000; and *pro-tariff terms* which reports the number of references to "protective tariff" or "tariff protection" relative to "and" multiplied by 1000.³⁷ I use these as dependent variables in alternative specifications to examine changes in transparent rhetorical frequency rather than overall protectionist slant to speculate on demand and supply side explanations of newspaper content. The change in these measures from 1880 to 1890 is constructed identically to the delta protectionism variable in subsection 3.1.1.

3.2 Tariff Data

I compile a new dataset of the tariff lines listed in the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Using the prompt³⁸ reported in Appendix no. 1, the AI tool, Claude Sonnet 4.6 (Extended), extracted each individual tariff line from the text files of the respective legislation, downloaded from the FRASER digital library of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

³⁶ The dictionary of pro-tariff and anti-tariff terms are defined in the codebook of Scheve and Serlin’s (2024) Replication Data on pages 3-4.

³⁷ Descriptions of variables listed in the codebook of Scheve and Serlin’s (2024) Replication Data on pages 3-4.

³⁸ The prompt listed in Appendix no. 1 was generated iteratively using Claude Sonnet 4.6 (Extended) based on the author’s natural language input and a request to optimize the prompt for efficient and accurate data extraction.

This prompt also included the request to assign one of the ten IPUMS 1950 industry code-based categories as aggregated by Scheve and Serlin (2024) to each product line, to reflect the industry most directly and intuitively affected by the tariff. This matching is the basis for constructing the county-level shift share instruments. The resulting dataset includes 1,830 distinct tariff lines, indicating the schedule or free list classification, the product description, the duty type (specific, ad valorem, compound, or free), the value of the duty, and a field for additional notes to capture more complex, product-specific stipulations reflected in the text. Table 4 reports some descriptive statistics of the tariff dataset, including the number of tariffs lines and share of duty types represented.³⁹ Specific tariffs constitute the majority of tariff lines in both the Mongrel and McKinley Tariff, followed by ad valorem tariffs. Relative to the Mongrel Tariff, the share of specific duties increased under the McKinley Tariff, as opposed to ad valorem tariffs which saw a reduction in tariff lines under the McKinley Tariff. The mean ad valorem tariff rate also saw a slight increase. The number of free list items is nearly identical across legislations, and although compound duties comprise the minority of tariff lines, more compound duties were applied under the McKinley Tariff.

Table 4

Tariff Line Composition: Mongrel Tariff (1883) and McKinley Tariff (1890)

Tariff Act	Number of Lines					Share of Lines (%)				Ad Val. Rate
	Total	Specific	Ad Val.	Compound	Free	Specific	Ad Val.	Compound	Free	
Mongrel (1883)	855	329	203	27	296	38.5	23.7	3.2	34.6	0.29
McKinley (1890)	975	447	175	62	291	45.8	17.9	6.4	29.8	0.33
(Δ) McKinley – Mongrel	120	118	-28	35	-5	7.3	-5.8	3.2	-4.8	0.04

Notes: Composition of tariff lines by duty type for the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890, after dropping lines flagged as having unclear duty definitions. Shares sum to 100 within each tariff act. Ad valorem rates are expressed as proportions and are computed over ad valorem and compound duty lines only (230 lines for Mongrel, 237 for McKinley); specific and free list lines carry no ad valorem rate. The Δ row reports the net change between the two acts. Tariff line data were extracted from digitized legislation available in the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRASER digital library database (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, n.d.) using Claude Sonnet 4.6 (Extended) based on author's prompt available in Appendix no. 1 (United States Congress, 1883; 1890).

³⁹ 22 tariff lines from the McKinley Tariff of 1890 are omitted for reasons of unclear attribution in terms of duty type and magnitude of the duty components.

3.2.1 Duty Types

I define the duty types reflected in the tariff dataset as follows.

Ad valorem tariffs assign the import tax based on a fixed percentage of the total value of the good. For example, the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 lists “Candles and tapers of all kinds, twenty percentum ad valorem,” indicating that the importer pays 20% of the value of the candle at the border (United States Congress, 1883, p. 511).

Specific tariffs assign the import tax based on a specific amount per unit of the good. The McKinley Tariff of 1890 for example, lists “Butter, and substitutes therefor, six cents per pound” and “Eggs, five cents per dozen,” indicating that importers would pay six cents per pound of butter and five cents per dozen eggs (United States Congress, 1890, p. 586). The units of measure naturally vary according to the good. Irwin (2020) notes that “the ad valorem equivalent of specific duties is inversely related to the price of imports,” meaning that “exogenous fluctuations in import prices have sometimes produced large changes in average tariffs, even when there was no change in the actual rates of duty set by policy makers and applied to imports” (p. 26). The uncertainty in the effective level of protection is why I attempt to estimate whether specific tariffs generate a distinct signaling effect. If the effective protection is unclear, I hypothesize that this can affect the perceptions and preferences of affected stakeholders, in line also with Taussig’s (1910) accounts of concerns of fraudulent evasion of ad valorem duties.

Compound tariffs have a specific and ad valorem component. In the McKinley Tariff of 1890, cigars are assigned a specific duty of four dollars and fifty cents per pound and an ad valorem duty of 25%:

Cigars, cigarettes, and cheroots of all kinds, four dollars and fifty cents per pound and twenty-five per centum ad valorem; and paper cigars and cigarettes, including wrappers, shall be subject to the same duties as are herein imposed upon cigars. (United States Congress, 1890, p. 585).

Compound tariffs inherit both the ad valorem component and the specific component.

Free list items, for which I code the duty type as “free,” were items that were previously subject to tariffs but declared as duty free. The McKinley Tariff of 1890 created a clear “Free List” heading, declaring that “On and after the sixth day of October, eighteen hundred and ninety, unless

otherwise specially provided for in this act, the following articles when imported shall be exempt from duty” and listed each item with sometimes extremely detailed specifications of what qualified for the provision (United States Congress, 1890, p. 602). A similar format was followed for the Mongrel Tariff of 1883. Addition of an item to the free list was largely welcomed from the consumer perspective – sugar was moved to the free list under the McKinley Tariff partially to quell consumer backlash – even though it implies a removal of protection (Irwin, 2017).

3.2.2 Mapping Industries to Tariff Lines

Table 5 reports the shares of duty types by the five aggregated industries for each respective tariff act. Using the prompt in Appendix no. 1, Claude Sonnet 4.6 (Extended) mapped an industry to each individual tariff line.⁴⁰ The possible industry categories attributed to tariff lines, due to their representation in the newspaper-decade dataset from Scheve and Serlin (2024) include: agriculture, forestry, and fishing; construction; mining; durable goods manufacturing; non-durable goods manufacturing; transportation and telecommunications; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; business and repair services, personal services, entertainment and recreation, and professional services; and public administration and others (Scheve & Serlin, 2024). Only the first five categories, agriculture/forestry/fishing, construction, mining, durable goods manufacturing, and non-durable goods manufacturing are applied to tariff lines, based on the most direct and intuitive match between industries and products. This approach is prone to measurement error in that it largely ignores the complexity of input versus output interests, as well as export vs import-oriented industries. These distinctions are arguably somewhat accounted for given the coarse industry categories, for example, the agriculture category was largely export-oriented and sample splits address heterogeneity in light of this. Additionally, the aim of this thesis is to assess signaling and salience of tariff changes in the short-term, which this intuitive approach

40 In light of concerns of measurement error from potential AI hallucinations, I manually checked a random set of 50 tariff lines out of the 1,852 in the dataset against the source legislation for accuracy – 25 from the Mongrel Tariff and 25 from the McKinley Tariff. I also worked closely with the dataset to ensure no transcription errors would interfere with expected values of variables. The classification of products under 15 distinct schedules also aided in visual inspection that products were correctly attributed to the proper schedule. In total, I omitted 22 tariff lines for which the duty type and magnitude were unclear due to product-specific stipulations. All omitted lines were classified under the McKinley Tariff. Fourteen omitted lines related to non-durable goods manufacturing, eight omitted lines related to durable goods manufacturing industry.

supports given a loosened assumption of perfect rationality of the individual county-level stakeholders (workers employed in the industry).

Table 5

Tariff Line Structure by Industry and Act, in Shares of Tariff Lines

Tariff Act	Industry	N	Share of Tariff Lines (%)				Ad Val. Rate
			Specific	Ad Val.	Compound	Free	Mean
Mongrel (1883)	Agriculture	113	31.9	5.3	0	62.8	0.25
	Construction	36	83.3	11.1	0	5.6	0.28
	Mining	50	14	8	0	78	0.18
	Durable manuf.	190	41.1	38.9	0	20	0.31
	Non-durable manuf.	466	38.2	24.7	5.8	31.3	0.29
McKinley (1890)	Agriculture	145	45.5	9	0	45.5	0.27
	Construction	40	57.5	42.5	0	0	0.26
	Mining	53	11.3	3.8	0	84.9	0.18
	Durable manuf.	258	51.9	30.6	10.1	7.4	0.35
	Non-durable manuf.	479	45.5	13.4	7.5	33.6	0.35
(Δ) McKinley – Mongrel	Agriculture		13.6	3.7	0	-17.3	0.02
	Construction		-25.8	31.4	0	-5.6	-0.01
	Mining		-2.7	-4.2	0	6.9	0
	Durable manuf.		10.8	-8.3	10.1	-12.6	0.04
	Non-durable manuf.		7.3	-11.3	1.7	2.3	0.06

Notes: Each row reports the composition of tariff lines by duty type for a given industry and tariff act. *N* denotes the total number of tariff lines assigned to that industry. Shares sum to 100 within each industry–act cell. Ad valorem rates in the final column are expressed as proportions and are computed over ad valorem and compound duty lines only; specific and free list lines carry no ad valorem rate. The bottom panel reports the change in duty type shares (percentage points) and the change in the mean ad valorem rate between the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 and the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Industry categories correspond to the 1950 industry classification (IND1950) and are measured using county-level census tabulations from IPUMS NHGIS. Industries include agriculture, forestry, and fishing (105–126); construction (246); mining (206–239); durable goods manufacturing (306–399); and non-durable goods manufacturing (406–499), as aggregated by Scheve and Serlin (2024). Tariff line data were extracted from digitized legislation available via the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRASER digital library database (United States Congress, 1883; 1890).

3.3 Shift-Share Instruments

Using the industry employment shares provided via the Scheve and Serlin (2024) replication package and the tariff dataset with each tariff line assigned to one of five industry categories, I construct several shift-share instruments. In this section, I present the construction of these variables and discuss identification assumptions in the following Empirical Approach section (Section 4). First, to assess effects of variation in the magnitude of tariff increases, I construct a shift-share instrument which weights the change in the ad valorem rate for an industry by the corresponding county-level industry employment shares. I note that this omits all specific tariffs and the specific components of the compound tariffs. Therefore, I then turn to alternative shift-share instruments that capture the number of changes in duty types for an industry, under the assumption that this too can have effects on the perceptions of tariff protection which can reflect changes in protectionist newspaper slant.

As Blanchard et al. (2024) demonstrate to measure exposure to the 2018 trade war, tariff exposure can be computed by interacting product level data tariff data and a county's initial employment mix.⁴¹ I take a straightforward approach, given data constraints and inspired by Kovak (2013), where the tariff exposure variable is a weighted average of the changes in trade policy, or as Blanchard et al. (2024) articulate, the industry-level tariff changes. Flaaen and Pierce (2024) additionally demonstrate that shift-share instruments can be employed in the reduced form manner, where the variable does not enter in a two-stage least squares instrumental variables estimation, but rather as a regressor itself, the implications of which I address in subsequent sections.

The first shift-share specification captures exposure to changes in the magnitude of ad valorem tariffs. Weighting the change in the average ad valorem rate in each of the five industries with products represented in the Mongrel and McKinley tariffs by the county's lagged (1880) employment share in that industry, yields a county-level aggregation of tariff exposure:

$$AdValoremExposure_c = \sum_k (EmploymentShare_{ck, 1880} \times \Delta \overline{AdValoremRate}_k)$$

⁴¹ Blanchard et al. (2024) compute US tariff shocks in addition to retaliatory tariff shocks in dollar-per-worker terms by multiplying percentage point changes in the tariff rate, weighting the shocks by bilateral trade values, mapping the national industry shocks corresponding to the county's national share of industry employment, and aggregating the shocks before dividing by the county population.

where $\Delta \overline{AdValoremRate}_k$ is the difference in the average ad valorem tariff rate in industry k between the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 and McKinley Tariff of 1890. In this specification, I also take into account the ad valorem components of compound duties, omitting the specific tariff component. $EmploymentShare_{ck, 1880}$ is the 1880 share of county employment attributed to industry k , based on guidance from the shift-share literature to employ sufficiently lagged, pre-treatment shares, even if such shares are not clearly exogenous (Borusyak et al., 2025).

Counties with higher employment shares in industries that experienced larger average ad valorem rate increases receive higher $AdValoremExposure_c$.⁴² Figure 6 shows the geographic distribution of the ad valorem exposure instrument of the 561 counties included in the analysis. Table 6 additionally reports summary statistics of the ad valorem shift-share instrument by region, in addition to the specific duty count instrument which I define in the subsequent section. For interpretability of estimates, I scale $AdValoremExposure_c$ by 100. Higher ad valorem tariff exposure is concentrated in the South, followed by the Midwest, Northeast, West, and counties which were a part of territories at this time. The coarseness of the industry employment data, the omission of a majority of the tariff lines, and the limited subsample of counties with newspaper data is reflected in the relatively scant distribution of this tariff exposure. I acknowledge this as a limitation of the thesis, with the note that a more disaggregated approach would lend itself to a more robust analysis.

Table 6

Shift-Share Tariff Exposure by Region

Region	Ad Valorem Magnitude ($\times 100$)				Specific Duty Count		
	N	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median
South	181	1.68	0.28	1.77	23.3	4.37	24.6
Midwest	253	1.59	0.2	1.61	22	3.22	22.6
Northeast	79	1.58	0.48	1.54	19.1	4.57	20.1
West	36	1.22	0.4	1.13	16.2	5.89	17.5
Territories	12	0.94	0.36	0.86	12.4	5.39	11.4
Full sample	561	1.58	0.33	1.63	21.5	4.7	22.6

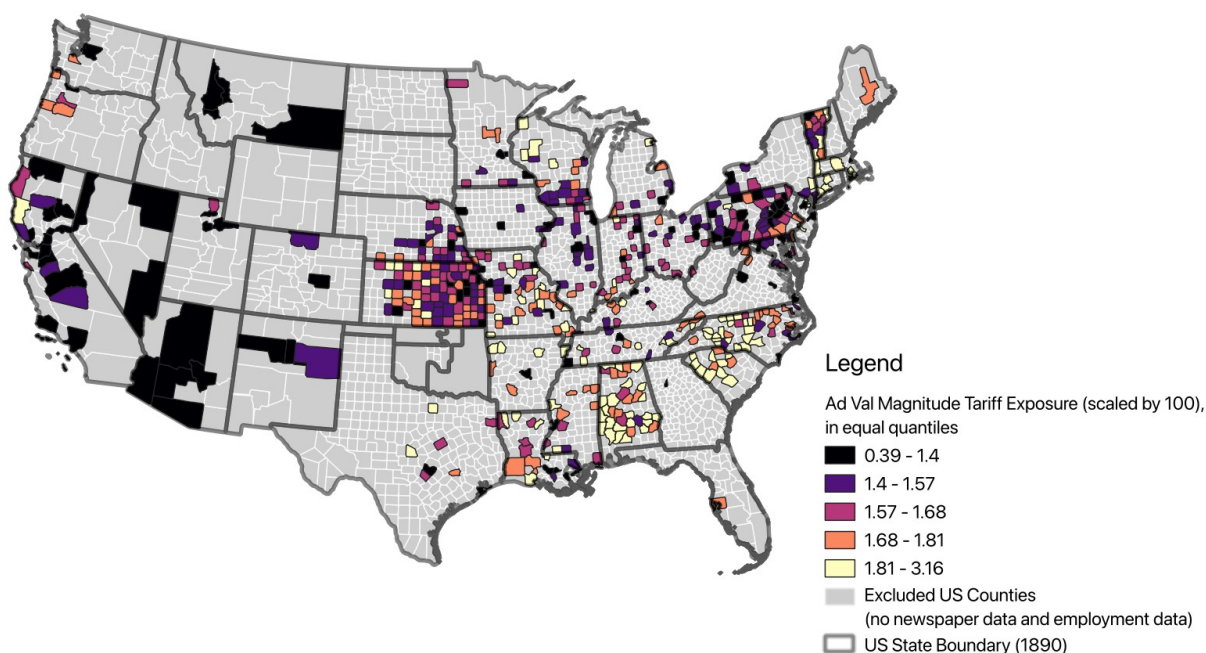
Notes: Mean, standard deviation, and median of the main shift-share tariff exposure variables by US region, computed over the 561-county analysis sample. Region classifications follow a five-region scheme applied to 1890

⁴² This shift-share could be applied to changes in ad valorem equivalents and thus include all tariffs in the schedule, but a lack of price data to compute the ad valorem equivalents for specific and compound tariffs prevents me from estimating this.

state boundaries, including territories as a separate category. Ad valorem magnitude exposure is the employment-share-weighted change in the average ad valorem tariff rate from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890, scaled by 100. Specific duty count exposure is the employment-share-weighted net change in the number of specific duty lines between the two acts. Both instruments use 1880 industry employment shares as weights, based on county-level census tabulations from IPUMS NHGIS, harmonized to 1950 industry classifications, and aggregated to coarse categories by Scheve and Serlin (2024).

