

Mobilizing the Home Front: The Impact of War on Women's Political Activism

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Abstract

The nineteenth century saw the first entry of American women into mass political activity. What originated this sudden influx of female political activists? I leverage novel, hand-collected archival data on women's volunteering during the American Civil War to demonstrate a connection between wartime and peacetime political capacity. Places where women organized volunteer societies in support of the Union war effort were more likely to have women-led political movements to agitate for temperance and to write petitions in favor of suffrage. These relationships are robust to adjusting for other measures of pre-war and wartime social and organizational capital, including male enlistment in the Civil War. I argue that wartime volunteer mobilization helped women gain organizing experience that was useful for mass politics, even in a social context that precluded them from the public sphere and did not involve women directly substituting for male roles (as they did during the first and second World Wars).

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1 Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, American women engaged in the first mass movements for political causes that benefited women as a specific political class (Clemens 1997; Teele 2018). What precipitated the entry of American women into mass politics at this particular point in time? I focus on women's experiences during the American Civil War as a potential catalyst of political participation. Using novel, hand-collected archival data, I show that towns that participated in a nationwide program to recruit women volunteers for home production roles to support the Union Army were substantially more likely to hold women-led street protests against alcohol and to petition Congress in favor of women's suffrage. I argue that wartime home front roles provided women with the opportunity to gain valuable social capital and practical organizing experience that could be redeployed to political activism.

In contrast to other studies that focus on the effects of female substitution for male wartime roles during the First (Ray 1918; Gay 2021) and Second (Acemoglu, Autor, and Lyle 2004; Fernandez, Fogli, and Olivetti 2004) World Wars, or those that focus on the complementarities between men's combat experiences and their political capacity (Jha and Wilkinson 2012; Dippel and Heblich 2021), I focus on a setting in which women achieved political gains while operating in a social context that provided more limited opportunities for women in public life. In the above-cited cases focused on women in the 20th century, men gain political capacity by participating in combat or domestic political uprisings, and women gain political (and economic) capacity by substituting for absent men in the formal labor force. In contrast, I examine a case of women gaining organizing experience while engaging in stereotypically *female* social roles during wartime. These volunteer roles performed by women involved the historically women's tasks of home production (such as preserving food and sewing uniforms) to support the Union Army. The volunteer organizations I examine were part of a nationwide umbrella organization, the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), which served as a

centralized hub for coordinating the donations of thousands of local soldiers' aid societies. The membership of these local societies was mostly female. Unusually for the time, the "middle management" of the USSC was also mostly made up of women, and the executive ranks of the organization were mixed-gender.

Using town-level archival data on the locations of wartime aid societies, I find that towns where women volunteered with USSC were substantially more likely to hold "Temperance Crusades," street protests against the sale of alcohol, a decade later. These protests involved public marches and the physical occupation of saloons and liquor sales venues by women – a strikingly public and radical form of political pressure. I find a large and statistically significant relationship between wartime volunteering and Crusading. A USSC branch is associated with a 7-to-10 percentage point increase in the probability of holding a protest. This relationship persists after controlling for, and matching on, baseline demographic and economic covariates, as well as for town-level variables that capture overall levels of social capital, including men's enlistment in the Union Army. I quantify the degree to which a causal interpretation of the relationship between wartime volunteer organizations and post-war temperance activism is vulnerable to unobserved variable bias or potential sample selection. Furthermore, counties with higher population exposure to USSC aid societies sent more petitions to Congress in favor of women's suffrage between 1874 and 1920.

By demonstrating empirical evidence for a link between sex-segregated social organization and public campaigns for women's political causes, I bridge the gap between a largely qualitative literature on women's roles in the 18th and 19th-century United States (Cott 1977; Tetrault 2014) and the more quantitative literature on their emergence into the workforce and public roles in the 20th century (Acemoglu, Autor, and Lyle 2004; Bailey 2006; Olivetti 2013; Goldin 2021). My findings contribute to an understanding of the development of American women's political capacity and participation in mass politics after the American Civil War. They also have generalizable implications for understanding how women can advance

politically in cultural contexts that preclude their full participation in the public sphere.

2 Historical Background

2.1 American Women's Rights Activism

The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention is sometimes considered to be the starting point of organized women's activism in the United States. Although Tetrault (2014) disputes this characterization, pointing to even earlier instances of political participation by early female activists on behalf of women's rights and the anti-slavery movement, it is still instructive to note that Seneca Falls, and subsequent conventions in New York and New England, typically attracted no more than a thousand women, most of them educated members of socially elite circles. These women were usually from relatively wealthy families and had the benefit of unusually high education levels (Wellman 2004; McMillen 2008).¹

The postwar women's movement, which drew support and participation from a broader swath of society, focused on two causes of particular interest to women: temperance and suffrage (as well the less-gendered cause of civil rights and racial equality). These social movements frequently overlapped with one another at the level of individual activists and organizations. In its 19th-century incarnation, political activism against the sale of alcohol focused on the problem of alcoholism among men and its impacts on their wives and families, including domestic violence, lost earnings, and familial neglect. Unlike the latter portion of the 19th century, when women strategically built coalitions in politically competitive local environments to advance the cause of suffrage (Teele 2018), the early temperance movement focused on campaigns of "moral suasion" to socially discourage the consumption and sale of alcohol rather than on legislative prohibition.

Though the American anti-alcohol movement predated the Civil War, it gathered steam

¹Women did engage in activities such as petitioning for abolition before the war; see Carpenter and Moore (2014).

in the 1870s, beginning with a series of “Temperance Crusades” in 1873 and 1874 – spontaneous women-led demonstrations, sometimes lasting for days, against the sale of alcohol across 910 American towns (Blocker 1985). These marches combined radical tactics – street protests, the physical occupation of saloons, and demands for the destruction of liquor stocks – with socially respectable aesthetics. Public marketing of the movement focused on alcohol’s damaging effects on families and on the obligation of women to serve as guardians of the family. The first Crusade was organized in Hillsboro, Ohio, by fifty-seven-year-old Eliza Daniel (“Mother”) Stewart, who wrote a memoir of her activist career in which she discussed alcohol’s effects on women: “wretchedness, woe, misery, privation, neglect, want, pinching poverty, and disgrace for her and her children” (Stewart 1890, 39). The marches had some short-run successes, pressuring some local merchants to shut down sale of alcohol, but little long-run effect on the actual supply of alcohol in American towns based on a quantitative survey presented in Blocker (1985). Their greater legacy was the organizations that emerged from the protest movement, including those that had spillover effects to suffrage.

The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded by Crusade participants in December 1874, became the leading American temperance organization and amassed considerable political influence. The WCTU pursued an approach its president, Frances Willard, called the “do everything” strategy, explicitly linking the pursuit of the franchise to the goal of temperance via the mobilization of women voters (Willard 1895, 10). The aesthetics of the WCTU, like those of the Temperance Crusades, drew heavily on the Victorian notions of women’s moral superiority and on Protestant religious imagery. In grounding itself in this cultural context, the temperance movement anticipated the subsequent tactics of the women’s suffrage movements, which, according to Corder and Wolbrecht (2016) “appropriated...the Cult of True Womanhood” to justify the vote for women (43). Yet Mattingly (2000) cautions readers not to view the temperance movement as conservative. Rather, “temperance women made a conscious, rhetorical decision to reach a broad-based audience by addressing the temperance cause,” including women who were not yet ready, or in a

position, to campaign for suffrage alone but who identified with a movement to improve the general welfare of women (22).

The goals and support base of the American temperance movement changed after Willard, the president of the WCTU, died unexpectedly in 1898. The leading 20th-century anti-alcohol organization, the Anti-Saloon League, had male leadership and pursued legislative approaches to banning alcohol, culminating in Prohibition. Unlike 19th-century women campaigners, who specifically conducted outreach to recruit immigrant women to their cause, the Anti-Saloon League sought conservative, nationalist allies, particularly among anti-immigration nativists (Okrent 2010). By this point, however, the attention of women activists had shifted away from agenda of temperance and suffrage to one that concentrated specifically on gaining the franchise.