Figure 6

Map of Geographic Distribution of Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-Share Tariff Exposure by county



Notes: Map shows the county-level ad valorem magnitude shift-share tariff exposure variable for the 561 counties in the analysis. Excluded counties in gray do not have newspaper data for both 1880 and 1890, and some are missing 1880 employment shares. Shift-share variable calculated as indicated in subsection 3.3. Shape files from IPUMS NHGIS, 2000 TIGER/line, reflecting 1890 state and county boundaries (Schroeder et al., 2025). Map created by author using QGIS using 1880 employment shares based on county-level census tabulations from IPUMS NHGIS, harmonized to 1950 industry classifications, and aggregated to coarse categories by Scheve and Serlin (2024) and tariff data compiled by author to compute the shift-share measure.

Seeing as specific tariffs constituted the majority of tariff lines, another specification instead uses the count of the change in duty type as the “shift,” capturing whether an industry

received relatively more specific duties under the McKinley Tariff of 1890 compared to the Mongrel Tariff of 1883. I construct it in a similar manner as follows:

$$SpecificDutyCountExposure_c = \sum_k (EmploymentShare_{ck, 1880} \times \Delta SpecificDutyCount_k)$$

where $\Delta SpecificDutyCount_k$ is the net change in the number of tariff lines assigned a specific duty in industry k from the Mongrel Tariff to the McKinley Tariff. Higher $SpecificDutyCountExposure_c$ indicates that a county had employment in industries that gained a greater number of specific duty lines under the McKinley Tariff relative to the Mongrel Tariff baseline. Tariff exposure by region using this shift-share instrument is reported in Table 6 where Southern counties have the highest tariff exposure. Figure 7 presents a map of specific duty shift share tariff exposure by county.

For completeness, I also construct separate shift-share variables of the net change in duty type counts for ad valorem duties, compound duties, and free list items. Lastly, I also compute the net change in the count of all protective tariff lines (ad valorem, specific, and compound), subtracting free list items. Comparing the estimates allows for a discussion on the correlations between duty types and newspaper protectionism and to comment on the robustness of count-based measures. The table in Appendix no. 2 reports the distribution of all shift-share instruments for the full 561 county sample.

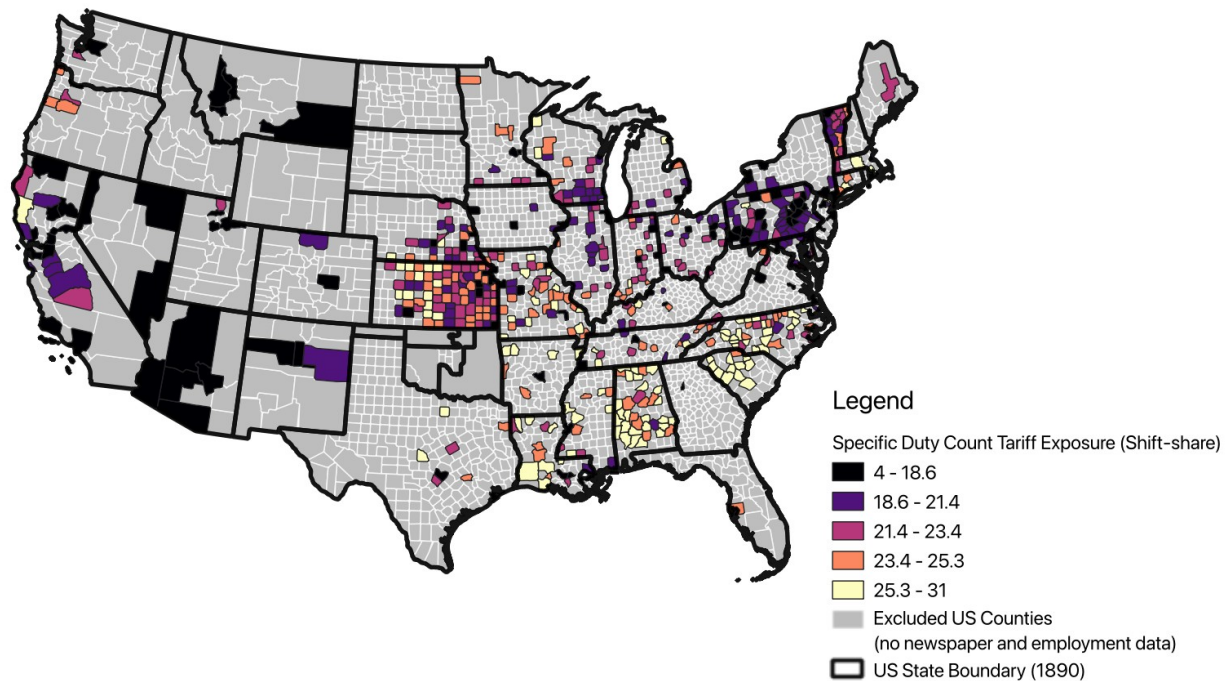
Some limitations of the shift-share approach are revealed here. Firstly, the variation in shift-share tariff exposure is relatively thin, driven by both the omission of a substantial portion of the tariff lines in each measure and the exclusion criteria which limit the analysis to these 561 counties with newspaper data. Due to the lack of precision in the industry categories, there is also room for measurement error, meaning that estimates stemming from the shift-share tariff exposure as the regressor should be interpreted with caution.

Another note is that tariff exposure through my shift-share instruments also appears concentrated in Southern counties, likely driven by the higher overall levels of agricultural employment in 1880. Conybeare (1991) notes that the agricultural tariffs under McKinley, though aimed at broadening the protectionist base “were trivial and only benefited farmers within a few hundred miles of the Canadian border” (p. 62). In the robustness subsection, I estimate the shift-

share instruments which omit the agricultural tariffs to isolate the effects of non-agricultural tariff exposure on newspaper slant.

Figure 7

Map of Geographic Distribution of Specific Duty Count Shift-Share Tariff Exposure by county



Notes: Map shows the county-level specific duty count shift-share tariff exposure variable for the 561 counties in the analysis. Excluded counties in gray do not have newspaper data for both 1880 and 1890, and some are missing 1880 employment shares. Shift-share variable calculated as indicated in Section 3.3. Shape files from IPUMS NHGIS, 2000 TIGER/line, reflecting 1890 state and county boundaries (Schroeder et al., 2025). Map created by author using QGIS using 1880 employment shares based on county-level census tabulations from IPUMS NHGIS, harmonized to 1950 industry classifications, and aggregated to coarse categories by Scheve and Serlin (2024) and tariff data compiled by author to compute the shift-share measure.

3.4 Control Variables

In an attempt to isolate the effect of tariff exposure on protectionist newspaper slant, I use several county-level controls for the decade 1880.⁴³ The county-level control variables all come from the replication dataset of Scheve and Serlin (2024), including two measures capturing market access calculated from transportation network data of Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016), updated by Hornbeck and Rotemberg (2019), demographic controls sourced from 1880 census data from IPUMS NHGIS,⁴⁴ and Republican party votes shares in the 1880 and 1888 presidential elections sourced from ICPSR 8611 (Clubb et al., 2006), for use in robustness checks.

The market access and trade connectivity variables are captured by two infrastructure measures that serve as the key determinants of voting patterns and protectionist newspaper slant in Scheve and Serlin's (2025) research, calculated from the Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016) and the updated Hornbeck and Rotemberg (2019) transportation infrastructure data. The first is railroad access, calculated as the log of the length of the railroad track within 40 miles of the county centroid. Including this variable holds equal the potential for railroad connectivity which implies greater domestic market integration which could plausibly affect trade exposure and baseline economic interests. The second measure, port access, is the log inverse of the iceberg transportation cost to the nearest major port. Scheve and Serlin (2025) demonstrate that falling transportation costs drove rising protectionism over the late 19th century through migration of protectionist workers. Including both as controls aids in isolating the effects of tariff exposure through the specific legislative change in 1890, rather than capturing the underlying domestic and international market access.

The demographic controls capture confounding variables on the county-level. I include the log of urban population, the log of total county population, and a categorical literacy variable capturing the average literacy score. In the four categories, 1 is coded to "illiterate," 2 indicates "cannot read, can write," 3 indicates "cannot write, can read," and 4 indicates "can read and write" (Scheve & Serlin, 2024). These variables should account for the readership capacity and

⁴³ I employ lagged controls variables also on account of these data being largely unavailable for 1890.

⁴⁴ As mentioned previously, county-level census tabulations are drawn from IPUMS NHGIS Version 15.0 (Manson et al., 2020), and are used here as compiled and harmonized in the replication materials of Scheve and Serlin (2024), which also incorporate aggregates derived from IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 census data with respect to industry employment shares and the literacy variable (Ruggles et al., 2021).

newspaper audience size.⁴⁵ I further control for the sectoral composition using the employment shares in the industries not included in the shift-share instruments: transportation and telecommunications (506-598), wholesale and retail trade (606-699), finance, insurance, and real estate (716-756), and business and personal services (806-899). These correspond to the 1950 industry classification (IND1950) and are measured using county-level census tabulations from IPUMS NHGIS as aggregated into coarser categories by Scheve and Serlin (2024). I omit the final category, public administration (906-991) as the shares sum to one. Introducing these shares as controls allows for them to absorb differences in sectoral composition. It is likely important to account for the services industries that include wholesale and retail trade and finance, insurance, and real estate which do not enter into the shift-share instrument, but likely imply protectionist and free trade stances which can affect demand for newspaper content. When estimating the sample splits of high and low manufacturing counties, the threshold is the median of the sum of non-durable and durable goods manufacturing employment in 1880.

For robustness exercises, the county-level Republican party vote share variables in Scheve and Serlin's (2024) replication package come from ICPSR 8611 (Clubb et al., 2006), allowing me to control for the county-level partisan alignments prior to the McKinley Tariff with respect to the 1880 and 1888 vote shares on the subset of counties with this data available. Average cotton and wheat suitability as calculated in QGIS by Scheve and Serlin (2024) from FAO GAEZ data are employed in balance tests to assess possible selection based on geographic variables which may speak to sectoral compositions. Additional indicators of economic development such as the number of firms, number of farms, value of farming products, values of manufacturing products, farm values, and capital for 1880 from IPUMS NHGIS census data via Scheve and Serlin (2024) are also employed in these balance tests.

3.5 Summary Statistics of Regression Sample and Sample Attrition Note

Table A3 in Appendix no. 3 reports the complete summary statistics of the analysis sample, including the 561 counties for which newspaper data are collected for 1880 and 1890 with non-missing employment data. Table 7 presents the balance table, comparing the 1880 observables of

⁴⁵ Population size, and wealth not accounted for in this model, appear to be determinants of newspaper advertising revenues according to Hirano and Snyder (2024). Controlling for population size therefore can to an extent capture the likelihood that newspapers are more independent as opposed to strongly partisan (Hirano & Snyder, 2024).

the 561 counties included in the analysis and that of the 2,063 counties that are excluded. In-sample counties differ significantly on nearly all 1880 observables, with the exception of the share of mining industry employment and the share of transportation and telecommunications industry employment. Additionally, excluded counties do not differ significantly in terms of market integration variables of log port access or log railroad length. Otherwise, in-sample counties are significantly larger, more urban, have more manufacturing employment, and exhibit greater economic development. This is likely driven by the exclusion criteria, which requires counties to have newspaper data collected for both 1880 and 1890. Excluded counties also exhibit higher values of tariff exposure as measured by the primary shift-share instruments capturing changes in ad valorem rates and the number of specific duties.⁴⁶ This indicates the in-sample counties may be particular, and the external validity of the estimates may be limited. In the following section, I outline in greater detail my empirical strategy, accompanied by the regression specifications.

⁴⁶ It is possible that significant differences in tariff exposure also reflect measurement error in the shift-share measures stemming from the exclusion of the majority of tariff lines due to the lack of granular price data.

Table 7*Sample Balance: In-Sample vs. Excluded Counties*

Variable	Mean (In)	Mean (Out)	Difference	p-value	
Panel A: Demographics and Market Access					
Log population	9.89	8.96	0.93	0	***
Log urban population	4.07	1.82	2.24	0	***
Log port access	-0.17	-0.18	0.01	0.28	
Log railroad length	3.33	3.2	0.13	0.17	
Foreign-born share	0.11	0.1	0.01	0.09	†
Panel B: 1880 Industry Employment Shares					
Agriculture (ind_1)	0.6	0.67	-0.08	0	***
Construction (ind_2_construction)	0.04	0.03	0.01	0	***
Mining (ind_2_not_construction)	0.02	0.02	0	0.87	
Non-durable manuf. (ind_3)	0.04	0.03	0.01	0	**
Durable manuf. (ind_4)	0.04	0.03	0.01	0	***
Transportation & telecom (ind_5)	0.04	0.03	0	0.16	
Wholesale & retail (ind_6)	0.06	0.04	0.02	0	***
Finance, ins. & real estate (ind_7)	0	0	0	0	***
Business & personal services (ind_8)	0.15	0.12	0.03	0	***
Panel C: Agricultural Suitability					
Wheat suitability	1915	1710	205	0	***
Cotton suitability	104	95	9.55	0.01	*
Panel D: Shift-Share Tariff Exposure					
Ad valorem magnitude (scaled)	1.58	1.66	-0.08	0	***
Specific duty count	21.5	23	-1.53	0	***
Ad valorem duty count	2.9	3.76	-0.86	0	***
Compound duty count	1.4	1.11	0.28	0	***
Free list count	-3.13	-3.49	0.36	0	***
Total duty count	28.9	31.4	-2.46	0	***
Panel E: Economic Development in 1880 (log values)					
Capital	12.3	10.4	1.9	0	***
Number of farms	7.37	6.52	0.84	0	***
Value of products	12.9	10.9	1.95	0	***
Farm value	15	13.6	1.31	0	***
Farm output	13.6	12.4	1.13	0	***
Number of firms	4.16	3.06	1.11	0	***
Value of materials	12.5	10.5	1.94	0	***
In-sample <i>N</i>	561 counties				
Excluded <i>N</i>	2,063 counties				

Notes: This table compares 1880 county-level characteristics between the 561 counties included in the analysis sample and the 2,063 excluded counties. Inclusion requires newspaper data in both 1880 and

1890 and non-missing 1880 employment shares. The difference column reports mean(in-sample) – mean(excluded). p-values are from Welch's two-sample t-tests assuming unequal variances. Economic development variables are log-transformed. Table created by author using data via Scheve and Serlin (2024). Variables in Panel A are sourced via Scheve and Serlin (2024), including both IPUMS NHGIS census data aggregates for population and literacy variables, and railroad and port access variables computed by Scheve and Serlin (2024) using data from Hornbeck and Rotemberg (2019). Employment shares in Panel B also sourced from IPUMS NHGIS data via Scheve and Serlin (2024) and soil suitability measures are county averages calculated in QGIS from FAO GAEZ data by Scheve and Serlin (2024) for Panel C. Shift-share tariff exposure variables in Panel D are constructed by author as described in subsection 3.3. Economic development variables in Panel E also sourced from IPUMS NHGIS data via Scheve and Serlin (2024).

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

4. Empirical Approach

This section describes the empirical approach used to examine the relationship between the change in county-level tariff exposure from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 and the change in protectionist newspaper slant from 1880 to 1890. By constructing county-level measures of exposure to the legislative changes in the McKinley Tariff of 1890, I investigate whether variation in tariff exposure can explain variation in the changes in protectionist newspaper slant in 1890 relative to the start of the decade in 1880. Given constraints in the data and identification challenges inherent to this setting, my analysis does not claim to establish causality in the effect of tariff changes on public demand for protectionist content in newspapers. Instead, I aim to systematically investigate whether correlational patterns in the data are consistent with certain behavioral political economy mechanisms, and to discuss the potential demand and supply side explanations of changes in the protectionist content in newspapers, conditional on increased tariff exposure.⁴⁷

While taking a cross-sectional approach, I draw on shift-share methodologies applied in the contemporary trade war literature and the broader trade shock literature (Autor et al. 2013;

⁴⁷ Rather than focusing on long-term effects which additionally take into account realized tariff incidence, I attempt to examine how short-term public responses to the changes in the tariff schedule may reflect their perceptions of the expected benefits from tariff protection, through the assumption that industry employment determines economic interest.

Autor et al. 2020; Blanchard et al., 2024; Borusyak et al., 2022; Borusyak et al., 2025; Flaaen & Pierce, 2024; Scheve & Serlin, 2023) and that are proven relevant in the Mongrel to McKinley setting when measuring electoral outcomes (Conybeare, 1991). Importantly, despite its name, the shift-share instrument does not enter the model through a typical instrumental variable (IV) estimation using two-stage least squares (2SLS) to instrument an endogenous regressor. Goldsmith-Pinkham et al. (2020) note that shift-share instruments, also referred to as Bartik (1991) instruments can be employed in a reduced form manner, but that they still retain the requirement of the exclusion restriction (p. 2589).⁴⁸ In this thesis, the shift-share instrument is the regressor, or the treatment itself, which is valid under restrictive assumptions of exogeneity of the “shifts” (Adão et al., 2019; Borusyak et al., 2025).⁴⁹

This cross-sectional approach applies several strong assumptions that I discuss the limitations of in subsequent sections: that newspaper content reflected in the outcome variable is demand-driven, and not confounded by the influence of lobbying interests and political mobilization efforts which I am unable to control for in the model; that the 1880 sectoral employment shares constitute a pre-determined industry structure independent of the McKinley Tariff’s changes to the tariff schedule; and conditional on controls, the national tariff shifts are plausibly exogenous and uncorrelated with unobservable political and economic geography factors. With the qualification that these identification assumptions are unlikely to hold and that data constraints prevent robust statistical inference, I acknowledge that this serves primarily as a correlational exercise providing information on the patterns of newspaper responses to the controversial and salient McKinley Tariff of 1890.⁵⁰

The empirical approach proceeds in two stages which both employ a cross-sectional ordinary least squares (OLS) regression of the change in protectionist newspaper slant on a shift-share measure of tariff exposure, clustering standard errors at the state level.⁵¹ I progressively apply

48 Flaaen and Pierce (2024) notably employ a shift-share instrument in the reduced form when estimating the effects of the 2018 trade war on domestic manufacturing outcomes.

49 The shift-share literature of Borusyak et al. (2022), Borusyak et al. (2025), Goldsmith-Pinkham et al. (2020), and Adão et al. (2019) guide the identification discussion and robustness exercises employed in this thesis.

50 The discussion of mechanisms also takes into account the possibility of reverse causality by examining both potential supply side and demand side mechanisms driving protectionist slant.

51 With only 42 states, the number of clusters is fewer than 50, but Angrist and Pischke (2008) argue that 42 clusters are still sufficient. However, as state fixed effects are applied, singleton counties are dropped from the regression, as well as in the case of the sample splits, which reduces the number of clusters further. Table notes

controls and state fixed effects. I first consider the shift-share instrument which uses the change in the magnitude of average ad valorem tariff rates as the “shift” component. I then estimate an alternative shift-share instrument using the net change in the count of specific duties by industry.⁵² Anticipating heterogeneity in the responses of majority manufacturing versus agricultural counties to tariff changes, I also run separate regressions based on a sample split based on above and below median sums of non-durable and durable manufacturing employment shares. Figure 8 shows that this split largely represents a North and South split with some exceptions, particularly in the West and Midwest.

The two-pronged approach with the shift-share is primarily motivated by data constraints, but also serves the signaling mechanism that I seek to explore. Ideally, increased tariff exposure under the McKinley Tariff in its most interpretable form would be proxied by an increase in the ad valorem equivalent rates across all tariff lines, where specific duties and compound duties are transformed to a percentage-based expression using product-level price data, in the spirit of Klein and Meissner (2024) and Greenland and Lopresti (2024). I failed to access this product-level price data, matched to the more than 800 specific and compound duty related tariff lines in the dataset. This means that my first estimation uses only ad valorem duties and the ad valorem components of compound duties in the shift-share tariff exposure variable, entirely omitting specific duties which constitute a sizable portion of duties applied to the 1,852 tariff lines across the two legislations, at about 42%. Therefore, the baseline specification estimates the change in average ad valorem tariff rates for an industry (including the ad valorem component of compound duties, omitting the specific component), weighted by industry employment shares. In light of the potentially interesting variation in newspaper responses driven by the specific tariff duties, which may differ in their interpretability relative to ad valorem tariffs, the alternative specification measures the net change in the count of specific duty lines by industry. Following Irwin’s (2020) insight that the ad valorem equivalents of specific tariffs fluctuate with world prices, implying that their effective protection is hard to assess or concretely predict and Taussig’s (1910) insight on fraud concerns associated with ad valorem tariffs, this approach may provide suggestive evidence

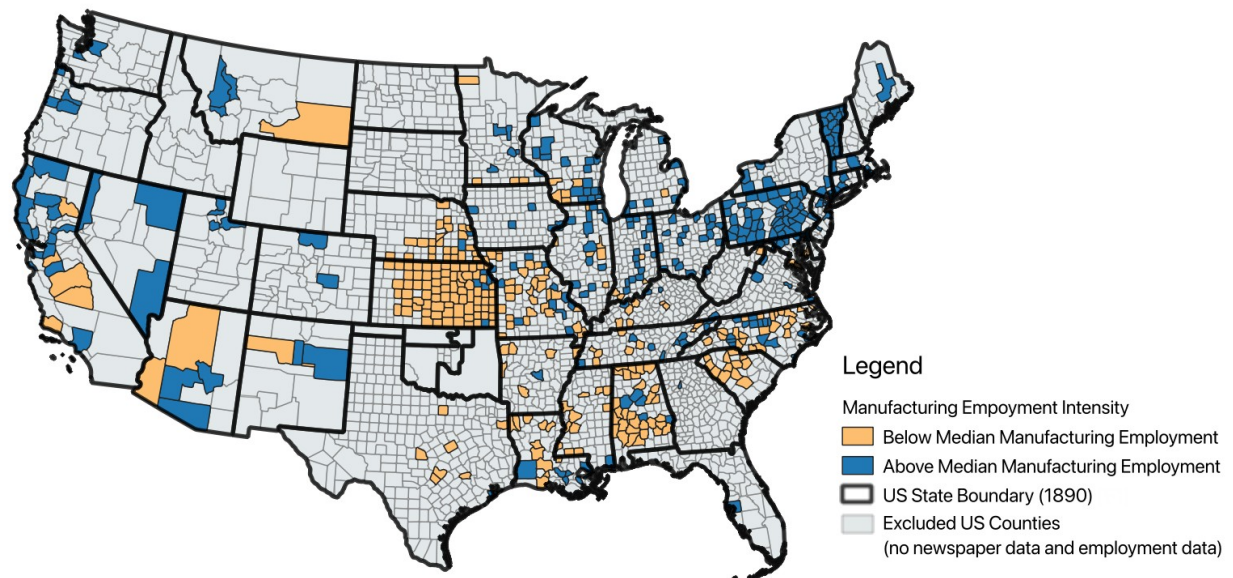
report the number of clustered for given specifications and cautious interpretation of the standard errors is encouraged in the case of extremely few clusters.

⁵² For completeness, I also report estimates of the shift-share instruments which use the counts of ad valorem duties, compound duties, and free list item classifications.

for an opacity channel by which specific tariffs increase or decrease demand for protectionist slant in newspapers. To also explore the effects of tariff exposure on salience of tariffs in newspapers through term frequency based outcomes, rather than overall protectionist slant, I also estimate alternative outcome measures using the main shift-share instruments.

Figure 8

Map of counties with above and below median manufacturing employment shares



Notes: Maps shows counties classified as having above (in blue) and below (in yellow) median manufacturing employment shares in 1880. Median manufacturing employment share computed by summing the share of non-durable and durable goods manufacturing employment in a county in 1880 and splitting at the median of the 561 county regression sample. Shape files sourced from IPUMS NHGIS, 2000 TIGER/line, 1890 state and county boundaries (Schroeder et al., 2025). Map generated by author in QGIS using IPUMS NHGIS census data on industry employment shares aggregated to coarse categories based on 1950 industry codes by Scheve and Serlin (2024), computing indicators for above and below median counties.

4.1 Regression Specification of Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-Share

I first use the shift-share instrument capturing changes in the ad valorem magnitude change, defined in subsection 3.3 as $AdValoremExposure_c$, in OLS regressions of delta protectionism as follows:

$$\Delta Newspaper\ Protectionism_c = \alpha_s + \beta \cdot AdValoremExposure_c + \gamma \cdot X_{c,1880} + \delta \cdot S_c + \varepsilon_{cs}$$

where $\Delta Newspaper\ Protectionism_c$ is the change in the county-level average predicted newspaper protectionism score from 1880 to 1890, representing changes in protectionist slant. $AdValoremExposure_c$ is the shift-share tariff exposure measure for county c . $AdValoremExposure_c$ should capture the extent to which increases to protection through the newly implemented McKinley Tariff are salient for a county. α_s captures the state fixed effects to absorb unobserved heterogeneity between states and to isolate within-state variation. Because these one-way fixed effects lower the number of clusters due to singletons in the data, I also report coefficients without state fixed effects, especially in the case of the high and low manufacturing sample splits. $X_{c,1880}$ is a vector of 1880 county-level controls including the log of railroad track length within 40 miles of the county centroid (log railroad), and the log inverse iceberg transportation cost to the nearest major port (log port access) to capture trade connectivity on the county-level as per the model of Scheve and Serlin (2025). Demographic controls include the average literacy score, the log of urban population, and the log of total population to capture readership capacity of newspapers on the county-level. To also capture sectoral composition not reflected in the shift-share measure, it includes the share employed in transportation and telecommunications, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance, and real estate, and business and personal services. The shares employed in public administration are omitted to prevent collinearity, since the shares sum to one. Following Borusyak et al. (2025), I control for the sum of employment shares across the five shift-share industries, $S_c = \sum_k s_{ck,1880}$, as it accounts for the “incomplete shares” problem where these five industries do not account for all employment in each county. Including S_c as a control ensures that the shift-share measure captures variation in the composition of the workforce across industries, rather than mechanically correlating with a

county's share of these industries. ϵ_{cs} is the error term, with standard errors clustered at the state level. This regression specification is then examined in a sample split, for counties with above and below median manufacturing employment shares separately, omitting state fixed effects. I also estimate this specification separately with the alternative, term-frequency based newspaper dependent variables which similarly capture the differences in means from 1880 to 1890.

4.2 Regression Specification of Specific Duty Count Shift-Share

Seeing as specific duties comprised the majority of tariff lines in both the Mongrel and McKinley Tariffs, I aim to capture industry-level variation applied to county sectoral employment shares through an admittedly crude measure – the change in the count of specific duties applied to products in the McKinley Tariff relative to the Mongrel Tariff. This alternative specification uses the net change in the count of specific duties applied to tariff lines by industry to construct the shift-share instrument, as described in subsection 3.3: $SpecificDutyCountExposure_c$. The OLS regression specification is identical to the aforementioned estimation in Section 4.1, with this alternative shift-share instrument:

$$\Delta Newspaper\ Protectionism = \alpha_s + \beta \cdot SpecificDutyCountExposure_c + \gamma \cdot X_{c,1880} + \delta \cdot S_c + \epsilon_{cs}$$

I also estimate the above and below median manufacturing sample split for this specification, but limit some of the robustness exercises to the ad valorem tariff exposure measure for brevity. Additionally, I replace this count-based shift-share regressor which focuses on specific duties with the various duty types in alternative specifications.

4.3 Identification

Given limitations in confidently satisfying identification assumptions and issues with statistical inference due to data constraints, the results of this analysis should be taken with caution and interpreted as merely correlational. In this subsection, I address the identification assumptions of as good as random “shifts,” discuss the endogeneity concerns of the shift-share given historical context, and provide a note on statistical inference issues before presenting the main results.

Adão et al. (2019) derive the statistical properties of the OLS estimator in the shift-share case and outline that the “shifters” should be as good as randomly assigned conditional on controls (p. 1952). As per the guidance of Borusyak et al. (2025), relying on exogenous shifts requires the presence of many exogenous shifts, which the five coarsely aggregated industry categories in my estimation likely do not reliably accommodate. For the exogenous shares case, strong assumptions of the exogeneity or pre-determinedness of lagged employment shares must also contend with the confounding relationship between sectoral compositions and constituency interests which can influence tariff setting (Conybeare, 1991; Grossman & Helpman, 1994).

An argument in favor of the tariff shifts possibly affecting protectionist newspaper sentiments only through the increments observed in the legislation is narrative evidence that the McKinley Tariff was rather quickly composed, and many compromises were made with respect to the nominal rates with the expectation that they could be later reduced (Irwin, 2017). Irwin (2017) directly quotes William McKinley’s explanation for approving the high tariff rates:

for the best reason in the world, to get my bill passed. My idea was to get the act through Congress, and to make necessary reductions later. I realized that some things were too high, but I couldn’t get my bill through without it . . . No tariff bill was ever framed that was not largely made up by compromises. (p. 269).

Therefore, because of the nature of the rate setting, the granular tariff increments that in turn affect public perceptions of protection from the tariffs and then expressed in demand for protectionist newspaper content could potentially satisfy this assumption. However, given the extended historical context, these shifts likely do not measure quasi-random variation in exposure to tariffs. Lobbying interests were powerful in asserting their interests which historical accounts argue are reflected in the tariff structure itself (Irwin, 2017).⁵³ Klein and Meissner (2024) and Greenland and Lopresti (2024) both acknowledge the problem of endogenous tariff setting and employ an IV using exogenous price changes which is arguably not appropriate in this thesis’s setting, given the coarseness of the newspaper outcome measure which is generated from data pooled across five year windows for each respective decade.

⁵³ Theoretical frameworks of the political economy of tariff setting also support this, for example that of Grossman and Helpman (1994).

Nonetheless, I follow the guidance of Borusyak et al. (2025) in administering tests for the “exogenous shifts” case with the caveat that the assumption of sufficiently many shifts for proper statistical inference is violated⁵⁴ and the assumption of as-good-as random shifts is questionable given historical context. I begin with reporting the results of the county-level balance tests and a pre-trends falsification test.

4.3.1 Supplementary Balance Test

As per Borusyak et al. (2025) I conduct unit-level balance tests.⁵⁵ First, as a supplementary balance test, I regress the shift-share instruments on the “pre-period,” 1880, newspaper variables calculated from Newspapers.com by Scheve and Serlin (2024), average county-level soil suitability characteristics calculated from FAO GAEZ by Scheve and Serlin (2024), and log transformed measures of economic development such as the number of firms, numbers of farms, the value farm output, and the value of manufacturing products, from IPUMS NHGIS via Scheve and Serlin (2024). These variables should capture whether higher tariff exposure in 1890 is predicted by pre-period newspaper rhetoric, soil characteristics which may proxy for sectoral compositions, and economic development indicators. This balance test also incorporates the industry employment share categories not included in the shift-share instrument construction, and the sum of industry employment shares used in constructing the shift-share instrument. Table 8 indicates that the shares employed in transportation and telecommunications as well as shares employed in business and personal services significantly predict *ad valorem* tariff exposure at the 5% level. The average log value of farm output in 1880 negatively predicts tariff exposure while the average log value of manufacturing products in 1880 positively predicts tariff exposure, both significant at the 5% level.⁵⁶ Such presumably mechanical correlation with economic variables is expected given the construction of the shift-share instruments, but are noted for transparency

⁵⁴ Borusyak et al. (2025) recommend implementing exposure robust standard errors on the shift-level for proper statistical inference. With only five industries and thus only five “shifts,” this procedure has substantially reduced power. For consistency, I report cluster robust standard errors, clustered at the state level for all tests and results and implement exposure robust standard errors in the final part of the robustness section.

⁵⁵ Borusyak et al. (2025) additionally recommend shift-level balance tests, but with a low number of industries and a lack of appropriate industry-level proxies for confounders, such tests are ultimately uninformative in this setting.

⁵⁶ The balance test regressing specific duty count tariff exposure on the same covariates yields similar results, with the exception that the value of farm outputs is not significant.

seeing as I cannot rule out that tariffs may have targeted counties in ways that would also affect newspaper outcomes.

Notably, no newspaper outcome related coefficients on the 1880 baseline are statistically significant aside from a small coefficient on the frequency of tariff mentions which is marginally significant at the 10% level. These results suggest that conditional on the controls specified in subsection 4.1 and state fixed effects, the shift-share instruments may be uncorrelated with pre-existing newspaper outcomes related to protectionism.

Table 8*County-Level Balance Test: Ad Valorem Tariff Exposure on 1880 County Characteristics*

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	t-statistic	
Panel A: Shift-Share Control				
Sum of industry employment shares	1.08	0.11	9.63	***
Panel B: Main Regression Controls				
Log population	-0.03	0.04	-0.77	
Log urban population	0	0	0.6	
Literacy score	0.07	0.05	1.42	
Log railroad length	-0.01	0.03	-0.3	
Log port access	0.43	0.53	0.82	
Transportation & telecom (ind_5)	-3.03	0.91	-3.33	**
Wholesale & retail (ind_6)	0.8	0.67	1.19	
Finance, ins. & real estate (ind_7)	3.95	5.32	0.74	
Business & personal services (ind_8)	-1.12	0.32	-3.45	**
Panel C: Agricultural Suitability				
Wheat suitability	0	0	0.41	
Cotton suitability	0	0	0.7	
Panel D: Pre-Period Newspaper Outcomes				
Predicted Newspaper Protectionism score	0	0	0.24	
Pro-tariff terms (per 1000)	0	0	-0.59	
Anti-tariff terms (per 1000)	0	0	1.32	
Tariff mentions (per 1000)	0	0	-1.91	†
Panel E: Economic Development				
Number of firms (log)	-0.01	0.03	-0.3	
Number of farms (log)	0.04	0.04	1.1	
Farm output (log)	-0.05	0.03	-2.13	*
Value of manufactured products (log)	0.03	0.01	2.07	*
Panel F: Model Fit				
Observations	556			
State fixed effects	Yes (37 states)			
Within R^2	0.57			

Notes: This table reports a county-level balance test regressing the ad valorem magnitude shift-share tariff exposure measure on pre-period county characteristics, conditional on the sum of shift-share industry employment shares and control variables as defined in subsection 4.1 and state fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the state level (37 clusters). The dependent variable is the ad valorem magnitude shift-share exposure variable scaled by 100. All control

variables are measured for 1880. Economic development variables are log-transformed ($\log(x + 1)$). Non-tariff data sourced from replication data of Scheve and Serlin (2024).

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

4.3.2 Pre-trends Falsification Test

As per Borusyak et al. (2025) I investigate whether either shift-share instrument is correlated with pre-existing trajectories in protectionist newspaper slant, leverage the change in predicted newspaper protectionism from 1870 to 1880, available for a subset of 342 counties represented in the regression sample and regress it on the ad valorem shift-share measure and the specific duty count shift-share measure. Following Autor et al. (2013), this pre-trends falsification exercise, otherwise known as an outcome-based balance test (Borusyak et al., 2025), should lessen concerns of reverse causality and identify the period-specific effects of the exposure measure if no significant correlation is found.