2.2 Women’s Roles In the American Civil War

At the start of the American Civil War, the Union Army faced the challenge of organizing, staffing, and supplying medical facilities to cope with large numbers of casualties from battles and disease. In June 1861, a group of philanthropists and civic leaders founded the United States Sanitary Commission, a civilian organization that partnered with the U.S. Army’s medical corps to provide money, supplies, and labor to army hospitals. Inspired by innovations in nursing and military medical science pioneered by the British during the Crimean War a few years earlier, the Sanitary Commission had a dual mission to recruit and train nurses for Army hospitals and to provide a centralized point of contact for local “soldiers’ aid societies” across the Union. These aid societies organized fundraising campaigns and contributed in-kind supplies from the home front, such as clothing and preserved food, directly to the war effort. The top leadership was mostly male, with the exceptions of national leaders Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and Dorothea Dix. However, the leadership of the USSC’s twelve regional branches – roles with considerable influence over strategic operations – was female, as were many of the “agents” who interfaced between branch leadership and

local club leadership, and the bulk of town-level volunteers (Giesberg 2006).

The branch-level female management of the USSC recognized that outreach to local women across the Union as crucial to their mission. To raise awareness of the USSC and boost contributions from town-level volunteer organizations, they networked in person and via correspondence with interested female volunteers, many of whom had never previously encountered women in positions of public authority. Giesberg (2006), a social history of the USSC, writes that “Rural women invested branch women with their confidence and believed them to be agents of the United States government, and in return, branch women worked hard and were committed to sustaining and maintaining the autonomy of women’s wartime relief work” (94). The USSC’s female leadership also engaged with male policymakers, supervisors, and colleagues on a co-equal level, giving both men and women the “opportunity to experiment with various divisions of responsibility and authority outside the domestic setting” (88). The leadership of individual clubs, however, was over ninety percent female.²

Like the postwar temperance movement, the movement to recruit women to volunteer roles during the Civil War deliberately couched itself in the cultural ideals of the nineteenth century. In sharp contrast to the “Rosie the Riveter” campaigns that encouraged women to join the war effort during the Second World War by emphasizing their physical capabilities and qualifications to step into male roles, discussion of aid societies tended to emphasize the feminine, motherly qualities of volunteers. A regimental surgeon who praised the work of soldiers’ aid societies wrote that “the Sanitary Commission furnishes to the suffering soldier just that kind of delicacy or substantial which a judicious mother or wife would furnish if they had the opportunity.”³ Others who came into contact with women volunteers, both nurses and aid society contributors, wrote of the “delicate yet important attentions which only a woman can give at the bedside of the suffering” and the contributions of homemade

²Based on author’s calculations from archival data.

³United States Sanitary Commission. “The Sanitary Commission of the United States Army: a Succinct Narrative of Its Works and Purposes” (1864) 211.

foodstuffs “all showing women’s warm hearts and women’s skillful hands.”⁴

A survey of the biographies of leadership of the Temperance Crusades or the WCTU reveals that many of the women at the helms of these movements had spent the war organizing women volunteers. The WCTU’s first president, Annie Turner Wittenmyer, spent the war years as a “Sanitary Agent” coordinating aid societies in her home state of Iowa. Mary Livermore, a prominent temperance and suffrage activist, served as both a wartime nurse and an administrator for the Chicago branch of the USSC. Eliza Daniel Stewart, the leader of the first Temperance Crusade in Hillsboro, Ohio, spent the war “busily engaged in procuring and sending supplies to the sick and wounded” (Daniels 1878, 278). Lesser-known women also got organizing experience during the war that served them well in the temperance and suffrage movements. The president of the Akron Soldiers’ Aid Society, Adeline Myers Coburn, “shifted her organizational and leadership skills to the temperance crusade” after the war (Endres 2006, 36).

3 Theory

A link between women’s wartime social organizations and postwar activism could rest on several different potential mechanisms, none of which are mutually exclusive. One possibility is that the USSC gave women opportunities to practice organization and leadership in single-sex environment without being crowded out by men. “Enclave theory” describes a mechanism wherein members of a socially or structurally disadvantaged group can more effectively develop skills that contradict assumptions or overcome barriers in an enclave of their own type. For instance, research demonstrates that women and girls are more likely to develop competitive skills in single-sex environments, or environments in which men are in the minority (Gneezy, Niederle, and Rustichini 2003; Gneezy, Leonard, and List 2009; Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and Shaker 2012; Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2018). Skills devel-

⁴The United States Sanitary Commission, Cleveland Branch. (1861/1862) “Annual Report of the Soldiers’ Aid Society of Northern Ohio to the U.S. Sanitary Commission.” 38-39.

oped in a enclave can continue to affect the behavior of women and girls once they return to a mixed-sex setting (Booth and Nolen 2012; Hampole, Truffa, and Wong 2021). Women temperance activists were intuitively aware of the benefits of maintaining a female-only enclave in the WCTU, which did not open itself to mass male membership explicitly so that women would feel comfortable taking positions of authority (Mattingly 2000, 60). In this sense, the strategy of the USSC reflects the account of Burns, Scholzman, and Verba (2001), which places the origins of women’s political participation in “private roots” based in the community. Theoretically, this explanation echoes the work of Carpenter and Moore (2014), which examines how female-led antislavery canvassing a functioned as a training ground for postwar women’s rights organization.⁵

Beyond simply interacting with other women in enclaves, the USSC elevated the profiles of women leaders at the regional and national level, giving the female public potential role models. A substantial body of literature demonstrates that female political leadership has outsized effects on women relative to men. For instance, female cabinet members in the UK House of Commons are more likely to boost the debate contributions of other female MPs (Blumenau 2021), and the election of a female mayor boosts support for other female candidates in lower municipal races in Germany (Baskaran and Hessami 2018). For perhaps the first time, the high national profiles of Blackwell and Dix, and the regional visibility of administrators like Annie Turner Wittenmyer and Mary Livermore, gave middle-class American women examples of women with political capital and authority in the public sphere.⁶

Finally, wartime volunteering could increase women’s legitimacy as a political force, either in the eyes of the (male) public or in the eyes of women themselves. The USSC provided

⁵Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz (2006) highlights the role of African-American fraternal clubs and societies as a different kind of enclave that proved useful in the fight for civil rights by “prepar[ing] citizens for wider participation by teaching organizational and leadership skills to millions of Americans” [5].

⁶The role of inspirational leadership was important in other contexts during this period in American history. Immigrants to the United States who had participated in the failed liberal 1848 uprisings in Europe played important roles in the anti-slavery movement in the United States and were effective recruiters for the Union Army (Dippel and Hebllich 2021).

an avenue for women to “serve the nation” during wartime. The marketing of the Temperance Crusades was frequently militaristic in tone, underscoring the parallel experiences of men and women during the war. For example, a speech by WCTU president Frances Willard addressed the “Beloved Comrades of the White Ribbon Army” with the reminder that “In about seventy days from now, twenty years will have elapsed since the call of battle sounded its bugle note among the homes and hearts of Hillsboro, Ohio” (where the Crusade movement originated) (Willard 1895). Skocpol (1995) examines the importance of social legitimacy to the origins of the American welfare system, the first beneficiaries of which were Civil War veterans and, later, needy mothers and children. The former group drew on their considerable cultural clout in the postbellum United States to obtain pensions and disability compensation. The latter laid claim to resources on the basis of “values traditionally associated with the feminine domestic sphere” that enabled even poor women to access the social legitimacy afforded to women as a deserving social class (465). The women who transitioned from wartime volunteering to postwar activism were the female counterparts of the soldiers and the predecessors of 20th-century reformist women who spearheaded campaigns for mothers’ pensions, and they potentially pioneered the cultural tactics that paved the way for these other kinds of political gains.

4 Data

4.1 Home Front Volunteering

My primary hypothesis is that the American Civil War provided women with opportunities to gain leadership and organizational experience on the home front that translated into political effectiveness after the war. To measure their participation in these opportunities, I draw on the records of the USSC, housed in the New York Metropolitan Archive to construct a variable that captures whether or not a town had a soldiers’ aid society affiliated with the

USSC.⁷

The USSC was organized into twelve different branches, some of which spanned multiple states. The New York Metropolitan Archives contains retrospective records for the Albany, Buffalo, California, Cleveland, Central, Hartford, Michigan, New England, New Jersey, Northwestern, Rochester, and Wisconsin branches. Records for the Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Kentucky, and New Albany (Ohio) branches are absent. I reconstruct a list of Cincinnati branches using an alternate dataset, the 1863 shipments received from towns that were members of this branch. The New Albany branch appears to have been small; thus, Ohio is likely mostly covered by data from the Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus branches. The archive contains no coverage of the Western Sanitary Commission, a similar but separate organization that operated only in Western states, or any independent societies unaffiliated with the USSC.