Panel A of Table 9 reports these results which show that the ad valorem tariff exposure shift-share instrument significantly predicts changes in newspaper protectionism from 1870 to 1880, which precedes the analysis window. This indicates that effects estimated using this shift-share instrument may capture a pre-existing trajectory toward greater protectionist slant in newspapers, rather than a response to the McKinley Tariff, or alternatively, that previous protectionism increases the probability of being more tariff exposed later on, consistent with models of demand for tariffs from constituencies (Conybeare, 1991). The specific duty count shift-share measure on the other hand does not significantly predict the pre-period change in protectionist slant. This may, however, speak more to the weak predictive power of this variable rather than exogeneity.

I discuss the implications of this subsample in more detail in the robustness section where I address Panels B and C, but note preliminarily that controlling for the pre-trend in delta protectionism on this subsample yields larger coefficients, suggesting omitting this variable attenuates estimates rather than inflating them. However, it is not possible to verify this for the counties without 1870 newspaper data. Therefore, I consider the results with the possibility of reverse causality and pre-trend trajectories in newspaper slant.

Table 9*Pre-trend Falsification Test*

	Ad Valorem Tariff Exposure		Specific Count Tariff Exposure	
	1	2	3	4
	Controls	+State FE	Controls	+State FE
Panel A: Pre-period outcome (Δ Prot. 1870–1880)				
Tariff exposure	6.300* (2.56)	7.560† (4.05)	0.49 (0.38)	0.46 (0.45)
Panel B: Main outcome (Δ Prot. 1880–1890)				
Tariff exposure	7.710* (3.4)	10.800** (3.87)	0.955* (0.45)	1.170* (0.55)
Panel C: Main outcome (Δ Prot. 1880–1890), pre-trend control				
Tariff exposure	9.16** (3.45)	13.0** (4)	1.07* (0.47)	1.3* (0.54)
Δ Protectionism 1870–1880	−0.230** (0.07)	−0.288*** (0.07)	−0.229** (0.07)	−0.284*** (0.07)
N	342	333	342	333
Clusters	41	32	41	32

Notes: Panel A reports the coefficient on the shift-share tariff exposure variable when the dependent variable is the pre-period change in county-level predicted protectionism from 1870 to 1880. Panel B reports the coefficient on the same exposure variable when the dependent variable is the main outcome, Δ Protectionism 1880–1890, on the identical 342-county subsample, with no pre-trend control. Panel C reports the coefficient on the shift-share tariff exposure variable when the 1870–1880 delta protectionism score is included as a control. The subsample is restricted to counties with non-missing newspaper protectionism scores in 1870, 1880, and 1890, covering 61% of the main analysis sample of 561 counties, resulting in 342 observations. Number of observations are also reduced due to removal of singleton county observations when state fixed effects are applied. Full controls are included. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the state level (41 clusters in main 342-county sample and reduced to 32 when state fixed effects are applied due to removal of singleton counties).

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

4.3.3 Robustness Plan

I employ a series of robustness exercises including the use of alternative newspaper outcome measures, reporting coefficients from regressions using alternative count-based shift-share instruments, controlling for the 1870 to 1880 delta protectionism for the subsample of 342 counties, checking for sensitivity of estimates to using party vote shares as controls, and I follow

Conybeare (1991) and omit agricultural tariffs in construction of the shift-share instruments. Lastly, I estimate exposure robust standard errors for the main specifications as per Borusyak et al. (2025) to highlight concerns in the correlation structure assumed under the state level clusters that I employ. I address these robustness checks in subsection 5.4.

5. Results

5.1 Main Results

5.1.1 Ad Valorem Tariff Exposure

Ad valorem tariff exposure, measuring the change in the average magnitude of ad valorem tariffs weighted by industry employment shares, is scaled by 100 for interpretability. I report the results of the OLS regressions of delta protectionism on this shift-share variable in Table 10, progressively applying controls, state fixed effects, and estimating the model on the high and low manufacturing sample split. Seeing as the low number of clusters as well as infeasibility of implementing exposure robust standard errors applies across specifications, these results are merely correlational. From this point, I interpret coefficients in terms of a one standard deviation increase in the shift-share tariff exposure.

As shown in Table 10, a one percentage point increase in ad valorem tariff exposure is associated with about a 6.012 unit increase in protectionist slant in newspapers and is significant at the 5% level without state fixed effects. This indicates that a one standard deviation increase in tariff exposure is associated with an increase in a county's predicted newspaper protectionism score of about 2 points, equivalent to about 0.094 standard deviations of the outcome. When state fixed effects are applied, isolating the within-state variation, the coefficient becomes slightly larger, equivalent to 0.1 standard deviations of the outcome, but becomes only marginally significant, suggesting that variation between states that are absorbed by the fixed effects partly confound the baseline estimate.

Descriptively, high and low manufacturing counties show diverging relationships between tariff exposure and changes in protectionist newspaper slant. The unconditional binned scatter plots in Figures 9 and 10, illustrate this for the ad valorem magnitude shift-share and specific duty count shift-share, respectively. A caveat is that there is little visual overlap in tariff exposure

between these sample splits, meaning that these coefficients should be interpreted with caution. When splitting into high and low manufacturing employment counties, the coefficients on ad valorem tariff exposure move in the expected directions. For high manufacturing counties, an increase in ad valorem tariff exposure is associated with a 6.9 unit increase in newspaper protectionist slant, and is significant at the 5% level. This translates to a one standard deviation increase in tariff exposure being associated with a 2.7 point increase in delta protectionism, which is about 0.13 standard deviations of the outcome. When state fixed effects are applied, the coefficient is stable, but becomes statistically insignificant.

The coefficient for low manufacturing counties is smaller in magnitude and negative, at a 2 point decrease in delta protectionism, about -0.092 standard deviations of the outcome, but is statistically insignificant. These results are consistent with increased tariff exposure generating positive demand for protectionist content in newspapers, more strongly for high manufacturing counties where the expected benefits of protectionism are likely the most overt and salient.

The low manufacturing coefficient flips signs when state fixed effects are applied, exhibiting a small, positive association between tariff exposure and increased protectionist slant, about 0.017 standard deviations of the outcome. This may point to a demand side explanation where tariff exposure is counterintuitively perceived as positive according to behavioral mechanisms outlined in the behavioral political economy framework. Or by contrast, a supply side explanation, where smaller, but still positive increases in protectionist slant in counties that did not stand to benefit from tariffs reflect injection of pro-protection propaganda by special interests. Although not significant, such mechanisms are discussed in more detail when examining alternative newspaper outcome estimates, despite the nullity of the results.

Table 10*Regressions of the Change in Protectionist Newspaper Slant on Ad Valorem Tariff Exposure*

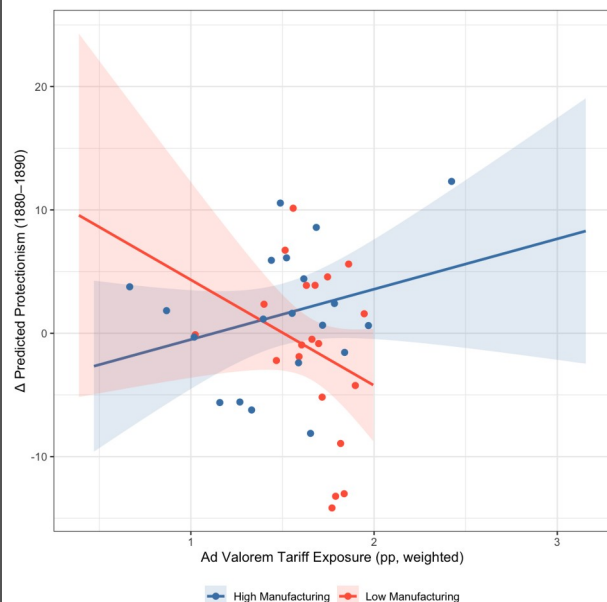
	Full Sample			Manufacturing Split			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	No Controls	Controls	+State FE	High Manuf.	+State FE	Low Manuf.	+State FE
Ad valorem exposure (×100)	0.03	6.012*	6.562†	6.890*	6.86	-8.91	1.77
	(2.6)	(2.97)	(3.95)	(3.08)	(4.53)	(9.03)	(8.12)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Incomplete share control	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	561	561	556	281	273	280	276
R ²	0	0.08	0.19	0.06	0.2	0.12	0.25

Notes: OLS regression results. Dependent variable is Δ Protectionism, the change in county-level average predicted newspaper protectionism score from 1880 to 1890. The regressor is a shift-share instrument, the employment-share-weighted change in the average ad valorem tariff rate from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890, scaled by 100. Controls include log total population, log urban population, literacy score, log railroad, log port access, and employment shares in transportation and telecommunications, wholesale and retail trade, finance and real estate, and business and repair services/personal services/entertainment and recreation/ professional services. The incomplete share control is the sum of employment shares across the five shift-share industries, included per Borusyak et al. (2025). Columns (4) and (5) show the sample split above the median manufacturing employment share within the analysis sample, without state fixed effects and with state fixed effects, respectively. Columns (6) and (7) show the sample split below the median manufacturing employment share within the analysis sample, without state fixed effects and with state fixed effects, respectively. Full controls are included but coefficients suppressed for brevity. Number of observations are reduced due to removal of singleton county observations when state fixed effects are applied. Cluster robust standard errors clustered at the state level (42 clusters in full sample in columns (1) and (2); 37 clusters in column (3); 41 clusters for high manufacturing subsample and 33 with state FE; 23 clusters for low manufacturing subsample and 19 with state FE) in parentheses. Low number of clusters indicate that inference should be treated with caution.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

Figure 9

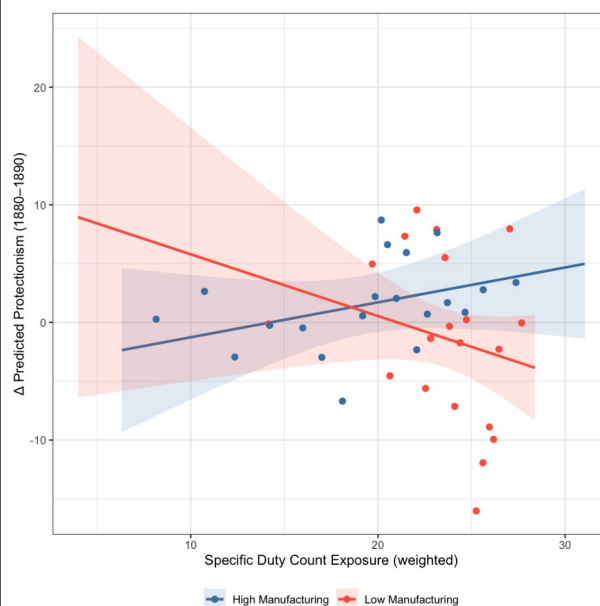
Binned Means and Linear Fit of Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-Share Tariff Exposure and Delta Protectionism, by Manufacturing Intensity



Notes: Points are within-group binned means (20 equal-sized bins per subsample) of ad valorem magnitude shift-share tariff exposure and the change in county-level predicted newspaper protectionism from 1880 to 1890. Lines show OLS regressions of Δ protectionism on tariff exposure estimated on the full 281 above-median and 280 below-median counties (not on the binned points), with shaded 95% pointwise confidence bands. No controls or fixed effects applied; cluster-robust inference is reported in Table 10. Graph is descriptive.

Figure 10

Binned Means and Linear Fit of Specific Duty Count Shift-Share Tariff Exposure and Delta Protectionism, by Manufacturing Intensity



Notes: Points are within-group binned means (20 equal-sized bins per subsample) of specific duty count shift-share tariff exposure and the change in county-level predicted newspaper protectionism from 1880 to 1890. Lines show OLS regressions of Δ protectionism on tariff exposure estimated on the full 281 above-median and 280 below-median counties (not on the binned points), with shaded 95% pointwise confidence bands. No controls or fixed effects applied; cluster-robust inference is reported in Table 11. Graph is descriptive.

5.1.2 Specific Duty Tariff Exposure

Motivated by the lack of representation of specific duties in the ad valorem magnitude specification, despite them comprising the majority of duties under both tariffs acts, I report the results of OLS regressions of delta protectionism on the specific duty count based shift-share instrument in Table 11. The sample splits without state fixed effects in Columns (4) and (6) are directionally consistent with the expectations of positive responses to tariff exposure for above median manufacturing counties and the opposite for below median manufacturing counties, but the coefficients are null across specifications. To provide an idea of the magnitude, a one standard deviation increase in specific duty tariff exposure, indicating that a county's sectoral mix sees more specific duties applied to relevant products, is associated with a 0.092 standard deviation increase in delta protectionism, which increase to 0.126 with state fixed effects. For high manufacturing counties, the magnitude increases further, equivalent to about 0.14 standard deviations of the outcome, without state fixed effects and 0.15 with state fixed effects. For low manufacturing counties, a similar pattern as in the previous section occurs: without state fixed effects, low manufacturing counties see a decrease in protectionist slant equivalent to about -0.052 standard deviations, which flips signs to 0.052 standard deviations with state fixed effects. It should be noted that these sample splits naturally induce less shift-share tariff exposure variation considering that agricultural employment is one industry category in the shift-share compared to manufacturing which enjoys two separate categories. Additionally, the estimates are similarly sensitive to the inclusion of state fixed effects in Columns (5) and (7) as for the ad valorem tariff exposure shift-share measure in the previous section.

Table 11

Regressions of the Change in Protectionist Newspaper Slant on Specific Duty Count Shift-share Tariff Exposure

	Full Sample			Manufacturing Split			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	No Controls	Controls	+State FE	High Manuf.	+State FE	Low Manuf.	+State FE
Specific duty count exposure	-0.09	0.42	0.57	0.6	0.65	-0.34	0.36
	(0.19)	(0.31)	(0.43)	(0.38)	(0.53)	(0.54)	(0.47)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Incomplete share controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	561	561	556	281	273	280	276
R ²	0	0.07	0.19	0.05	0.2	0.12	0.25

Notes: Dependent variable is Δ Protectionism, the change in county-level average predicted newspaper protectionism score from 1880 to 1890. The regressor is a shift-share instrument, the employment-share-weighted net change in the count of specific duty lines from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Controls include log total population, log urban population, literacy score, log railroad access, log port access, and employment shares in transportation and telecommunications, wholesale and retail trade, finance and real estate, and business and repair services/personal services/entertainment and recreation/ professional services. The incomplete share control is the sum of employment shares across the five shift-share industries, included per Borusyak et al. (2025). Columns (4) and (5) show the sample split above the median manufacturing employment share within the analysis sample, without state fixed effects and with state fixed effects, respectively. Columns (6) and (7) show the sample split below the median manufacturing employment share within the analysis sample, without state fixed effects and with state fixed effects, respectively. Full controls are included but coefficients suppressed for brevity. Number of observations are reduced in the full sample due to removal of singleton county observations when state fixed effects are applied. Cluster robust standard errors clustered at the state level (42 clusters in full sample in columns (1) and (2); 37 clusters in column (3) as five singletons are removed when state fixed effects applied; 41 clusters for high manufacturing subsample and 33 with state fixed effects; 23 clusters for low manufacturing subsample and 19 with state fixed effects) in parentheses. Low number of clusters indicates that inference should be treated with caution.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

5.2 Alternative Outcome Variables

I also report the results of both ad valorem magnitude shift-share and specific duty count shift-share specifications which use alternative newspaper outcome variables in Table 12. These include term frequency outcomes from Scheve and Serlin (2024). For both shift-share instruments, there appears to be a positive effect of tariff exposure on the frequency of pro-tariff terms. For the ad valorem measure, this effect is equivalent to 0.07 standard deviations of the outcome and is statistically significant. For the specific duty count measure, the effect is larger, at about 0.166 standard deviations and is statistically significant. However, these results are not robust to the inclusion of state fixed effects, and in the case of ad valorem tariff exposure, flips signs and diminishes almost entirely. The specific duty count measure also seems to predict a small increase in tariff mentions, but this effect diminishes with state fixed effects.

Table 12

Regressions of Alternative Newspaper Outcomes on Specific Duty Count and Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-share Tariff Exposure

	Spec. Count Tariff Exposure		Ad Valorem Tariff Exposure	
	1	2	3	4
Outcome	Controls	+State FE	Controls	+State FE
Panel A: Primary outcome				
Δ Protectionism	0.42 (0.31) [561]	0.57 (0.43) [556]	6.012* (2.97) [561]	6.562† (3.96) [556]
Panel B: Term frequency outcomes				
Δ Pro-tariff terms	0.621*** (0.17) [561]	0.09 (0.3) [556]	3.710* (1.85) [561]	-0.49 (3.5) [556]
Δ Anti-tariff terms	0.26 (0.39) [561]	-0.12 (0.51) [556]	0.04 (3.93) [561]	-3.08 (5.14) [556]
Δ Tariff mentions	1.810* (0.92) [561]	0.18 (1.19) [556]	10.1 (9.41) [561]	-4.68 (13.6) [556]
Panel C: Other outcomes				
Δ HS protectionism	0.54 (0.66) [498]	0.73 (0.93) [494]	4.63 (5.99) [498]	7.55 (8.34) [494]
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incomplete share	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Each cell reports the coefficient on the shift-share exposure variable for a given outcome–specification combination. The specific duty count and ad valorem magnitude exposures are as defined in subsection 3.3. Number of observations in brackets below standard errors (in parentheses) are reduced due to removal of singleton county observations when state fixed effects are applied. Δ Pro-tariff terms and Δ Anti-tariff terms are changes in the frequency of pro- and anti-tariff phrases per 1,000 references to "and." Δ Tariff mentions is the change in overall tariff term frequency per 1,000 references to "and." Δ HS protectionism is the change in the Hirano–Snyder protectionism measure of relative frequency of pro-tariff terms and has 498 observations (494 with state FEs) due to missingness in the underlying term frequency data. These data are calculated from a Newspapers.com scraping procedure by Scheve and Serlin (2024). Full controls and incomplete share control are included in all specifications. Cluster robust standard

errors clustered at the state level (42 clusters in controls-only specifications in columns (1) and (3), with the exception of Δ HS Protectionism in Panel C where the number of clusters is 41 controls only and 36 with state fixed effects; 37 clusters in columns (2) and (4) as five singletons are removed when state fixed effects applied). Low number of clusters indicates that inference should be treated with caution.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

When considering the magnitude and sign, ignoring the lack of statistical significance of coefficients in the state fixed effects specifications, one can speculate on the shape of discourse on the tariff issue as a function of increased tariff exposure. Counties in the same state that had relatively higher ad valorem tariff exposure appear to have exhibited fewer pro-tariff mentions (0.49 unit decrease, or 0.01 of a standard deviation), but a stronger decrease in anti-tariff phrases relative to this (3 unit decrease, or -0.054 of a standard deviation). This is consistent with an overall, marginally significant increase in overall protectionist slant, represented by the coefficient on delta protectionism of 6.56 (about 0.1 of a standard deviation). Without state fixed effects, both specifications exhibit an overall increase in all term-frequency-based measures, with the largest coefficients on the change in overall tariff mentions, followed by the change in pro-tariff terms. This may reflect the overall increased salience of tariff issues around 1890 relative to the start of the decade, which is consistent with historical context. Pro-tariff terms are defined as references to "protective tariff" or "tariff protection" relative to "and" scaled by 1000 (Scheve & Serlin, 2024). The positive coefficients indicate that justifications for the tariff in the context of infant industry protection, consistent with Irwin's (2020) framework of the tariff evolving toward restriction rather than revenue during this time, became more frequent in newspapers. Anti-tariff terms, by contrast, show much smaller positive changes, indicating some persistence in the frequency of anti-tariff rhetoric, which in this measure encompass references to "high tariff", "monopoly tariff", "trust tariff" or "tariff tax" relative to "and" scaled by 1000 (Scheve & Serlin, 2024). With state fixed effects, there is a larger decrease in anti-tariff terms and overall tariff mentions relative to the smaller decrease in pro-tariff terms. A caveat is that the frequency of the pro- and anti- tariff phrases do not account for the nuance of tariff discourse. Newspapers could refer to and quote arguments of the opposite side whether to criticize or to present a balanced view of the tariff issue. Therefore, the coefficients are likely sensitive to the choice of dictionary.

Assuming that term frequency to an extent reflects local demand of rhetorical framing of the tariff issues in newspaper content, the direction of coefficients would indicate that more tariff exposed counties wanted to read about tariffs, were more receptive to justifications for the tariff related to protection, and to a lesser extent demanded content that framed the tariff as a reflection of elite interests. Motivated by the insights of Petrova (2011), Gentzkow et al. (2006), Masera and Rosenberg (2021), and Ottinger and Posch (2025) on the role of external interests in newspaper content, I also consider an alternative perspective. A supply side explanation, where political and producer interests are able to influence newspaper content, would suggest that more tariff-exposed counties were targeted with more pro-tariff framing. Under this scenario, anti-tariff framing could still plausibly occur in newspaper content to the extent that elite interests did not entirely bar anti-tariff content, but rather disproportionately injected more pro-tariff content to perhaps influence public opinion and quell the expected consumer backlash to the McKinley Tariff. This model does not account for within-state variation in lobbying presence, but such an indicator variable in future research could plausibly isolate this mechanism, in addition to granular information on newspaper advertising revenues.

In Table 13 I report the alternative newspaper outcomes for the above and below median manufacturing sample split for the ad valorem shift-share instrument, omitting state fixed effects. No estimates for high manufacturing counties achieve statistical significance, but the coefficients suggest that counties with increased ad valorem tariff exposure are correlated with an increase in pro-tariff terms and slight decrease in anti-tariff terms. Low manufacturing counties by contrast exhibit a large and positive relationship of ad valorem tariff exposure with pro-tariff terms, with the coefficient being 14.5, or about 0.16 of a standard deviation of the outcome and statistically significant at the 5% level. The coefficient on anti-tariff terms is slightly smaller, about 9.3 units or about 0.105 of a standard deviation of the outcome and is marginally significant at the 10% level. The increase in tariff mentions is also statistically significant at the 5% level with the coefficient of 67.3 being equivalent to about 0.2 of a standard deviation of the outcome. Although the lack of state fixed effects and the low number of clusters should induce caution in interpreting these estimates, the sign and magnitude of the coefficients may paint an interesting picture indicative of a supply side explanation of newspaper content.

Table 13

Regressions of Alternative Newspaper Outcomes on Ad Valorem Magnitude Exposure Shift-share Tariff Exposure: Manufacturing Split without State FEs

		Ad Valorem Magnitude Exposure (×100)	
Outcome	N	High Manuf. (N=281)	Low Manuf. (N=280)
Panel A: Protectionism outcomes			
Δ Protectionism	561	6.890* (3.08)	-8.91 (9.03)
Panel B: Term frequency outcomes			
Δ Pro-tariff terms	561	2.14 (1.78)	14.500* (6.11)
Δ Anti-tariff terms	561	-0.06 (3.94)	9.290† (4.79)
Δ Tariff mentions	561	6.69 (8.83)	67.300* (27.1)
Panel C: Other outcomes			
Δ HS protectionism	498	4 (6.48)	16.1 (25.7)
Controls		Yes	Yes
Incomplete share		Yes	Yes
Clusters		41	23

Notes: Each cell reports the coefficient on the ad valorem magnitude shift-share exposure for the indicated outcome and manufacturing subsample. The sample is split at the median manufacturing employment share within the analysis sample. The Δ HS protectionism outcome has fewer observations due to data missingness. Full controls as defined in subsection 4.1 are included in all specifications with the exception of state fixed effects. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses. High manufacturing sample split has 41 clusters in all specifications except for when Δ HS Protectionism is the outcome variable, in which case the number of clusters is 40 due to observations with missing data. The low manufacturing split has 23 clusters in all specifications except for when Δ HS Protectionism is the outcome variable, in which case the number of clusters is 22 due to the same data missingness.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

While the overall, protectionist slant appears negative, albeit statistically insignificant, low manufacturing counties with higher ad valorem tariff exposure saw large increases in the overall salience of the tariff issue in newspapers, and a stronger increase in pro-tariff terms relative to a smaller increase in anti-tariff terms. This can indicate more balance in the tariff debate in low

manufacturing counties. The way that the change in pro-tariff terms outweighs the change in anti-tariff terms perhaps represents either more frequent quotation of protectionist arguments which is reflected in the overall negative coefficient on protectionist slant, or may represent attempts by special interests to inject more protectionist content to sway public opinion. Seeing as these dynamics are reflected in low manufacturing counties, which may not have stood to benefit from tariffs, as opposed to high manufacturing counties, where the perceived benefits of tariffs were more apparent, this suggests that perhaps the supply side explanation is one to consider in this setting.

5.3 Alternative Exposure Measures

For completeness, I estimate the relationship between newspaper protectionist slant and the alternative count-based shift-share measures. These include one based on the count of ad valorem tariff lines, one based on the count of compound tariff lines, another based on the count of free list items, and a final one based on the net change in protective tariff lines, which sums ad valorem, specific, and compound duties, while subtracting free list items. The results are in Table 14. None of the coefficients are robust to state fixed effects. Interestingly, the ad valorem count measure shows a negative and statistically significant coefficient without state fixed effects, suggesting that the increase in the number of tariff lines with ad valorem duties applied is associated with a small decrease in protectionist slant, equivalent to about -0.08 of a standard deviation. Taking context on the potential for fraudulent undervaluing of goods subject to ad valorem duties from Taussig (1910), a demand-side interpretation of newspaper slant would suggest that expansion of ad valorem lines is associated with less confidence in effective protection from this duty type. However, this is merely suggestive.

The compound duty count measure by contrast shows a positive and statistically significant coefficient, suggesting the opposite relationship, equivalent to about 0.117 of a standard deviation. The free list count measure is negative and statistically insignificant and there appears to be no significant correlation between a net increase in protective duties on protectionist slant. As in Table 11 where I estimate the effect of specific duty count exposure, the association is positive, albeit null. Directionally, this provides some support for positive responses of the public to the expansion of specific duties relative to ad valorem duties. This exercise, although limited in its interpretability

due to the crudeness of the count-based construction of the shift-share instruments, suggests that the various duty types may be correlated with directionally different changes in newspaper slant. Although identification issues prevent isolation of demanded versus supplied protectionist content and the low number of effective shifts among these shift-share instruments fail to produce substantial variation in tariff exposure, such suggestive evidence could be the basis of future research.

Table 14

Regressions of Change in Newspaper Protectionist Slant on Alternative Duty Type Count Shift-share Tariff Exposures

Exposure Measure	Definition	Δ Protectionism	
		Controls	+State FE
Ad valorem count	Δ # ad valorem lines	-0.517* (0.24)	-0.3 (0.42)
Compound duty count	Δ # compound lines	1.660* (0.76)	0.15 (0.93)
Free list count	Δ # free list items	-0.13 (0.73)	-0.24 (1.15)
Total protective count	Δ (spec + comp + av) – free	0.11 (0.18)	0.13 (0.27)
N		561	556
Controls		Yes	Yes
Incomplete share		Yes	Yes

Notes: OLS regression results. Dependent variable is Δ Protectionism in all rows. Each row uses a different shift-share exposure measure as the regressor, defined as the employment-share-weighted net change in the count of the specified duty type from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890. The total protective count subtracts net free list changes from the sum of specific, compound, and ad valorem count changes, since free list items represent removal of protection. Full controls and incomplete share control as defined in the main tables are included in all specifications. Cluster robust standard errors clustered at the state level (42 clusters in full sample, 37 clusters when state fixed effects are applied due to singleton removal) in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

5.4 Robustness

5.4.1 *Controlling for Pre-Trend in Delta Protectionism*

Considering the results of the pre-trends falsification test that the ad valorem magnitude tariff exposure shift-share significantly predicts the pre-existing trajectory of protectionist newspaper slant from 1870 to 1880, I control for this directly on the subsample of counties for which newspaper data is available across all three decades. An interesting aspect of this exercise on the subsample of 342 counties with 1870 newspaper data, is that there may be unique attributes of counties with consistent newspaper presence over this extended period in the late 19th century. Many counties are excluded from the main analysis due to lack of both 1880 and 1890 newspaper scores, which may speak to a lack of newspaper presence, or perhaps a lack of digitization of historical newspapers, which introduces another selection problem. In Panel B of Table 9, I replicate the main specifications but only on this 342 county subsample. The coefficients on the shift-share variable achieve significance, becoming stronger in magnitude even when state fixed effects are applied. This suggests that tariff exposure may be more strongly correlated with increases in protectionist slant when a county has an extended newspaper presence, equivalent to about 0.165 of a standard deviation (in Panel B, column 2). This can speak to a multitude of mechanisms, given the inherent problems of reverse causality. One speculative example is that it is possible that if protectionist slant came from political or lobbying interests on the supply side, counties with more established newspapers were more subject to increased protectionist influence because political interests recognized them as effective levers in shifting public sentiments. From the demand side, if counties were truly becoming more protectionist as a result of increased tariff exposure, then individuals in counties would have stronger demands for their newspapers to reflect their desired content.

Panel C of Table 9 reports the results of the main specification on the 342 county subsample with newspaper coverage for 1870 through 1890 with the pre-trend control of delta protectionism from 1870 to 1880. When controlling for the pre-period protectionist slant trajectory, the coefficients for both shift-share instruments become larger and more statistically significant, suggesting that omitting this control attenuated rather than inflated the estimates. An increase in ad valorem tariff exposure is associated with an increase of approximately 0.2 of a standard deviation (Table 9, Panel C, Column 2), the strongest result thus far. This still does not rule out

concerns of other confounding variables and I therefore cannot attribute a causal effect to the McKinley Tariff on newspaper slant, however this subsample of 342 counties appears to exhibit stronger increases in protectionist slant conditional on tariff exposure, suggesting that counties with more consistent newspaper presence differ substantially from those with coverage only from 1880 onward or those with coverage missing in any of the years surrounding 1870, 1880, and 1890.

5.4.2 Omitting Agricultural Components of Shift-Share Instruments

Following Conybeare's (1991) intuition that the agricultural tariffs under the McKinley Tariff were largely inconsequential, I estimate the main specifications based on shift-share instruments which omit agricultural tariffs and by extension, do not use agricultural employment shares, but control for them in the regression. As in Table 15, the magnitude of the coefficient in the pooled sample is stable and maintains statistical significance, but is not robust to state fixed effects. When considering the effect only for counties with below median agricultural employment shares, the coefficient becomes larger and more statistically significant, at about 0.19 standard deviations of the outcome. For the specific duty count measure, a similar pattern emerges, where the coefficient becomes statistically significant and stronger in a below median agricultural employment subsample. The relative stability of the pooled estimates compared to the main results suggests that the tariff shifts associated with the agricultural industries do not so strongly influence changes in protectionist slant. This corroborates the literature's emphasis on the appeal of protectionism to the subset of industrial interests which stood to benefit the most from protective tariffs.

Table 15

Regressions of Change in Newspaper Protectionist Slant on Non-Agricultural Tariff Exposure Shift-Share Instruments

	Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-share ($\times 100$)		Specific Duty Count Shift- share	
	1	2	3	4
	Controls	+State FE	Controls	+State FE
Panel A: Full sample (Dependent variable Δ Protectionism)				
Non-agricultural tariff exposure	5.8*	6.6	0.671*	0.52
	(2.46)	(4.24)	(0.31)	(0.48)
N	561	556	561	556
Clusters	42	37	42	37
R^2	0.08	0.19	0.08	0.19
Panel B: Low-agriculture subsample				
Non-agricultural tariff exposure	7.99**	6.1	0.803*	0.54
	(2.93)	(3.89)	(0.36)	(0.47)
N	280	274	280	274
Clusters	40	34	40	34
R^2	0.1	0.26	0.1	0.26
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: OLS regression results. Dependent variable is Δ Protectionism in all columns. Exposure variables are shift-share instruments constructed using only the four non-agricultural industries (construction, mining, durable manufacturing, non-durable manufacturing) following the intuition of Conybeare (1991). The non-agricultural incomplete share control replaces the full incomplete share sum in all specifications, per Borusyak et al. (2025). Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the state level. The low-agriculture subsample retains counties below the median agricultural employment share ($N=280$, 40 clusters). State FE specifications are estimated on singleton-dropped samples. Full controls included as in main specifications, with the addition of the agricultural employment share.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

5.4.3 Controlling for 1880 and 1888 Republican Party Vote Shares

I investigate whether results are driven by pre-existing county-level partisan alignment by introducing Republican party vote shares in the 1880 and 1888 presidential election separately as controls. This results in the loss of 26 county observations. As shown in Table 16, the positive coefficient on ad valorem tariff exposure of around 6 units (about 0.09 standard deviations of the outcome) is robust to the inclusion of 1880 Republican vote shares, albeit with an increase in standard errors, and is marginally significant with the inclusion of state fixed effects in the pooled sample. The coefficient on Republican party vote shares is positive and marginally significant in the full sample, indicating that more Republican counties may have increased in their protectionist slant in newspapers independent of the subsequent tariff changes which aligns with the Republican party's protectionist platform. With state fixed effects in the full sample and in the high manufacturing subsample, the positive coefficients on the Republican party vote share is consistently positive and statistically significant, but do not achieve significance in the low manufacturing subsample. The magnitude of the coefficients on party vote shares is substantial, equivalent to about 0.166 standard deviations of the outcome in Column (3).

Table 16

Regressions of Change in Newspaper Protectionist Slant on Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-share Tariff Exposure, Controlling for 1880 Republican Presidential Vote Share and Manufacturing Splits

	Full Sample			High Manuf.		Low Manuf.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Baseline	+Vote	+Vote+FE	+Vote	+Vote+FE	+Vote	+Vote+FE
<i>Dependent Var.: ΔProtectionism</i>							
Ad valorem exposure (×100)	6.620*	6.350*	6.310†	6.780*	5.58	−23.30*	−1.27
	(2.99)	(3.13)	(3.82)	(3.34)	(4.46)	(9.29)	(7.96)
1880 Republican vote share		0.174†	0.227*	0.436***	0.489**	0.03	0.13
		(0.09)	(0.1)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.12)	(0.13)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1880 Republican vote	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Incomplete share control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	535	535	530	265	258	270	268
Clusters	37	37	32	35	28	20	18
R ²	0.08	0.09	0.19	0.13	0.22	0.11	0.23

Notes: Dependent variable is Δ Protectionism. Shift-share variable is ad valorem magnitude tariff exposure. This table assesses robustness of the main results to controlling for the 1880 Republican presidential vote share at the county level. The sample is restricted to the 535 counties with available vote share data sourced from ICPSR 8611 (Clubb et al., 2006), via Scheve and Serlin (2024). Column (1) replicates the baseline specification without the vote share control on this restricted subsample. Columns (2)–(3) add the 1880 Republican vote share to the full sample. Columns (4)–(7) report results for above- and below-median manufacturing employment share subsamples. All specifications include the full set of controls and the incomplete share control. Observations are reduced in state fixed effects specifications due to removal of singleton counties. Cluster-robust standard errors clustered at the state level in parentheses. The low number of clusters in subsample specifications, particularly the low manufacturing split (20 and 18 clusters), means inference should be treated with caution.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

Table 17 shows the results of controlling for 1888 Republican party presidential votes shares, where I observe a similar pattern of stability of the estimates which however are not robust to state fixed effects. Republican party vote shares appear to significantly predict statistically significant increases in the protectionist slant of newspapers, but only for the high manufacturing subsample where the effect is equivalent to about 0.319 of a standard deviation of the outcome.