Accordingly, I restrict the sample to states for which the USSC data is sufficiently comprehensive: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Ohio.⁸ Together, the sample states comprise of twelve of the twenty-six Union states (including border states) and, collectively, about 52% of the Union population.⁹ Appendix A gives further details on the construction of the dataset.

Figure 1 shows the locations of towns that did vs. did not have a soldiers' aid society affiliated with the USSC in states for which there is complete or near-complete USSC data. There is substantial regional variation in the degree to which towns participated in the USSC; for instance, a majority of localities in New York and southern parts of New England

⁷The New York Public Library Humanities and Social Sciences Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, United States Sanitary Commission Records 1861-1878, MSSCol 3101, Box 979. "Catalogue of the aid societies tributary to the U.S. Sanitary Commission, alphabetically arranged."

⁸I omit California because, as the only Western state with USSC affiliates, it was fundamentally different politically and, uniquely, the bulk of its soldiers' aid societies were run by men. Indiana is omitted because aid activities were mostly run by the state-level Indiana Sanitary Commission (Thornbrough 1965).

⁹Source: Author's calculation using 1860 U.S. Census.

took part, while participation was sparser in the Midwest and northern parts of New England. Within Ohio, enthusiasm was particularly high in the northeastern corner of the state around Cleveland. However, even in areas where participation was high, participating towns are interspersed with those that did not have a USSC affiliate club, and in areas where participation was low, some towns did join. There are no sharp geographic or regional boundaries that clearly demarcated the USSC's presence. Section 4.3 discusses the characteristics of towns that did vs. did not have USSC-affiliated aid societies.

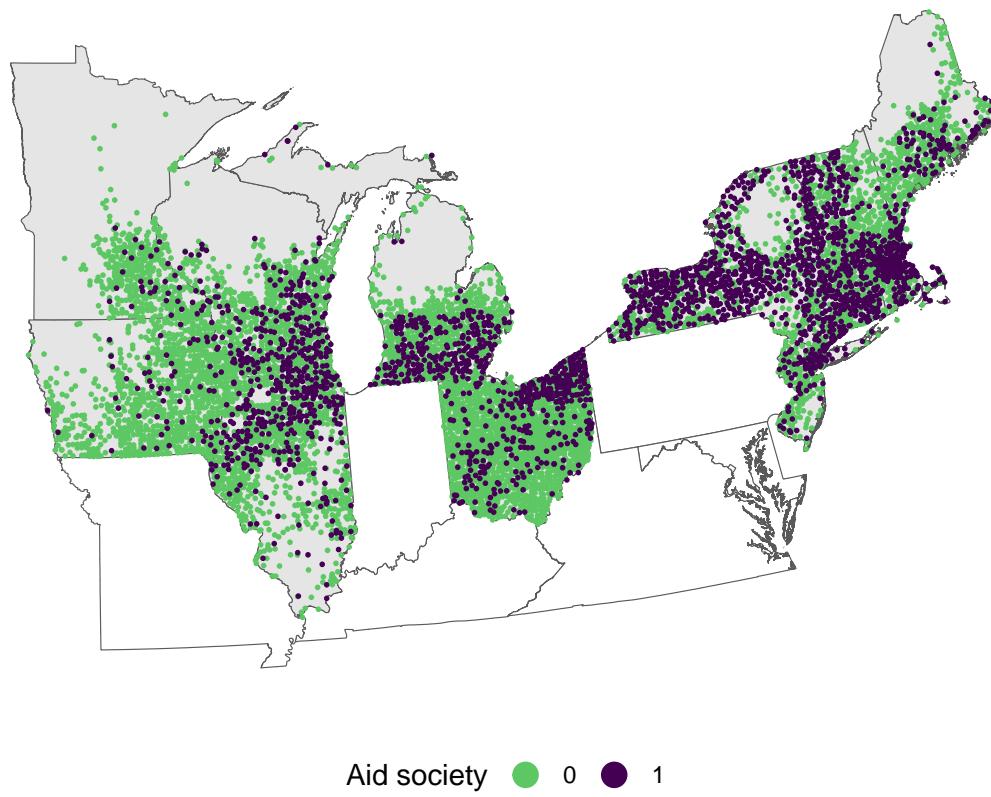


Figure 1: Map of towns that did vs. did not have a local soldiers' aid society affiliated with the USSC. State boundaries are from 1860; states in the Union that are in (*out of*) sample are shaded gray (*white*).

4.2 Women's Postwar Political Activism

As the first postwar outcome of interest, I use town-level data from Blocker (1985) on Temperance Crusades in 1873-1874. To my knowledge, this data has been used in only one other

quantitative study, García-Jimeno, Iglesias, and Yildirim (2021), which focuses on communication networks as proximate reasons for Crusades, while I focus on the ultimate social mechanisms that enabled women to organize.

In total, 910 towns across the country held Crusades, 692 of which are located in states in the sample described in Section 4.1. Of these, 465 can be matched to a town that appears in the 1860 Census; the remainder are towns that were not yet incorporated by 1860 but were known population centers by the 1870s, which I omit from the sample.

The top panel of Figure 2 shows the locations of towns that had Temperance Crusades in the sample states. The town that hosted the first Crusade – Hillsboro, OH – is located in the southwest corner of the state and formed a clear epicenter of the protest movement. Crusades were more common in Midwestern states than in states further East, which García-Jimeno, Iglesias, and Yildirim (2021) attributes in part to the technology through which news of the protest movement spread.

To measure post-war women’s suffrage activism, I use data from Carpenter et al. (2018) on post-war petitions in favor of women’s suffrage submitted to Congress between 1874 and 1920. This database contains 905 petitions that can be linked to a specific county where the petitioners resided. These petitions were usually (though not always) submitted on behalf of women activists, and I interpret them as a measure of enthusiasm for, and ability to organize in favor of, suffrage. Appendix D gives further details of this data. Because the long right tail of the distribution of petitions by counties largely reflects the locations of large population centers, the bottom panel of Figure 2 shows counties coded according whether their residents submitted at least one suffrage petition, which is used as the postwar suffrage outcome.

The Temperance Crusade outcome is measured at the town level, but suffrage petitioning is measured at the county level. To transform the town-level USSC variable into a county-level data that can be related to the suffrage petition outcome, I measure the share of a county’s

1860 population living in a town with an aid society, thus capturing the share of a county’s population “exposed” to a society. Figure 3 shows the distribution of exposed population by county.

4.3 Demographic, Social, and Economic Variables

I use town- and county-level demographic, social, and economic covariates drawn from the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Censuses to adjust for pre-war town characteristics and to examine the role of societies in a subset of the data matched on pre-war characteristics. To control for basic geographic characteristics, I include state fixed effects and linear and quadratic controls for latitude and longitude. Black, foreign-born, and German population shares (due to the association of German immigrants with beer halls, a potential target of temperance activists), as well as log 1860 population, are drawn from the 1860 Census and are included to capture demographic characteristics. To capture localities’ economic characteristics, I include town-level log distance to the nearest railroad (in 1860, based on railroad shapefiles from Atack 2016) and county-level per-capita agricultural output value in 1860; manufacturing jobs per capita in 1860; and 1860 illiteracy rates. To adjust for the political leanings of a town, I include 1860 town-level Republican vote share.