For the low manufacturing subsample, the effect is relatively sizable as well, about 0.157 of a standard deviation of the outcome, but statistically insignificant. The main takeaway is that the coefficients on tariff exposure are on the whole stable in magnitude to the inclusion of Republican party vote shares, but pre-existing partisan alignment importantly contributes to overall changes in protectionist slant, as seen by the magnitude and significance of the coefficients. The literature’s emphasis on the election of 1888 being a “national referendum on the country’s tariff policy,” is reflected in these results, where increases in protectionist newspaper slant seem to be most strongly associated with increased Republican party vote shares in 1888, particularly in above median manufacturing counties (Irwin, 2017). For below median manufacturing counties, increased ad valorem tariff exposure is associated with a sizable decrease in protectionist slant without state fixed effects, not significantly explained by the Republican party vote shares.

Table 17

Regressions of Change in Newspaper Protectionist Slant on Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-share Tariff Exposure, Controlling for 1888 Republican Presidential Vote Share and Manufacturing Splits

	Full Sample			High Manuf.		Low Manuf.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Baseline	+Vote88	+Vote88+FE	+Vote88	+Vote88+FE	+Vote88	+Vote88+FE
<i>Dependent Variable: ΔProtectionism</i>							
Ad valorem exposure ($\times 100$)	6.62* (2.99)	6.25* (2.97)	6.11 (3.8)	6.90* (3.2)	5.24 (4.73)	-24.30* (9.54)	-1.01 (7.98)
1888 Republican vote share		0.16 (0.11)	0.328** (0.11)	0.554*** (0.14)	0.660*** (0.19)	-0.06 (0.12)	0.19 (0.15)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1888 Republican vote	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Incomplete share control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	535	535	530	265	258	270	268
Clusters	37	37	32	35	28	20	18
R^2	0.08	0.08	0.2	0.14	0.24	0.11	0.24

Notes: OLS regression results. Dependent variable is Δ Protectionism. Shift-share variable is ad valorem magnitude tariff exposure. This table assesses robustness of the main results to controlling for the 1888 Republican presidential vote share. The sample is restricted to the 535 counties with available vote share data sourced from ICPSR 8611 (Clubb et al., 2006), via Scheve and Serlin (2024). Column (1) replicates the baseline specification without the 1888

vote share control on this restricted subsample. Columns (2)–(3) add the 1888 Republican vote share to the full sample. Columns (4)–(7) report results for above- and below-median manufacturing employment share subsamples, adding state FEs in columns (5) and (7) for the respective subsample. All specifications include the full set of controls and the incomplete share control. Observations are reduced in state fixed effects specifications due to removal of singleton counties. Cluster-robust standard errors clustered at the state level in parentheses. The low number of clusters in subsample specifications, particularly the low manufacturing split (20 and 18 clusters), means inference should be treated with caution.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

5.4.4 Exposure Robust Standard Errors in Shift Level Regressions

As per the guidance of Borusyak et al. (2025), in the case of many exogenous shifts, exposure robust standard errors should be used for causal inference, which involves running shift-level regressions as opposed to location-level regressions as have been reported in this section, where standard errors were clustered at the state level. There is reason to allow for correlation on the industry level, meaning the level of the shifts, because industries respond to common shocks, and assuming that counties with similar industry shocks are independent may underestimate the standard errors. Using the R package, *ssaggregate* by Butts (2026) based on the procedure outlined by Borusyak et al. (2022), I estimate the shift-level regressions which collapse county-level outcomes to exposure-weighted industry-level averages and regress these on the industry-level tariff shifts. Concretely, county-level outcomes are first residualized on the same set of controls used in the location-level regression, then collapsed to industry-level averages weighted by industry employment shares before being regressed on the industry-level tariff shifts. These standard errors account for correlation among counties sharing common industry exposure. I report the t-statistics from the shift-level regression of the main specifications without state fixed effects applied in Table 18. The t-statistic for the ad valorem shift-share instrument moves from 2.03 to 1.34 and for the specific count shift-share instrument, 1.33 to 1.278. Neither measure achieves conventional significance thresholds under exposure-robust inference. Important caveats as addressed before apply here. With only five industries, and therefore only five shifts, the shift-level regression has only 3 degrees of freedom, mechanically raising the critical t-values. The point estimates indicating a positive association between tariff exposure and newspaper protectionism are directionally consistent in both inferential approaches but cannot be established with statistical

confidence under the more rigorous approach. Future work with more disaggregated industry level classifications would enable more reliable exposure-robust inference.

Table 18

Exposure-Robust Inference Results

	Ad Valorem Exposure		Specific Duty Count	
	County-level	Shift-level	County-level	Shift-level
Estimate	6.012*	18.93	0.42	0.03
Standard error	(2.97)	(14.15)	(0.31)	(0.02)
t-statistic	2.03	1.34	1.33	1.28
Degrees of freedom	~500	3	~500	3
Observations	561	5	561	5

Notes: This table compares inference under state-clustered standard errors at the county level and exposure-robust standard errors at the shift level, following Borusyak et al. (2025). The county-level specifications regress Δ Protectionism on the shift-share exposure measure with full controls and 42 state clusters, excluding state fixed effects. The shift-level specifications implement the *ssaggregate* procedure of Borusyak et al. (2022) and Borusyak et al. (2025), which collapses county-level outcomes, residualized on the same controls, to exposure-weighted industry-level averages, and regresses these on the industry-level tariff shifts weighted by average industry employment shares using the *ssaggregate* R package by Butts (2026). Exposure-robust standard errors account for the correlation of errors across counties sharing common industry exposure.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

6. Discussion

Although identification issues prevent a causal interpretation of the estimates, and the shift-share measures applied do not encompass all tariff shifts granularly enough for valid statistical inference, the results provide suggestive evidence of the shape of tariff discourse surrounding the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Under the assumption that newspaper slant reflects local demand, and by extension, local protectionist sentiments, the main specifications indicate the intuitively positive correlation between increased ad valorem tariff exposure and protectionist newspaper slant in above median manufacturing counties and the negative correlation in below median manufacturing counties. Although the significance of the coefficients is not robust to the inclusion of state fixed effects, they are generally stable in magnitude and sign in high

manufacturing employment subsamples and with the introduction of Republican party vote shares as controls.

Investigation of the effect of ad valorem tariff exposure on alternative, term frequency based newspaper outcomes yields a discussion on potential supply side explanations on protectionist newspaper content, namely the potential for lobbying interests to influence how tariff issues are more frequently framed. Although pooled estimates are not robust to state fixed effects, the high and low manufacturing split reveal interesting relationships. Low manufacturing counties with higher ad valorem tariff exposure saw larger increases in overall tariff mentions while the overall change in protectionist slant was negative, albeit statistically insignificant. At the same time, the increased frequency of pro-tariff terms, significant at the 5% level, was higher than that of anti-tariff terms, significant at the 10% level. These results could suggest either more references to protectionist arguments on the tariff, whether for more balanced reporting or for criticizing the opposing side, or that political or lobbying interests may have found it lucrative to supply more pro-tariff framing to counties most likely to exhibit stronger backlash against tariffs. It is not in the scope of this thesis to precisely isolate these mechanisms, but the newspaper data nonetheless provides a novel opportunity to speculate on the shape of the tariff debate in light of the overall changes in newspaper slant shown in the main results.

To deal with incomplete representation of all tariff lines in the data, I employed the specific duty count shift-share instrument which provided coefficients consistent with the story that manufacturing dominated counties respond positively to expansion of protective duties, with an opposite pattern for less manufacturing dominated counties for whom increased protection is expected to be detrimental. The specific duty count shift-share instrument benefits from not failing a pre-trends falsification test, but may lack predictive power in general. The investigation into the effects of the various types of duties motivated in part by the hypothesis that duty types vary in their transparency which can then reflect in their effectiveness in shifting protectionist sentiments. The coarse industry and product categorization in this analysis however, prevents detection of a meaningfully differential effect across duty types. An interesting finding is that when employing the count-based shift share for each duty type, an increase in ad valorem duties is associated with a decrease in protectionist newspaper slant. This presents an interesting dynamic, contrary to the specific duty count estimates which are positive, in line with potentially differential perceptions of

ad valorem tariffs due to concerns of fraud (Taussig, 1910). These results could point to future exploration of how transparency of the tariff and the implied expected benefits to workers in industries governs protectionist sentiment.

Although the robustness exercises show that coefficients on the tariff exposure variables are relatively stable, the coefficients are largely null when state fixed effects are applied and the low number of clusters across sample splits prevent proper statistical inference. Therefore, I fail to reject the null hypothesis that employment weighted tariff exposure does not predict changes in the protectionist slant of newspapers. These findings align in part with perspectives that the economic geography of protectionism was largely fixed during this period (Irwin, 2017; Irwin, 2020), that factors other than direct changes in tariff exposure plausibly determine increased protectionist sentiment (Scheve & Serlin, 2025), and suggests that the change in the tariff from the Mongrel to the McKinley Tariff specifically may not strongly predict adverse electoral outcomes later on (Conybeare, 1991).⁵⁷

7. Limitations

This thesis has aimed to be transparent about its limitations which I address systematically in this section. I address the identification concerns, highlight data constraints, and acknowledge the sample size and inference concerns, all while incorporating suggestions for improving the analysis.

7.1 Identification Concerns

Although the shift-share framework allows for endogeneity of shares, the historical context of endogenous congressional tariff setting and the assertion of producer interests and lobbying introduces concerns of the endogeneity of the shifts as well. Confounders that I do not properly account for in the model, such as varying lobbying intensity, give rise to likely omitted variable bias. As Conybeare (1991) asserts, tariff setting is partially a function of satisfying constituencies for subsequent electoral gains, with models such as that of Grossman and Helpman (1994) amplifying dynamics of lobbying and political interests. An instrumental variable which

⁵⁷ I note that this thesis does not directly test the associations with the 1890 Republican electoral losses or subsequent elections.

identifies a shift in the salience of tariff legislation, independent of political and lobbying factors could resolve this concern.

The historical literature also heavily stresses the influence of lobbying and producer interest organizations in tariff setting as well as in attempting to influence public sentiments (Irwin, 2017; Kusch, 2025a). Controlling for lobbying intensity could partially absorb concerns of omitted variable bias in this respect, but there is no guarantee that the primary outcome variable, predicted newspaper protectionism, is not contaminated by content published on behalf of lobbying organizations. In fact, the machine learning derived score uses as training data the rhetoric of such lobbying organizations, such as the American Protective Tariff League (Scheve & Serlin, 2024). Therefore, the outcome variable may perhaps constitute a measure of effective lobbying intensity itself to an extent. Although I report alternative outcome measures relating to term frequency, these are also sensitive to the dictionary construction. Therefore, the correlational estimates should be interpreted with caution and with the caveat that lobbying presence is not accounted for in the cross-sectional estimation.

The failure of the ad valorem tariff exposure shift-share instrument in a pre-trends falsification test also suggests that on the whole, any identified effects may be driven by an overall trajectory toward increased protectionist slant in newspapers, and not specific to a post-McKinley Tariff response. Therefore, since I am unable to rule out reverse causality, even discussions of the meaning of the direction of correlational estimates may fail to provide an accurate explanation of the outcome.

7.2 Data Constraints

The data constraints affect not only the shares and the shift components of the shift-share variable, but also the outcome variable. The unavailability of 1890 industry employment share data limited the analysis to a cross-sectional estimation, using lagged 1880 employment shares. Additionally, my lack of access to product-level price data to construct ad valorem equivalents of specific and compound duties limited the shift-share construction to the ad valorem tariff lines that constituted a minority in both the Mongrel and McKinley Tariffs. This omits cross-industry variation that could potentially strengthen the shift-share's predictive power, despite the underlying

endogeneity issues. My attempt to use a count-based shift-share for specific duties represents an effort to compensate for this shortcoming, but the measure lacks power.

Additionally, the predicted newspaper protectionism scores as constructed by Scheve and Serlin (2025) are based on textual data scraped in the year surrounding the year of observation which complicates alignment with the tariff legislation enactments. 1880 newspaper scores are based on the text published from 1878 to 1882 and 1890 scores are based on the text published from 1888 to 1892. Although the pre-period is free from direct contamination with the Mongrel Tariff of 1883, the 1890 period captures both pre and post McKinley newspaper content. This means that the variable does not cleanly measure responses to the McKinley Tariff and in fact, incorporates anticipatory debates reflecting predetermined protectionist sentiments as well as longer term debates on the tariff's incidence. The mechanisms I seek to explore therefore, are merely suggestive and likely are subject to reverse causality concerns as discussed with regard to the pre-trends falsification test.

7.3 Sample Size and Inference

Due to the exclusion criteria, requiring newspaper data for both 1880 and 1890 as well as 1880 employment shares, more than 2,200 counties are dropped from the analysis. This constitutes a limit on the statistical power of the estimation and brings concerns that the dropped counties differ significantly on observables, which is corroborated by the balance table in subsection 3.5 (Table 7). What is more, I cluster standard errors at the state-level, yielding only 42 clusters in total in full sample specifications. Although 42 clusters is still considered valid by Angrist and Pischke (2008), albeit at the boundary, there could be cause for concern in statistical inference with the reported p-values (p. 238). When reporting various sample splits and applying state fixed effects, the number of clusters is further reduced, as in the case of for example, 35 clusters for high manufacturing employment counties and 20 for low manufacturing employment counties when estimating the robustness to party vote shares. This therefore introduces a problem with the statistical inference based on cluster robust standard errors.

Another aspect of the statistical inference concerns is the likely insufficient number of exogenous shifts. As Borusyak et al. (2025) highlight, a shift-share approach based on exogenous shifts should consist of many shifts for which exposure robust standard errors can be computed.

Exposure robust standard errors, as discussed in subsection 5.4.4, allow for correlation at the shift level (the industry level, in this case), seeing as industries share the same shock and standard errors clustered at the state level may be underestimated. Failing to consistently apply these standard errors means that the results should be interpreted conservatively.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to bridge recent applications of shift-share methodologies with historical data, examining how increased tariff exposure is correlated with average county-level changes in protectionist newspaper slant. In light of narrative evidence of public sentiments on protectionism in the late 19th century (Taussig, 1910), I attempted to use novel newspaper data from Scheve and Serlin (2024) to advance the understanding of how the potential to be affected by the tariff increases under the McKinley Tariff of 1890, gleaned through local industry employment shares, potentially affected the rhetoric employed and protectionist slant in local newspapers, whether demanded or supplied. Although identification issues, data constraints, and lack of precise statistical inference threaten the findings, I consider both demand and supply based explanations of newspaper outcomes, providing suggestive evidence that the nature of the tariff debate in the years surrounding the McKinley Tariff, conditional on county-level tariff exposure, was heterogeneous according to the above and below median manufacturing employment shares.

Although the findings are generally not robust to the inclusion of state fixed effects, I report that increased ad valorem tariff exposure from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 is positively associated with increases in protectionist slant for above median manufacturing counties, and negatively for below median manufacturing counties without state fixed effects. For low manufacturing counties, the sign flips positive with state fixed effects. This lends itself to a potential discussion on supply-side explanations of protectionist content. Further investigation of term frequency based outcomes shows that the framing of tariff debates also varied between these subsamples which advance this speculative discussion further. When estimating alternative shift-share regressors which leverage changes in the count of various duty types, increases in ad valorem duty count tariff exposure are negatively correlated with protectionist newspaper slant, contrasting the positive relationship for the specific duty count tariff exposure measure, though these results are not significant. This suggests heterogeneity in public attitudes

based on the structure of the tariff and the implied transparency. In robustness exercises, Republican party vote shares in presidential elections of 1880 and 1888 indeed appear to have more explanatory power towards subsequent increases in protectionist slant in newspapers, but such an association applies only to the high manufacturing subsamples. A final takeaway is the stability of estimates on the subsample of counties with a consistent newspaper presence beginning in 1870, where coefficients are robust to the inclusion of state fixed effects, suggesting that this subsample is particular and that lack of newspaper data may introduce a selection bias.

Future research that incorporates more granular data and stronger identification could improve upon this model. Although the late 19th century is far removed from the modern setting temporally, insights from this limited media environment show how the strength of the public appeals to protectionism through tariff increments may be heterogeneous according to one's industry of employment and the implied perceptions of the benefits of protection. Additionally, it suggests that the shape of public discourse may be influenced by external interests.