Because a location’s probability of having an aid society, or participating in later activism, may be affected by general levels of social interconnectedness and pro-sociality, I also include controls for local levels of social capital, political engagement, and organizational capacity before and during the war. Firstly, I include the number of church “sittings” (seats) per capita in 1860, observed at the county level, as a measure of religiosity. Second, I include town-level Civil War enlistment from Dippel and Heblisch (2021). Male wartime enlistment in the Union Army was almost entirely on a volunteer basis; thus, enlistment data captures town-level variation in civic volunteerism among a town’s men. Thirdly, I control for pre-war enthusiasm for temperance using town-level data on the locations of the Independent Organization of Good Templars (IOGT), a pro-temperance organization open to both women

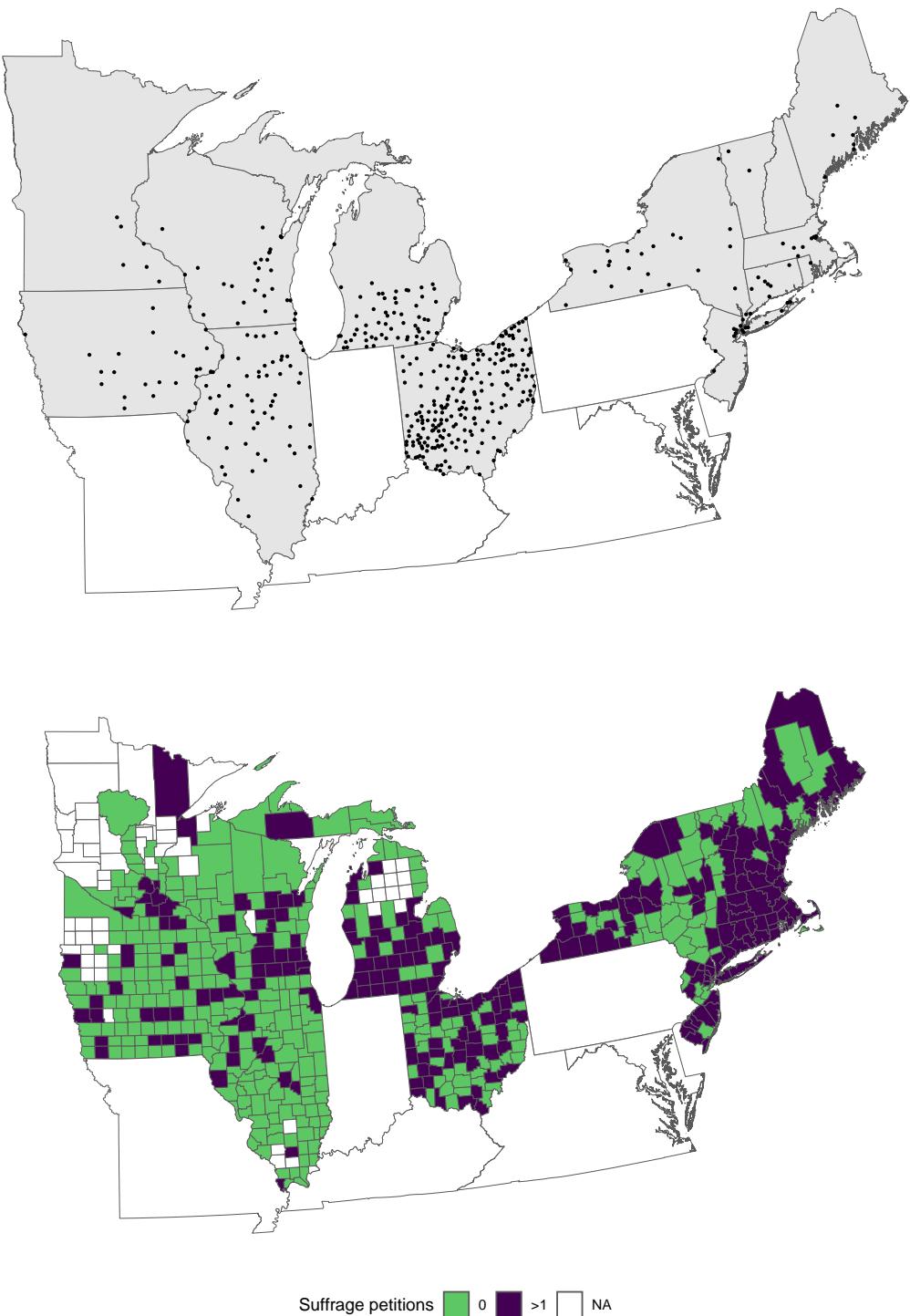


Figure 2: Top: Locations of Temperance Crusades. Bottom: Counties that did vs. did not submit at least one petition in favor of women's suffrage to Congress between 1874 and 1920. Counties with no settlements designated as towns or cities in the 1860 Census, and adjacent states in the Union that are not in sample, are displayed in white.

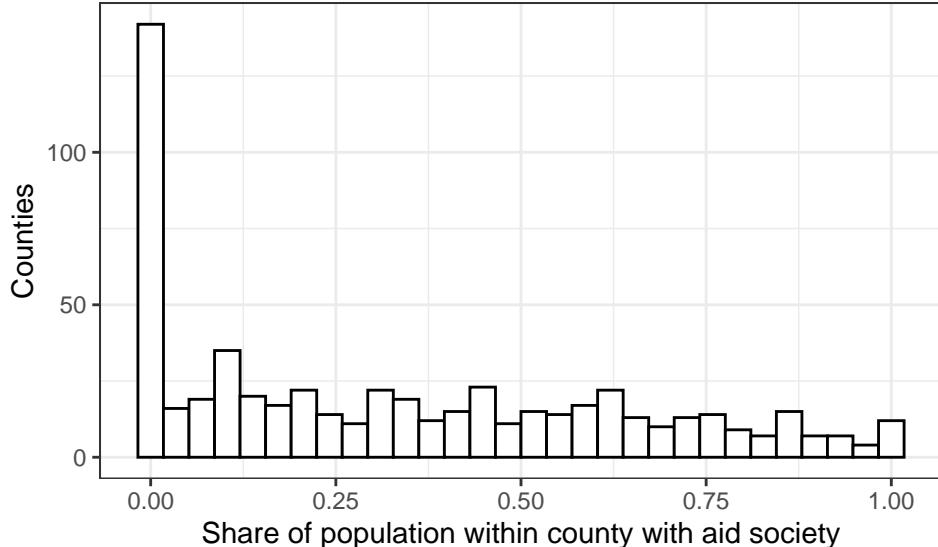


Figure 3: Share of counties’ 1860 population living in a town with an aid society.

and men. Town-level data on the locations of local IOGT chapters (called “lodges”) is available for the state of Wisconsin.

Finally, I include two variables that capture local political organizational capacity, one for women only and a second, more general measure. To measure the pre-war political capacity of women, I include a variable on the number of petition signatures gathered by female abolitionist campaigners at the county level (Carpenter and Moore 2014).¹⁰ Secondly, using data from Blackhawk et al. (2021), I construct a town-level measure of the number of petitions submitted by citizens and interest groups to Congress in the decade between the Civil War. Each petition is associated with its date of submission, the geographic location of origin (town, county, or congressional district), and substantive demands. Some issues mentioned in petitions to Congress are political in nature (for instance, petitions to legislate the closure of businesses on Sunday for religious reasons, or change the age of consent for marriage), while others draw attention to more prosaic requests (for instance, the approval of an individual’s veteran pension). These petitions can be understood to capture a town’s

¹⁰Obviously, the abolitionist cause would only have been championed by women with abolitionist political sentiments; thus, this cannot be construed as capturing women’s *general* political capital, although many women participated in both civil rights causes and temperance or suffrage.

general level of political involvement, capacity, or enthusiasm. Appendix D gives additional information about the construction of this variable.

The top panel of Figure 4 shows the difference in means for towns with vs. without a USSC aid society for each mean-standardized town-level pre-war variable with and without adjusting for baseline geographic variables (linear and quadratic terms for latitude and longitude and state fixed effects). Towns with soldiers' aid societies tend to be more populous, closer to railroads, more industrial (as measured by manufacturing jobs per capita), and more literate, with more church sittings per capita. They are more likely to vote Republican in the 1860 election and to have levels of higher pre-war social and political capital. Where variables are available only at the county level (for instance, those drawn from the 1860 Census), I assign the county measures to all towns within the county. Appendix Tables A1 and A2 give summary statistics for town-level and county-level covariates respectively.

One possible concern is that, despite the inclusion of covariates to adjust for observable differences between locations with and without societies, results may be biased due to underlying (observable) differences between towns that did vs. did not have a USSC-affiliated aid society. To check for and control for this potential bias, I use propensity score matching to build a more comparable sample using the method suggested by Imai and Ratkovic (2014). First, I estimate a logistic regression

$$Pr(society_i = 1 | X_i) = \frac{\exp(X_i^T \beta)}{1 + \exp(X_i^T \beta)} \quad (1)$$

where X_i is a matrix of all control variables available for the full sample (excluding the Wisconsin-only IOGT variable) and β a vector of the associated coefficients. Maximizing the fit of Equation 1 yields propensity score predictors for each observation. I then use nearest-neighbor matching to construct a dataset matched on the calculated propensity scores. The matched dataset consists of 2,424 (1,280) observations with (*without*) an aid society.¹¹ The

¹¹For simplicity of interpretation, and because results varied minimally between the main results and the

bottom panel of Figure 4 shows the difference in means between towns with vs. without a USSC aid society for the matched sample.

Figure 5 shows the county-level version of Figure 4, constructed to accommodate the county-level suffrage petition outcome. In this figure, the graph reflects the point estimates of a regression of the share of counties' population exposed to a USSC society (a continuous variable) on each covariate. To adjust for potential bias due to imbalance on observable characteristics, I use entropy balance (Hainmueller 2012) to re-weight each observation for improved balance.¹²

5 Analysis

5.1 Temperance Crusades

The difference in the probability of holding a Crusade conditional on having vs. not having had a wartime aid society is stark. In the full sample, of towns that had an aid society, 12.4% had a Crusade, vs. 2.9% of those with no aid society. Table 1 shows this difference adjusted for pre-war covariates using variations on the following OLS regression:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta society_i + \mathbf{X}\gamma + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

where Y_i is a variable capturing whether town i held a Temperance Crusade (either 0 or 1); α is an intercept term; $society_i$ is a variable representing whether town i had a soldiers' aid society during the Civil War; and γ is a vector of coefficients for control variables discussed in Section 4.3.

Even after introducing a number of controls, towns with USSC-affiliated soldiers' aid society

appropriate robustness check, I assign aid societies at random to plausible matches when ambiguous.

¹²Town-level matching and county-level weighting are conducted using the **MatchIt** (Ho et al. 2018) and **WeightIt** (Greifer 2019) R packages, respectively.

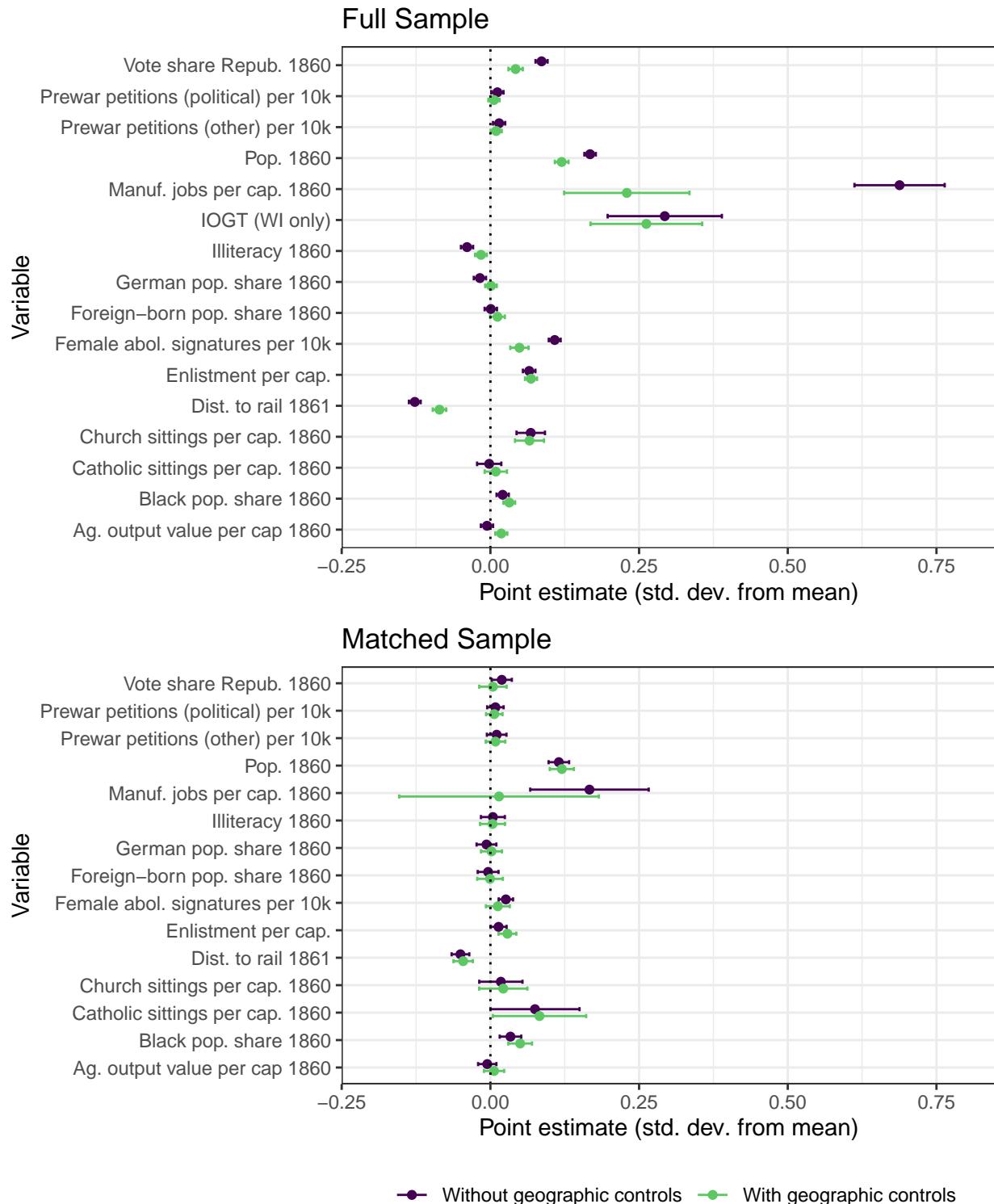


Figure 4: Balance table comparing difference in means for demographic, socio-economic, and political variables in towns that did vs. did not have a USSC-affiliated soldiers’ aid society, with and without adjusting for state fixed effects (except for IOGT, which is available only for Wisconsin) and linear and quadratic latitude and longitude. Variables available only at county level are assigned to all towns within those counties. All variables are mean-standardized for easier comparisons.