Shrnutí

Cílem této práce bylo propojit nedávné aplikace metodiky shift-share s historickými údaji a prozkoumat, jak souvisí zvýšená celní expozice s průměrnými změnami protekcionistického zaměření novin na úrovni okresů. S ohledem na narativní důkazy o veřejném mínění ohledně protekcionismu na konci 19. století (Taussig, 1910) jsem se pokusila využít nové novinové údaje od Scheveho a Serlina (2024) k prohloubení porozumění tomu, jak potenciál být ovlivněn zvýšením cel v rámci McKinleyho celního zákona z roku 1890, odvozený z podílů zaměstnanosti v místním průmyslu, potenciálně ovlivnil rétoriku a protekcionistické zaměření v místních novinách, ať už poptávané, nebo nabízené. Ačkoli zjištění ohrožují problémy s identifikací, omezení dat a nedostatek přesné statistické inference, zvažuji jak poptávková, tak nabídková vysvětlení novinových výsledků a poskytují sugestivní důkazy o tom, že povaha celní debaty v letech kolem McKinleyho celního zákona, podmíněná celní expozicí na úrovni okresů, byla heterogenní podle nadmediánových a podmediánových podílů zaměstnanosti ve zpracovatelském průmyslu.

Ačkoli zjištění obecně nejsou robustní vůči zahrnutí fixních efektů na úrovni států, uvádím, že zvýšená expozice valorickým clům od Mongrellova celního zákona z roku 1883 po

McKinleyho celní zákon z roku 1890 je bez fixních efektů na úrovni států pozitivně spojena s nárůsty protekcionistického zaměření u okresů s nadmediánovým podílem zpracovatelského průmyslu a negativně u okresů s podmediánovým podílem. U okresů s nízkou výrobní aktivitou se znaménko při zahrnutí fixních efektů na úrovni států mění na kladné. To otevírá prostor pro potenciální diskusi o vysvětleních protekcionistického obsahu z pohledu nabídky. Další zkoumání výsledků založených na frekvenci termínů ukazuje, že rámcování celních debat se mezi těmito podvzorky rovněž lišilo, což tuto spekulativní diskusi dále rozvíjí. Při odhadu alternativních shift-share regresorů, které využívají změny v počtu různých typů cel, jsou nárůsty celní expozice v počtu valorických cel negativně korelované s protekcionistickým zaměřením novin, což je v kontrastu s pozitivním vztahem u měřítka celní expozice v počtu specifických cel, ačkoli tyto výsledky nejsou statisticky významné. To naznačuje heterogenitu postojů veřejnosti v závislosti na struktuře cla a z ní vyplývající transparentnosti. V testech robustnosti se podíly hlasů pro Republikánskou stranu v prezidentských volbách v letech 1880 a 1888 skutečně jeví jako proměnné s větší vysvětlující silou pro následné zvýšení protekcionistického zaměření novin, avšak taková souvislost platí pouze pro podvzorky s vysokým podílem zpracovatelského průmyslu. Posledním poznatkem je stabilita odhadů na podvzorku okresů s nepřetržitou novinovou přítomností od roku 1870, kde jsou koeficienty robustní vůči zahrnutí fixních efektů na úrovni států, což naznačuje, že tento podvzorek je specifický a že nedostatek údajů o novinách může způsobovat selekční zkreslení.

Budoucí výzkum, který by zahrnul podrobnější data a silnější identifikaci, by mohl tento model vylepšit. Ačkoli je konec 19. století časově daleko od moderního prostředí, poznatky z tohoto omezeného mediálního prostředí ukazují, jak může být síla veřejných apelů na protekcionismus prostřednictvím změn celního sazebníku heterogenní v závislosti na odvětví zaměstnání a z něj vyplývajícím vnímání přínosů protekcionismu. Dále naznačují, že podobu veřejné diskuse mohou ovlivňovat vnější zájmy.

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List of Appendices

Appendix no. 1: Prompt for Tariff Data Extraction (text)

Prompt used for extracting tariff lines from digitized tariff legislation into CSV format and assigning 1950 industry code categories based on IPUMS NHGIS employment share data as aggregated by Scheve and Serlin (2024) (text)

You are a precise legislative data extraction assistant. Your task is to read the full text of the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 (provided below) and convert every single tariff line item into a structured CSV dataset. Accuracy and completeness are paramount. You must not hallucinate, invent, interpolate, or infer any rate, description, or number that is not explicitly stated in the source text.

CRITICAL RULES — READ BEFORE STARTING

1. ****Do not stop early.**** Process the ENTIRE document from beginning to end, including every Schedule, every paragraph, and every sub-item. If you reach a token or output limit, stop at the last COMPLETE row and clearly print:
`## EXTRACTION PAUSED — Resume from paragraph [X]`
so the user knows exactly where to continue in a follow-up prompt.
2. ****Do not hallucinate.**** If a rate, description, or field is not present in the source text, leave that cell blank or write `not specified`. Never guess, estimate, or borrow from external knowledge of tariff history.
3. ****Transcribe product descriptions faithfully.**** Copy them verbatim or as close to verbatim as possible. Do not paraphrase or summarize.
4. ****Capture compound duties correctly.**** Many items have both a specific duty AND an ad valorem duty (e.g., "3 cents per pound and 35 per centum ad valorem"). In such cases: populate BOTH the `specific\_duty` column AND the `ad\_valorem\_rate` column, set `duty\_type` to `compound`, and reproduce the full combined rate string in the `compound\_note` column.
5. ****Handle "Free List" items.**** Items listed as free of duty should have `specific\_duty` blank, `ad\_valorem\_rate` blank, `unit\_of\_measure` = `free`, and `duty\_type` = `free`.
6. ****Paragraph numbers are mandatory.**** Every row must include the paragraph

or item number exactly as it appears in the legislation. If a paragraph covers multiple products, create one row per distinct product.

7. ****Do not merge or collapse rows.**** Each distinct product or sub-item gets its own row, even if they share a paragraph number.

8. ****Do not add columns**** beyond those specified. Do not add commentary outside the CSV block.

OUTPUT FORMAT

Output only a single CSV block, starting with the header row and containing no text before or after it (except for the pause notice in Rule 1 if needed).

Use standard CSV formatting: comma-delimited, double-quote all fields that contain commas or line breaks, UTF-8 encoding.

COLUMN DEFINITIONS (in order)

Column	Field Name	Instructions
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1	tariff_act	Always: McKinley_1890
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2	effective_date	Always: 1890-10-06
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3	schedule	The schedule title exactly as printed in the act (e.g., "Schedule A – Chemicals, Oils, and Paints"). If no schedule heading applies, write "General".
---	----------	---

4	paragraph_number	The paragraph or item number from the legislation. Mandatory.
---	------------------	---

5	industry	Your best categorization of the broad industry this product serves, based solely on context within the text (e.g., Agriculture, Textiles, Metals, Construction, Food & Beverage, Chemicals, Ceramics). Write "Unclassified" only if genuinely ambiguous.
---	----------	--

6	category	The sub-category or product group within the schedule (e.g., Wool Manufactures, Cotton Goods, Cast Iron). Derive from schedule section headings or groupings in the text.
---	----------	---

7	product_description	Verbatim or near-verbatim product description from the text. Include all qualifiers (e.g., "not bleached, colored, or printed").
---	---------------------	--

8	specific_duty	Numeric value only of the specific duty rate. Examples: 2.5 (for 2½ cents), 1.25 (for 1¼ cents), 2 (for 2 dollars). Leave blank if no specific duty.
---	---------------	--

9	ad_valorem_rate	Numeric percentage value only of the ad valorem rate. Example: 35 (for 35%). Leave blank if no ad valorem duty.
---	-----------------	---

10	unit_of_measure	The unit for the specific_duty (e.g., "cents per pound", "dollars per ton", "cents per yard", "per dozen", "cents per gallon"). If ad valorem only: write "ad valorem". If free: write "free".
----	-----------------	--

11	duty_type	One of: specific / ad valorem / compound / free
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| 12 | compound_note | For compound duties only: write the full rate as it appears in the text (e.g., "3 cents per pound and 35 per centum ad valorem"). Otherwise leave blank. |

| 13 | notes | Any conditions, exceptions, qualifications, exclusions, or "not otherwise provided for" clauses attached to this specific item. Leave blank if none. |

SELF-CHECK BEFORE OUTPUTTING

Before generating output, perform the following checks mentally:

- Have I included every paragraph from every Schedule in the document?
- Have I created a separate row for each distinct product within a paragraph?
- Have I verified each rate against the source text (not my training data)?
- Have I correctly identified compound duties and populated both rate columns?
- Have I left `specific\_duty` and `ad\_valorem\_rate` blank for free-list items?
- Are all `paragraph\_number` fields populated?
- Is the output valid CSV with no stray commas, unmatched quotes, or broken rows?

Now do the same but for the Mongrel Tariff of 1883. This legislation does not include paragraph numbers.

—

Now for both csv files (McKinley and Mongrel), match each tariff line to one of the following industry categorizations.

- ind_1 share employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing (ind1950 105-126)IPUMS
- ind_2_construction share employed in construction (ind1950 246) IPUMS
- ind_2_not_construction share employed in mining (ind1950 206-239) IPUMS
- ind_3 share employed in durable goods manufacturing(ind1950 306-399)IPUMS
- ind_4 share employed in nondurable goods manufacturing (ind1950 406-499)IPUMS
- ind_5 share employed in transportation and telecommunications (ind1950 506-598)IPUMS
- ind_6 share employed in wholesale and retail trade(ind1950 606-699)IPUMS
- ind_7 share employed in finance, insurance, and real estate (ind1950 716-756) IPUMS
- ind_8 share employed in business and repair services,personal services, entertainment and recreation,and professional services (ind1950 806-899)IPUMS
- ind_9 share employed in public administration and other categories (ind1950 906-991)

Appendix no. 2: Summary Statistics of Shift-Share Tariff Exposure Variables (table)

Distribution of Shift-Share Tariff Exposure Variables for the Analysis Sample of 561 counties (table)

Table A2

Distribution of Shift-Share Exposure Variables (Analysis Sample, N=561)

Group	Min	P25	Median	Mean	P75	Max
Panel A: Main delta-based specifications						
Ad valorem magnitude	0.39	1.45	1.63	1.58	1.77	3.16
Specific duty count	3.97	19.8	22.6	21.5	24.7	31
Ad valorem count	-21.8	1.84	3.87	2.9	4.93	6.43
Compound count	0.01	0.4	0.84	1.4	1.78	9.4
Free list count	-8	-3.95	-3.54	-3.13	-2.72	4.43
Total protective count	0.07	26.2	30.8	28.9	33.9	51.4
Panel B: Non-agricultural specifications						
Ad valorem magnitude	-0.03	0.09	0.21	0.34	0.41	3.05
Specific duty count	-0.12	0.99	2.16	3.5	4.33	24.2
Total protective count	-3.4	0.84	1.87	3.75	4.92	36.9

Notes: Distribution of all shift-share exposure variables used in the main analysis sample ($N=561$ counties).

All variables are employment-share-weighted sums of industry-level tariff shifters from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890, constructed using 1880 county employment shares from IPUMS NHGIS via Scheve and Serlin (2024) and tariff data sourced from FRASER database (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, n.d.). Ad valorem magnitude measures are scaled by 100 for interpretability and constitute also the ad valorem components of compound tariffs. Count variables measure employment-weighted numbers of tariff lines of each type. P25 and P75 denote the 25th and 75th percentiles.

Appendix no. 3: Summary Statistics (table)

Summary Statistics of Main Variables for the Analysis Sample of 561 counties (table)

Table A3

Summary Statistics: Analysis Sample (N=561)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	P25	Median	P75	Max
Panel A: Outcome Variables								
Δ Protectionism (1880–1890)	561	0.1	21.2	-67.5	-13	0.59	12.2	65.9
Δ HS protectionism	498	-11.1	23.3	-100	-22.9	-10.6	0.61	73.2
Δ Tariff mentions	561	102	67.8	-163	55.7	96.7	146	337
Δ Anti-tariff terms	561	17.1	18.9	-15.8	4.66	11.6	22.1	128
Δ Pro-tariff terms	561	16.4	17.5	-49.5	4.76	13.4	24.9	113
Protectionism score (1880)	561	41.5	15.3	0.07	32.4	40	49.8	100
Protectionism score (1890)	561	41.6	21.3	0	25.8	42.2	54	98.9
Panel B: Tariff Exposure Variables								
Ad valorem exposure (×100)	561	1.58	0.33	0.39	1.45	1.63	1.77	3.16
Specific duty count	561	21.5	4.7	3.97	19.8	22.6	24.7	31
Ad valorem count	561	2.9	3.27	-21.8	1.84	3.87	4.93	6.43
Compound count	561	1.4	1.49	0.01	0.4	0.84	1.78	9.4
Free list count	561	-3.13	1.38	-8	-3.95	-3.54	-2.72	4.43
Total protective count	561	28.9	7.57	0.07	26.2	30.8	33.9	51.4
Panel C: Controls								
Log population	561	9.89	0.98	6.13	9.39	9.88	10.3	14
Log urban population	561	4.07	4.66	0	0	0	8.77	14
Literacy score	561	3.5	0.55	1.72	3.18	3.79	3.89	4
Log railroad	561	3.33	0.95	0	2.86	3.44	4	4.86
Log port access	561	-0.17	0.09	-0.59	-0.22	-0.16	-0.12	-0.04
Panel D: Industry Employment Shares (1880)								
Agriculture (Ind. 1)	561	0.6	0.23	0.01	0.47	0.66	0.77	0.93
Construction (Ind. 2)	561	0.04	0.02	0	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.16
Mining (Ind. 2, non-constr.)	561	0.02	0.07	0	0	0	0.01	0.56
Durable manuf. (Ind. 3)	561	0.04	0.05	0	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.35
Non-durable manuf. (Ind. 4)	561	0.04	0.05	0	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.46
Transport & telecoms (Ind. 5)	561	0.04	0.03	0	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.15
Wholesale & retail (Ind. 6)	561	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.08	0.27
Finance & real estate (Ind. 7)	561	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.03
Business & services (Ind. 8)	561	0.15	0.06	0.04	0.11	0.14	0.19	0.4
Incomplete Shares Sum	561	0.74	0.13	0.22	0.68	0.77	0.83	0.95
Panel E: Newspaper Coverage								
Newspapers per county (1880)	561	2.66	2.46	1	1	2	3	22
Newspapers per county (1890)	561	3.98	4.62	1	1	2	5	48
Newspapers in both decades	561	1.82	1.56	0	1	1	2	12

Notes: Summary statistics for the 561-county analysis sample. Δ variables denote changes from 1880 to 1890. The HS protectionism outcome has 498 observations due to missingness in the underlying newspaper term frequency data. Pro-tariff and anti-tariff terms are expressed per 1,000 references to the word "and." Tariff exposure variables are employment-share-weighted shift-share measures computed as in Section 3.3. Industry shares are 1880 values from IPUMS NHGIS via Scheve and Serlin (2024) and sum to nearly one within each county as the public

administration category (Ind. 9) is omitted. Incomplete shares sum is the sum of the shift-share industries, concretely Agriculture (Ind. 1), Construction (Ind. 2), Mining (Ind. 2, non-constr.), Durable manuf. (Ind. 3), and Non-durable manuf. (Ind. 4). The literacy score is an ordinal variable ranging from 1 (illiterate) to 4 (reads and writes). P25 and P75 denote the 25th and 75th percentiles. Newspaper variables in Panel A sourced from Scheve and Serlin (2024). Tariff exposure variable in Panel B computed by author using 1880 IPUMS NHGIS industry employment share data via Scheve and Serlin (2024) and tariff increments from the Mongrel Tariff of 1883 to the McKinley Tariff of 1890 compiled by the author using historical tariff schedule from FRASER database (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, n.d.). Controls in Panel C are sourced via Scheve and Serlin (2024), including both IPUMS NHGIS census data for population and literacy variables, and railroad and port access variables computed by Scheve and Serlin (2024). Industry employment shares in Panel D are sourced from IPUMS NHGIS via Scheve and Serlin (2024), with the incomplete shares sum calculated by author using definition of the shift-share instrument. Newspaper coverage in Panel E uses newspaper level dataset from Scheve and Serlin (2024) which the author aggregates to the county level to track newspapers per county in the each respective decade as well as the overlap between decades among the 561 county analysis sample.