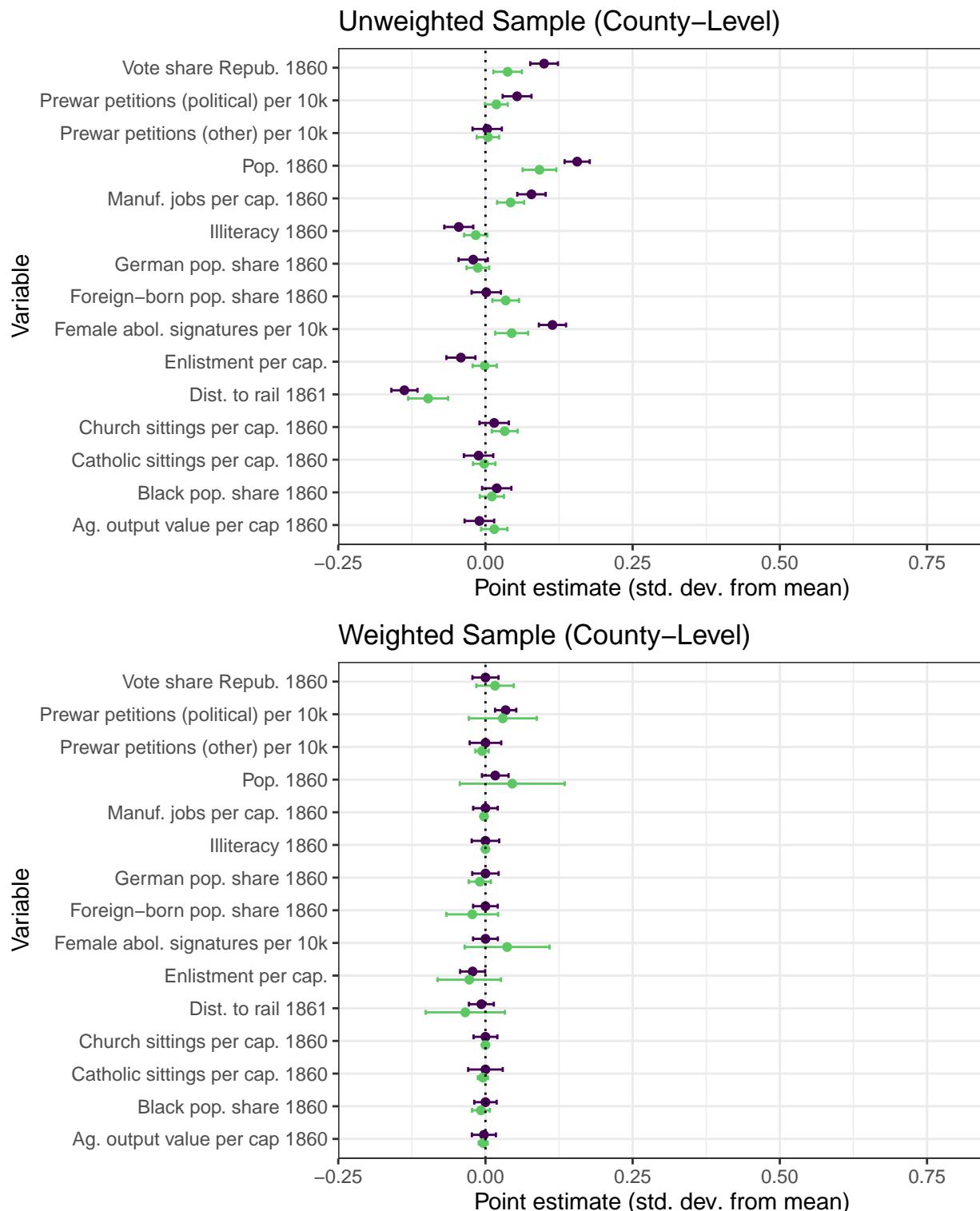


Figure 5: Balance table comparing coefficients for share of a county's population exposed to a USSC-affiliated aid society regressed on county-level demographic, socio-economic, and political variables, with and without adjusting for state fixed effects and linear and quadratic latitude and longitude. All variables are mean-standardized for easier comparisons.

had a strikingly higher likelihood of hosting a Temperance Crusade. The point estimate remains statistically significant and fluxuates little after adjusting for geographic variables, economic and political characteristics, and measures of pre-war social capital (Columns 2-4). Column 5 shows results for Wisconsin only, including a variable that captures the presence of an IOGT lodge.¹³ Appendix C shows other variations on the main specification: adjusting for population in the regression weights; dropping the smallest and largest cities; and using Conley standard errors to account for spatial variation. Results are qualitatively similar across all variations.

The point effect on $society_i$ in the regression conducted on the matched sample (Column 6 of Table 1) is of somewhat smaller magnitude than those from the regressions that use the full sample (6.6 percentage points vs. 8.0-10.3 percentage points), although it remains statistically significant and substantively meaningful in terms of its size. This suggests that at least some of the observed effect in the full sample can be attributed to bias due to a lack of common support over the covariates and/or to imbalance on the observable covariates (Heckman, Ichimura, and Todd 1998). I discuss the implications for interpreting the relationship between wartime volunteering and postwar outcomes in Section 5.3.

5.2 Suffrage Petitions

To measure the longer-run relationship between USSC societies and women's political capacity, I turn to the outcomes that capture post-war suffrage petitioning and women voters' participation after enfranchisement. I run the following regression at the county level:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta society_i + \mathbf{X}\gamma + \epsilon_i \quad (3)$$

where Y_i is a dichotomous measure of whether any town in county i sent at least one petition to Congress in favor of suffrage; $society_i$ is the share of population in county i that resides in a

¹³Note that no towns in Wisconsin contribute pre-war suffrage petitions.

Table 1: Results from the specification described in Equation 2 for the full sample (Columns 1-4), matched sample (Column 5), and Wisconsin only (Column 6).

	Dependent variable:					
	Full sample			Has Crusade		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	USSC society	0.094*** (0.006)	0.103*** (0.006)	0.090*** (0.006)	0.080*** (0.006)	0.086*** (0.019)
Log pop. 1860		0.050*** (0.003)	0.037*** (0.003)	0.043*** (0.004)	0.074*** (0.013)	0.073*** (0.007)
Dist. to rail 1861			-0.046*** (0.003)	-0.042*** (0.003)	-0.042*** (0.010)	-0.040*** (0.005)
Illiteracy 1860			-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.009)	-0.011* (0.006)
Repub. vote share 1860			0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.004)	0.011 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.007)
Black pop. share 1860			0.034*** (0.003)	0.031*** (0.003)	0.013 (0.010)	0.047*** (0.006)
Foreign-born pop. share 1860			-0.002 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.013)	-0.005 (0.008)
German pop. share 1860			0.001 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.007)	0.006 (0.005)
Ag. output per cap. 1860			0.004 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.050* (0.030)	-0.007 (0.009)
Manuf. jobs. per cap. 1860			-0.018 (0.033)	-0.021 (0.034)	-0.027 (0.087)	-0.084 (0.053)
Enlistment per cap.				0.036*** (0.003)	0.025*** (0.007)	0.049*** (0.005)
Church sittings per cap. 1860				-0.026** (0.012)	-0.116 (0.075)	-0.032 (0.021)
Catholic sittings per cap. 1860				0.010 (0.008)	0.025 (0.053)	0.012 (0.026)
General Congress. pet.				0.005 (0.003)	0.004 (0.007)	0.008 (0.005)
Political Congress. pet.				0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.008)	0.00002 (0.005)
Female abol. pet.				-0.005 (0.004)		-0.001 (0.006)
IOGT					0.086*** (0.023)	
Geo. controls		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	7,862	7,862	7,787	7,429	631	3,704
Adjusted R ²	0.034	0.108	0.148	0.168	0.244	0.230

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

town or city that had a wartime aid society; and \mathbf{X} is a matrix of county-level covariates. I use a binary formulation for Y_i rather than measuring (for instance) the number of petitions per capita because I lack information about the number of signatories to any individual petition and thus cannot differentiate between a single petition with many signatories vs. many petitions with fewer signatories.

Table 2 shows the results of variations on Equation 3. The point estimates on all specifications are positive, but standard errors are large on estimates using the unmatched sample when covariates are introduced. The point estimate generated using weighted sample, however, is statistically significant; a one-deviation increase in the share of a county living in a town with a USSC-affiliated aid society is associated with a 5.9-percentage point increase in the probability of a town originating a suffrage petition.

5.3 Evaluating the Causal Channel

The results in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 show a strong association between women’s wartime experiences and their postwar political capacity. They cannot, however, speak directly to a causal relationship: to what extent did wartime volunteering grant women political capacity they would not otherwise have had, versus reflecting the antecedents to women’s mass political engagement in the late nineteenth century? To address this concern, I present a sensitivity analysis based on Cinelli and Hazlett (2020). The purpose of such an analysis is to demonstrate how large an effect a hypothetical omitted variable would need to have to explain all of the effect attributed to the explanatory variable of interest (in this case, the presence of USSC-affiliated aid societies).

Suppose that there is some unobservable covariate U_i that is correlated both with the presence of an aid society and with the occurrence of a Temperance Crusade. The approach suggested by Cinelli and Hazlett (2020) is to measure how strong the relationships between U_i and the USSC variable, and U_i and the Crusade outcome, would have to be to completely explain

Table 2: Results from the specification described in Equation 2 for the full sample (Columns 1-4) and weighted sample (Column 5).