Appendix no. 4: Regression Results of Ad Valorem Shift-Share Tariff Exposure (table)

Full regression results of main regressions using Ad Valorem Shift-Share Exposure (table)

Table A4

Full Regression Output of Main Specifications: Delta Protectionism Regressed on Ad Valorem Magnitude Shift-Share Tariff Exposure

	No controls	Controls	+State FE	High, no FE	High, FE	Low, no FE	Low, FE
(Intercept)	0.06 (3.52)	9.14 (26.04)	-18.62 (24.87)	-6.98 (123.62)	-403.824* (162.54)	29.64 (40.13)	167.8 (137.78)
Ad valorem tariff exposure (x100)	0.03 (2.6)	6.012* (2.97)	6.562† (3.95)	6.890* (3.09)	6.86 (4.59)	-8.91 (9.03)	1.77 (8.12)
Log population		-4.889** (1.76)	-5.325** (1.68)	-4.132† (2.24)	-3.18 (2.35)	-7.263† (4.1)	-6.53 (4.05)
Log urban population		-0.08 (0.29)	-0.08 (0.32)	-0.36 (0.44)	-0.56 (0.48)	0.22 (0.43)	0.38 (0.58)
Literacy score		1.98 (2.48)	-1.36 (3.56)	3.99 (4.4)	-1.19 (7.7)	-3.79 (4.44)	-5.26 (5.7)
Log Railroad Length		4.232** (1.53)	6.166* (2.56)	3.055† (1.64)	4.472† (2.51)	7.722* (3.73)	9.052† (5.45)
Log port access		-14.66 (19.64)	-39.96 (31.58)	-13.79 (21.73)	15.03 (35)	-34.6 (29.93)	-86.52 (66.98)
Share employed in transportation and telecoms. (1880)		21.63 (40.21)	65.5 (41.5)	16.67 (145.85)	454.696* (185.21)	-2.62 (48.77)	-83.17 (133.22)
Share employed in wholesale and retail trade (1880)		53.04 (57.56)	80.07 (50.02)	53.18 (147.9)	436.875** (157.53)	117.25 (107.17)	-126.47 (250.39)
Share employed in finance, insurance, and real estate (1880)		674.593† (381.42)	706.217* (333.97)	663.55 (451.44)	1122.025* (547.13)	779.27 (947.02)	805.09 (1013.64)
Share employed in business and repair services, personal services, entertainment and recreation, and professional services (1880)		-4.25 (30.83)	16.07 (27.3)	8.93 (130.53)	408.858** (156.53)	-28.96 (40.9)	-177.89 (115.8)
Incomplete share sum		1.35 (15.86)	33.751** (11.59)	8.33 (128.29)	401.825** (149.5)	39.018* (19.58)	-133.74 (118.48)
Num. Obs.	561	561	556	281	273	280	276
R ²	0	0.08	0.19	0.06	0.2	0.12	0.25
R ² Adj.	0	0.06	0.12	0.02	0.02	0.08	0.15

Notes: Full results of main specifications of OLS regressions of ad valorem magnitude shift-share tariff exposure (scaled by 100) on delta protectionism. Column 1 shows bivariate regression with no controls, column 2 shows includes controls as listed, column 3 applies state fixed effects, column 4 is the above median manufacturing employment subsample without state FEs, column 5 is the above median manufacturing employment subsample with state FEs, column 6 is the below median manufacturing employment subsample without state FEs, column 7 is

the below median manufacturing employment subsample with state FEs. Cluster-robust standard errors at the state level in parentheses. Clusters are reduced when State FEs are applied, low number of clusters introduces caution in interpreting estimates.

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Appendix no. 5: Regression Results of Specific Duty Count Shift-Share Tariff Exposure (table)

Full regression results of main regression specifications using Specific Duty Count Shift-Share Tariff Exposure (table)

Table A5

Full Regression Output of Main Specifications: Delta Protectionism Regressed on Specific Duty Count Shift-Share Tariff Exposure

	No controls	Controls	+State FE	High, no FE	High, FE	Low, no FE	Low, FE
(Intercept)	2.01 (3.42)	8.77 (26.35)	-22.93 (26.97)	3.23 (126.74)	-414.379* (167.2)	27.15 (39.97)	149.21 (135.96)
Specific Duty Count Tariff Exposure	-0.09 (0.19)	0.42 (0.31)	0.57 (0.43)	0.6 (0.38)	0.65 (0.53)	-0.34 (0.54)	0.36 (0.47)
Log population		-4.703** (1.76)	-5.271** (1.68)	-3.791† (2.26)	-2.95 (2.37)	-7.162† (4.09)	-6.45 (4.01)
Log urban population		-0.06 (0.29)	-0.06 (0.32)	-0.32 (0.44)	-0.53 (0.47)	0.19 (0.42)	0.37 (0.58)
Literacy score		2.28 (2.49)	-1.12 (3.53)	4.09 (4.39)	-1.49 (7.48)	-3.9 (4.47)	-5.36 (5.7)
Log Railroad Length		4.081** (1.5)	6.208* (2.54)	2.868† (1.66)	4.662† (2.43)	7.653* (3.73)	8.987† (5.4)
Log port access		-11.86 (19.41)	-40.64 (31.56)	-11.3 (21.54)	14.06 (34.81)	-37.97 (29.93)	-87.57 (67.04)
Share employed in transportation and telecommunications (1880)		18.52 (39.63)	67.89 (41.35)	4.41 (149.95)	463.182* (188.66)	2.91 (48.31)	-61.95 (135.06)
Share employed in wholesale and retail trade (1880)		58.33 (57.31)	89.721† (51.42)	46.36 (152.71)	451.684** (161.18)	120.4 (107.65)	-107.14 (246.1)
Share employed in finance, insurance, and real estate (1880)		670.648† (385.95)	695.906* (330.39)	649.49 (458.54)	1118.755* (542.98)	772.76 (946.86)	832.19 (1014.43)
Share employed in business and repair services, personal services, entertainment and recreation, and professional services (1880)		-6.89 (31.01)	17.81 (26.7)	-7.58 (133.87)	414.323** (158.28)	-26.69 (40.79)	-159.5 (114.31)
Incomplete share sum		0.16 (17.48)	33.458** (10.79)	-7.13 (133.81)	405.988** (149.82)	31.892† (17.44)	-122.78 (118.2)
Num. Obs.	561	561	556	281	273	280	276
R ²	0	0.07	0.19	0.05	0.2	0.12	0.25
R ² Adj.	0	0.06	0.12	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.15

Notes: Full results of main specifications of OLS regressions of specific duty count shift-share tariff exposure on delta protectionism. Column 1 shows bivariate regression with no controls, column 2 shows includes controls as

listed, column 3 applies state fixed effects, column 4 is the above median manufacturing employment subsample without state FEs, column 5 is the above median manufacturing employment subsample with state FEs, column 6 is the below median manufacturing employment subsample without state FEs, column 7 is the below median manufacturing employment subsample with state FEs. Cluster-robust standard errors at the state level in parentheses. Clusters are reduced when State FEs are applied, low number of clusters introduces caution in interpreting estimates. $\dagger p < 0.1$, $* p < 0.05$, $** p < 0.01$, $*** p < 0.001$.

Appendix no. 6: Second-stage LASSO Selected Terms (table)

Second-stage LASSO selected terms predicting whether a newspaper was quoted by the *American Economist*, used to construct predicted newspaper protectionist scores, from replication data and generated using code of Scheve and Serlin (2024) (table)

Table A6

Second-Stage LASSO Terms and Coefficients for Constructing Predicted Newspaper Protectionism

Term	Coefficient	Direction
strike reduction	-62.12	Free Trade
protected manufacturers	-45.79	Free Trade
wilson gorman	42.91	Protectionist
protection american	9.91	Protectionist
special privilege	-8.8	Free Trade
american industries	8.53	Protectionist
high tariff	-6.71	Free Trade
protection make	-6.66	Free Trade
free trader	4.02	Protectionist
privileged	-3.95	Free Trade
maximum	3.55	Protectionist
protected	-3.18	Free Trade
lithia water	2.96	Protectionist
high duties	-2.83	Free Trade
brit	2.5	Protectionist
tariff revision	2.41	Protectionist
looms	2.17	Protectionist
immoral	-2.08	Free Trade
bates	2.08	Protectionist
ores	1.8	Protectionist
greater part	1.74	Protectionist
aristocracy	-1.62	Free Trade
beet sugar	1.61	Protectionist
employers	-1.38	Free Trade
tariff law	1.29	Protectionist
savings	-1.28	Free Trade
readers	-1.24	Free Trade
upon	1.18	Protectionist
trader	1.09	Protectionist
automobiles	0.79	Protectionist
silks	0.65	Protectionist

board	0.65	Protectionist
farm	0.65	Protectionist
insurgent	0.6	Protectionist
struggle	-0.6	Free Trade
importers	-0.45	Free Trade
centres	-0.44	Free Trade
machine works	-0.37	Free Trade
societies	-0.33	Free Trade
corruption	-0.31	Free Trade
per pound	0.27	Protectionist
investment	0.26	Protectionist
party	0.25	Protectionist
wools	0.18	Protectionist
number	0.18	Protectionist
today	0.16	Protectionist
british	-0.14	Free Trade
counties	0.14	Protectionist
tariff	0.11	Protectionist
copper	0.08	Protectionist
catalogue	-0.04	Free Trade
free traders	0.02	Protectionist
trusts	-0.02	Free Trade
prod	0.02	Protectionist
morals	0	Free Trade

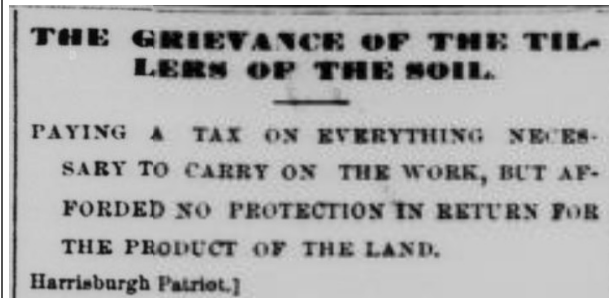
Notes: Terms selected by second-stage LASSO predicting whether a newspaper was quoted in the *American Economist*. Procedure and data by Scheve and Serlin (2024), only replicated by author in this table. Positive coefficients indicate association with protectionism; negative coefficients indicate association with free trade. Coefficients are weights used in computing predicted newspaper protectionism scores.

Appendix no. 7: Select Newspaper Excerpts (figures)

Select newspaper excerpts used to illustrate the nature of the tariff debate, not indicative of data used in deriving predicted newspaper protectionism score (Figures A11 to A15).

Figure A11

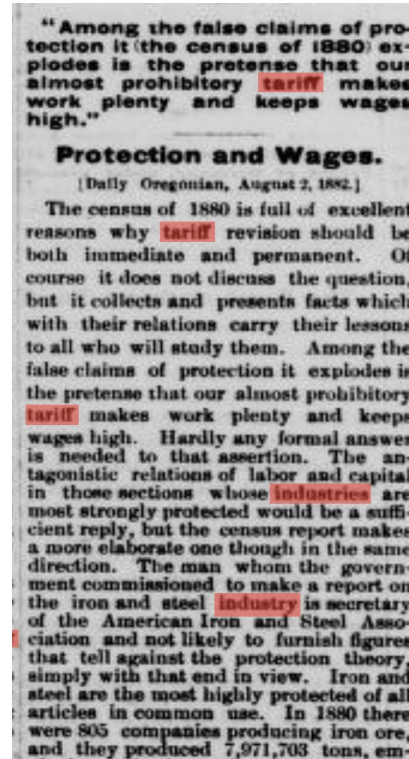
Newspaper Excerpt from the Weekly Floridian, 1888



Note: Newspaper excerpt from "The grievance of the tillers of the soil." From *The Weekly Floridian*, August 2, 1888, p. 1 (Chronicling America, Library of Congress; <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn82015289/1888-08-02/ed-1/?sp=1>). In the public domain.

Figure A12

Newspaper Excerpt from the Washington Standard, 1888



Note: Newspaper excerpt from "Protection and wages." From *Washington Standard*, October 26, 1888, p. 6 (Chronicling America, Library of Congress; <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84022770/1888-10-26/ed-1/?sp=6>). In the public domain. Highlighted text in red from keyword search of "tariff" and "industry".

Figure A13

Newspaper Excerpt from Pittsburg Dispatch, 1890

Can't Depend on Accidents.

Now, I insist that we do not want famines. We don't want revolutions, we don't want to have thousands of men slaughtered by war, in order to keep up a free trade tariff, and make it look prosperous when it is not. [Laughter and applause.] Give us a protective tariff, and we can get along without the slaughter or the starvation of men.

An in connection with the tariff of 1846, I want to say that you never heard of a free trade tariff coming to the relief of the people. [Laughter.] The only three times that the people of the United States tried a free trade tariff they fell into adversity until a protective tariff came to the relief of the people. Some people want us to let the protective tariff go by in order to make the experiment again. Well, I would like to see that experiment tried, if only one or two people were to suffer; but it is a pretty hard thing to take the dreadful and terrible chance of prostrating the industries of the country when there are 64,000,000 mouths to be fed. [Applause.] When the tariff of 1846 was enacted there were only 20,000,000 of people in this country. We now have 64,000,000. Four years after the tariff was enacted, according to the census of the United States, we only had \$7,000,000,000 of property. We now have 64,000,000 of people and \$60,000,000,000 of property. [Applause.] Gentlemen, you cannot

Note: Newspaper excerpt from "Blaine's big boost."

From *Pittsburg Dispatch*, October 26, 1890, p. 1

(Chronicling America, Library of Congress;

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024546/1890-10-26/e-d-1/?sp=1>). In the public domain. Highlighted text in red from keyword search of "tariff".

Figure A14

Newspaper Excerpt from People and Patriot, 1884

TIN AND THE TARIFF.

To the Editor of the People and Patriot:

I noticed in the *Mirror and Farmer*, under the date of Jan. 24, 1884, an argument for protection, making a suggestion of a remedy for our present business depression. I ask you to publish it, together with a few objections, hoping it may prove beneficial to the reading public. The article, under the caption of "Tin Plate and the Tariff," is as follows:

The material commonly called tin, of which tin cans, pans, dishes and roofs are made, is simply thin sheet iron covered with a light coating of tin. It is known in commerce as tin plate. Of this there was used in this country, last year, more than 200,000 tons, and the consumption is so steadily and rapidly increasing that the total for this year will probably be about 240,000 tons. The market price is about six cents a pound, or \$120 a ton. To prepare the material and produce 240,000 tons annually requires about 60,000 men working all the time.

The only reason why tin plate cannot be made as cheaply here as in England, or any other country, is because wages are higher here than there. We have plenty of iron, coal, and of everything necessary to make it EXCEPT BLOCK TIN AND PALM OIL. and we have or could have plenty of mechanics and machinery adapted to the business. But the labor necessary to produce a ton costs about fifty dollars more here than in England, and raises the cost from \$90 to \$140. The duty under our tariff laws is \$22 a ton. Consequently, the foreigner can make the article, ship it to this country, pay the duty on it, and undersell the American producer. Therefore, none is made here, and we import all we use from England. To pay for this it takes about twenty-eight million dollars annually, of which the Englishmen get about twenty-three millions and the United States treasury about five millions. In

Note: Newspaper excerpt from "Tin and the tariff." From

People and Patriot, February 7, 1884, p. 4 (Chronicling

America, Library of Congress;

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84020381/1884-02-07/e-d-1/?sp=4>). In the public domain. Highlighted text in red from keyword search of "tariff".

Figure A15

Newspaper Excerpt from The Republican, American Protective Tariff League Advertisement, 1890

TARIFF LITERATURE FOR ALL	
The AMERICAN PROTECTIVE TARIFF LEAGUE is publishing a most valuable series of Tariff documents. These are prepared with a view to state the facts and arguments for Protection, whether in the interest of farmers, laborers, merchants or professional men. Each issue of the series appeals to those engaged in separate industries, and presents indisputable facts—comparisons of wages, cost of living, and other arguments showing the benefits of Protection. Any single one will be sent on receipt of 2 cents in stamps except "Wages, Living and Tariff," which will be sent for 4 cents. The whole list will be sent for 30 cents or any twelve for 20 cents, or any five for 10 cents, postage paid. Order by number.	
No.	PAGE.
1—"Wages, Living and Tariff." E. A. HARTS- HORN.....	104
2—"The Advantages of a Protective Tariff to the Labor and Industries of the United States." First Prize Essay, 1887. CRAW- FORD D. HENNING.....	32
3—"Home Production indispensable to a Sup- ply, at Low Prices, of the Manufactured Commodities required for the People of the United States, and Adequate Home Production of these Commodities impos- sible without a Protective Tariff." First Prize Essay, 1888. C. D. TODD.....	32
4—"What are Raw Materials? Would Free Raw Materials be Advantageous to the Labor and Industries of the United States." First Prize Essay, 1889. HOMER B. DIBELL.....	32
5—"Fallacies of Free-Trade." E. P. MILLER.....	32
6—"Some Views on the Tariff by an Old Busi- ness Man." GEO. DRAFER.....	32
7—"The Protective Tariff: Its Advantages for the South." C. L. EDWARDS.....	32
8—"The Wool Interest." Judge WM. LAWRENCE.....	24
9—"Protection vs. Free-Trade."—A Historical Review. D. G. HARRIMAN.....	20
10—"The Farmer and the Tariff." COL. THOMAS H. DUDLEY.....	16
11—"Protection as a Public Policy." GEORGE S. BOUTWELL.....	16
12—"Reply to the President's Free-Trade Mes- sage." R. P. PORTER.....	8
13—"Workingmen and the Tariff.".....	8
14—"The Vital Question: Shall American Indus- tries be Abandoned and American Mar- kets Surrendered?.....	8
15—"Same in German, with Addition.....	8
16—"The Progress of One Hundred Years." ROBERT P. PORTER.....	8
17—"Protection for American Shipping.".....	8
18—"The Tariff Not a Tax." HOMER B. DIBELL.....	8
19—"Why Irishmen Should Be Protectionists.".....	8
20—"Protection." E. H. AMMIDOWN.....	4
21—"What is a Tariff?" Answers to a Working- man's Question.....	4
22—"The American Wool Industry." E. H. AM- MIDOWN.....	8
23—"Wages and Cost of Living." J. D. WEEKS.....	4
24—"Southern Farming Industries.".....	4
25—"A Short Talk to Workingmen.".....	2
26—"Protection and the Farmer." Senator S. M. CULLOM.....	12
The AMERICAN ECONOMIST, weekly, devoted to the discussion of all phases of the Tariff question. \$2 a year. Sample copies free. Address American Protective Tariff League, 23 W. 23d St., New York.	

Note: Newspaper excerpt from "Tariff literature for all." From *The Republican*, April 19, 1890, p. 8 (Chronicling America, Library of Congress; <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn88065202/1890-04-19/ed-1/?sp=8>). In the public domain.