	Dependent variable:				
	Sent suffrage petition			Weighted sample	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Share exposed to USSC society	0.131*** (0.020)	0.061** (0.026)	0.040 (0.027)	0.042 (0.028)	0.059** (0.025)
Log pop. 1860		0.065*** (0.019)	0.043 (0.027)	0.032 (0.029)	0.019 (0.031)
Dist. to rail 1861			-0.092** (0.038)	-0.089** (0.039)	-0.074* (0.044)
Illiteracy 1860			-0.014 (0.021)	-0.015 (0.021)	-0.036 (0.023)
Repub. vote share 1860			0.078*** (0.030)	0.075** (0.031)	0.060* (0.035)
Black pop. share 1860			0.035* (0.021)	0.029 (0.021)	0.022 (0.019)
Foreign-born pop. share 1860			-0.028 (0.027)	-0.031 (0.028)	-0.022 (0.033)
German pop. share 1860			0.032 (0.020)	0.030 (0.020)	0.098*** (0.022)
Ag. output per cap. 1860			0.040 (0.026)	0.050 (0.051)	-0.035 (0.063)
Manuf. jobs. per cap. 1860			0.030 (0.028)	0.028 (0.028)	-0.005 (0.031)
Enlistment per cap.				-0.034 (0.024)	-0.031 (0.025)
Church sittings per cap. 1860				-0.013 (0.052)	0.066 (0.063)
Catholic sittings per cap. 1860				0.002 (0.023)	0.050 (0.048)
General Congress. pet.				0.029 (0.021)	0.007 (0.026)
Political Congress. pet.				-0.011 (0.019)	-0.012 (0.017)
Female abol. pet.				0.041 (0.028)	0.069** (0.031)
Geo. controls		✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	577	577	565	565	565
Adjusted R ²	0.069	0.217	0.242	0.241	0.241

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

the effect attributed to the presence of an aid society in the matched and weighted sample regressions actually shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Formally, following Cinelli and Hazlett (2020), I define the *partial R² of the unobserved confounding variable with the outcome* as

$$R^2_{Y_i \sim U_i | society_i, \mathbf{X}} = \frac{R^2_{Y_i \sim society_i + \mathbf{X} + U_i} - R^2_{Y_i \sim society_i + \mathbf{X}}}{1 - R^2_{Y_i \sim society_i + \mathbf{X}}} \quad (4)$$

and the *partial R² of the unobserved confounding variable with the treatment* as

$$R^2_{society_i \sim U_i | \mathbf{X}} = \frac{R^2_{society_i \sim \mathbf{X} + U_i} - R^2_{society_i \sim \mathbf{X}}}{1 - R^2_{society_i \sim \mathbf{X}}} \quad (5)$$

where Y_i and $society_i$ are defined as in Section 4 and \mathbf{X} is a matrix of control variables. The intuition behind the sensitivity analysis is to measure how $\hat{\beta}$, the coefficient on $society_i$, would change in relation to a range of hypothetical non-zero values for $R^2_{Y_i \sim U_i | society_i, \mathbf{X}}$ and $R^2_{society_i \sim U_i | \mathbf{X}}$.

If one assumes the presence of an omitted variable (or variables) that is orthogonal to $society_i$ (the binary, town-level USSC society variable), such a variable would have to explain more than 8.47% of the residual variance of both $society_i$ and the Crusade variable in order to reduce the coefficient on $society_i$ to a range in which it is no longer statistically distinguishable from zero at the 95% significance level. As a benchmark, the partial R^2 of wartime enlistment with respect to $society_i$ and the Crusade variable are 0.27% and 3.19%, respectively. With respect to the county-level outcome of a suffrage petition, a hypothetical omitted variable would need to explain 1.62% of the residual variance, and for this specification, the partial R^2 of wartime enlistment with respect to the continuous exposure-to-a-society variable and the suffrage petition outcomes are 0.86% and 0.30%, respectively. Appendix Figures A5 and A5 show a visual representation of these relationships. If one assumes that men's willingness

to volunteer to fight in the Civil War is a good indicator of a town's existing levels of political involvement and support for politically progressive causes, therefore, an omitted variable bias would need to have a relationship several times stronger than that of enlistment with the treatment and outcomes in order to fully explain the variation that is attributed to the presence of a soldiers' aid society in the highlighted specifications.

The degree to which one believes that an omitted variable with such explanatory power might exist is, naturally, subjective. However, interpreting these results in a purely descriptive way still reveals useful insights into the origins of women's mass political participation in the United States. Regardless of the degree to which the wartime activities of American women had a *causal* impact on their propensity to engage in direct action against the sale of alcohol, or in local communities' support for suffrage, the quantitative findings and the case studies discussed in Section 2 demonstrate that the path to women's equality in the United States did not run exclusively through the channels of well-educated elite women leaders or increased access to economic opportunities in the formal labor market. Rather, places where women organized themselves to campaign for women's political causes were places where they had organized themselves during the war to do the perform traditionally female roles of home production.

6 Conclusions

In this paper, I examine the origins of American women's entry into mass politics. I theorize that a variety of mechanisms, including the benefits of single-sex enclaves, the development of networks, and the political legitimization of women as a political class, made home front volunteering during the American Civil War a useful setting for women to develop political capacity. This setting is distinctive from the one in which women made social gains in the twentieth century, when they substituted for male labor force and social roles during periods of wartime deployment.

To test this theory, I collect novel data on local-level participation in wartime volunteering. My empirical findings demonstrate a strong relationship between the presence of wartime volunteer societies and post-war outcomes that capture measures of women's political capacity. Towns and counties where women joined volunteer societies to engage in home production of goods for the Union Army were more likely to hold Temperance Crusades and submit petitions to Congress in favor of women's suffrage. These findings bridge a gap in the literature between a (mostly qualitative) historical literature on women's social organizations in the early United States and a (mostly quantitative) social science literature on their entry into the labor force and equality gains in the twentieth century. The association between women's home front activities and their subsequent entry into activism points to the importance of social capital formation as a conduit to political influence. In contrast to the twentieth century, when women's economic and political gains came from social shocks (the World Wars) and technological innovations (birth control) that enabled them to substitute into male roles, nineteenth-century women who participated in political movements gained organizing experience and legitimacy in a highly gendered environment.

Future avenues for research include exploiting data on the names of individual USSC aid societies' club leadership, which could, potentially, be linked to membership rolls of women's activist organizations to move from looking at community-level to individual-level linkages. Additionally, other aspects of women's wartime activities during the American Civil War remain largely unexplored. In addition to organizing women on the home front, the USSC trained and deployed women as battlefield and hospital nurses. The effect of this treatment on women's human capital and potential political legitimacy is another promising area of future exploration.

While the United States has made great strides towards gender equality across a variety of social outcomes, including labor force participation, education, and political equality, women remain socially segregated and politically disempowered in many other contexts across the

globe. My findings point to the possibility that women can become an empowered and politically mobilized class within the context of a socially segregated environment – a potentially important finding for expanding women's rights in the modern day.

7 References

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A USSC Data Construction Details

USSC data are hand-coded from handwritten directories held in the New York Metropolitan Archives (supplemented with 1863 contribution logs for the Cincinnati Branch). The amount of data available for each entry varies between and within branch but always includes a town name and state, with additional information on county and the names of one or more club officers also sometimes provided. Figure A1 gives an example of a register of societies from the area around Buffalo, NY.

All Societies tributary to the Buffalo Branch - Continued.

Societies	Where Located	Prominent Officers
Boston Corners	Erie Co.	Mrs. H. J. Chaffee, Pres.
West Remington	West Remington, Wyoming Co.	Miss Lydia J. Fogg, Pres.
Black Ridge	Black Ridge, Niagara Co.	Mrs. N. Sennet, Pres.
South Byron	In Byron, Genesee Co.	" Miller, Pres.
Bristol	Bristol, Ontario Co.	W. Scott Hicks
Byron	Byron, Genesee Co.	Mrs. Waller
Beaumont & Evans	"	Jacob Major, Pres.
Clarendon	Clarendon, Orleans Co.	Melinda Cooper, Secy.
Clarence	Clarence, Erie Co.	" C. Oakley, Pres.
Clarence	"	E. A. Andeworth, Pres.
Cambria	Cambria, Erie Co.	C. E. Pugsley, Pres.
Lyndon	Lyndon, Niagara Co.	Prof. Steele, Secy.
Charlotte, Route 1	Charlotte, Erie Co.	A. Farwell, Secy.
Colton	Colton, Erie Co.	P. R. Brown, Pres.
Castile	Castile, Wyoming Co.	R. J. Dennis, Pres.
Cowlesville	Cowlesville, Wyoming Co.	Edwin Weston, Pres.
Concordia, Ontario Co.	Concordia, Ontario Co.	W. G. Ulcrete, Pres.
Crustkewaga	Crustkewaga, Erie Co.	Miss Hannah M. Peck Mrs. Hartman, Pres.

All Societies tributary to the Buffalo Branch - Continued

Societies	Where Located	Prominent Officers
North Collins	North Collins, Erie Co.	Mrs. Horace Kimball, Pres. Geo. Dore, Pres.
Colost Ladies	Buffalo, Erie Co.	" Mr. Cole, Pres.
Golden Centre	Golden Centre, Erie Co.	" C. O. Calbeck, Pres.
North Colton	North Colton, Erie Co.	" C. L. Haskell
Sherrill	Sherrill, Ontario Co.	" Allen Green
Clark's Mills	Clark's Mills, Ontario Co.	" C. Harrison
Centreville	Centreville, Allegany Co.	Rev. Mr. Gilman
Dale	Dale, Wyoming Co.	"
Darien	Darien, Genesee Co.	Mrs. Thos. Nichols, Pres.
"	"	Horace Nutt, Pres.
DeWittville	DeWittville, Chenango Co.	Miss Jessie Aldrich
Eaton	Eaton, Erie Co.	Mr. Copp, Secy.
Elm Valley	Elm Valley, Erie Co.	J. L. Burton, Secy.
Elma	Elma, Erie Co.	Mrs. Kiram Hartwick, Pres.
Egyptville	Egyptville, Erie Co.	J. C. Mariner
Ellon	Ellon, Cattaraugus Co.	Juliet E. Braune, Secy.
East Ashford	East Ashford, " "	Mrs. A. J. Wiltsie, Secy.
Forserville	Forserville, "	Castile, Cattaraugus Co., O. M. Blanchard, Pres.
Elicott	Elicott, Erie Co.	Miss Ellen Griffen, Pres.

Figure A1: An example of a USSC society roster from the Buffalo (New York) branch.

Because the USSC data was based on self-identified locations of societies, it is non-standardized in terms of geographic location, and societies' locations do not always cleanly map to locations in the 1860 U.S. Census, which supplies the demographic control variables used in my analysis. Some societies were located in communities too small to be captured as towns in the Census, or identified themselves with neighborhoods of larger cities. Some clubs were affiliated simultaneously with more than one branch, while others could potentially be mapped to more than one potential Census entry (in cases where multiple locations within a state share a name and no county information is offered in the USSC dataset).¹⁴ To handle these situations in which the correct location of societies is ambiguous, I employ various

¹⁴For instance, there are twenty-four communities with the name "Liberty" in Ohio captured in the 1860 Census.

robustness checks. For the main results in Section 5.1, I randomly assign the location of a society with an ambiguous location to a town that is a potential candidate. In the robustness check in Appendix C, I employ several other approaches, including probabilistic matching (creating a continuous variable that captures the probability that a town has a society), counting all potential matches as containing a society, and dropping all ambiguous place names from the sample.

On the other hand, some towns have multiple organizations affiliated with the USSC representing different neighborhoods or social groups (for instance, one for adult women and another for youths). However, I dichotomize a town’s participation in the USSC (or, in the case of ambiguous matches, create a probabilistic variable) rather than measuring “societies per capita” variable due to inconsistencies across branch-level recordkeeping systems in whether and how multiple societies are recorded.

If there are N possible matches for a society, I assign each potential a weighted value of $\frac{1}{N}$ for the $society_i$ variable. Figure A2 shows the distribution of these weights; the majority of societies can be located exactly.

In all, the sample contains 7862 towns that appear in the 1860 Census. Of these 2,470 are potentially matched to a town with a soldiers’ aid society. Over ninety percent gap between these 6,404 entries and the 2,470 potential matches comes from societies in states outside the sample; the remainder (less than ten percent) is due to societies that could not be matched to any Census town (because these towns were too small to be captured by the Census, or are counted as subdivisions of larger cities). Giesberg (2006) gives a total of 7,000 soldiers’ aid societies. My hand-transcribed list from the USSC archive consists of 6,404 entries, a total that is reasonably comparable; the gap probably results from societies that I judge to be duplicates of the same location but which Giesberg (2006) counts separately.

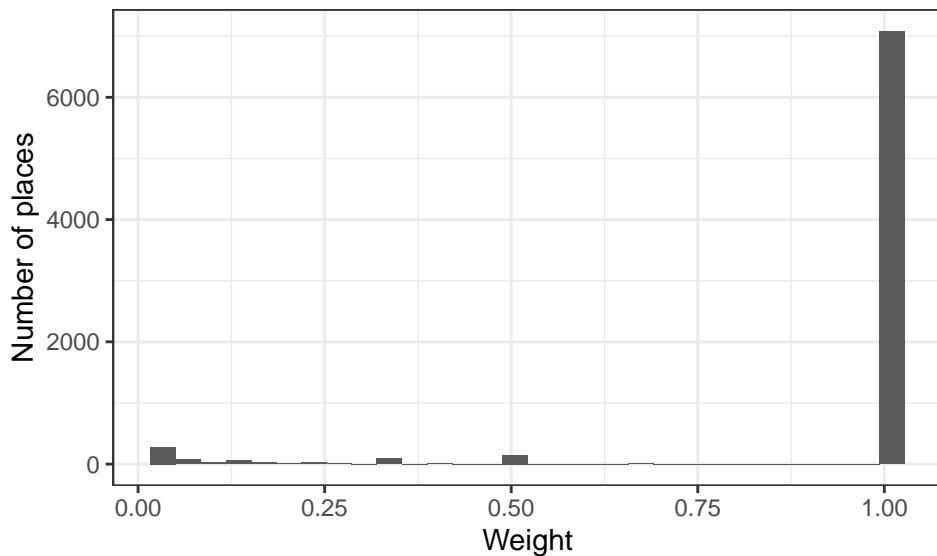


Figure A2: Distribution of weights used to adjust for uncertainty in exact location of soldiers’ aid societies.

Of the 6,404 entries listed in the USSC registers, 5,915 are in states not included in the sample, either because USSC data appears incomplete for that state or because the state held no Temperance Crusades: the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. The remaining discrepancy of 489 entries results from societies in towns that could not be linked to any place in the 1860 Census, usually because they were small, unincorporated communities.

B Summary Statistics

Table A1

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Pop. 1860	7,862	1,588.501	4,944.853	2	579.2	1,675	266,661
Nearest rail 1861	7,862	28,546.970	52,620.500	0.005	3,200.379	24,099.710	471,691,400
Vote share Repub. 1860	7,796	0.574	0.109	0.025	0.506	0.646	1.000
Enlistment per cap.	7,493	0.074	0.071	0.0001	0.041	0.085	0.985
Prewar petitions (political) per 10k	7,861	0.298	3.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	111.111
Prewar petitions (other) per 10k	7,861	2.844	15.425	0.000	0.000	0.000	666.667
Female abol. signatures per 10k	7,862	225.634	488.807	0.000	0.000	183.620	3,251.641
IOGT	680	0.134	0.341	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000

Summary statistics for town-level data

Table A2

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Church sittings per cap. 1860	572	0.754	1.422	0.000	0.282	0.776	15.974
Catholic sittings per cap. 1860	572	0.072	0.344	0.000	0.000	0.064	6.927
Black pop. share 1860	575	0.001	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.0002	0.043
Manuf. jobs per cap. 1860	572	0.039	0.060	0.000	0.008	0.043	0.484
Illiteracy 1860	575	0.050	0.071	0.000	0.003	0.071	0.646
German pop. share 1860	575	0.028	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.030	0.402
Ag. output value per cap 1860	562	91.984	185.655	0.445	40.433	77.052	2,062.783
Foreign-born pop. share 1860	575	0.218	0.196	0.000	0.081	0.300	1.000

Summary statistics for county-level data

C Robustness Checks for Main Results

C.1 Alternative Specifications

Table ?? shows robustness checks for Table ?? using different variations on population weights and assignments of aid societies to towns. The first column shows results for an OLS (linear probability model) regression with 1860 population weights; the second, for an OLS regression dropping the bottom and top 5 percent of cities by population. The third column assumes that all potential town name matches in the USSC catalogue should be treated, and the fourth drops all ambiguous name matches. The fifth column uses a probabilistic town-level variable to handle ambiguous society-to-town matches that takes a value of 0 if there is no possible match to an aid society for that town and 1 if there is a potential match. This value is then multiplied by the inverse of potential matches to a town name (so a certain match is a 1, while a society that could be matched to one of two towns results in both towns being “treated” with a society and receiving weights of $\frac{1}{2}$, etc.). Table ?? shows variations of the main results using a logistic specification rather than a linear probability model, and Figure A3 shows the robustness of the point estimates of the main linear specification (Column 4 of Table ?? in the main body of the paper) to using Conley standard errors of varying radii rather than clustering standard errors at the county level.

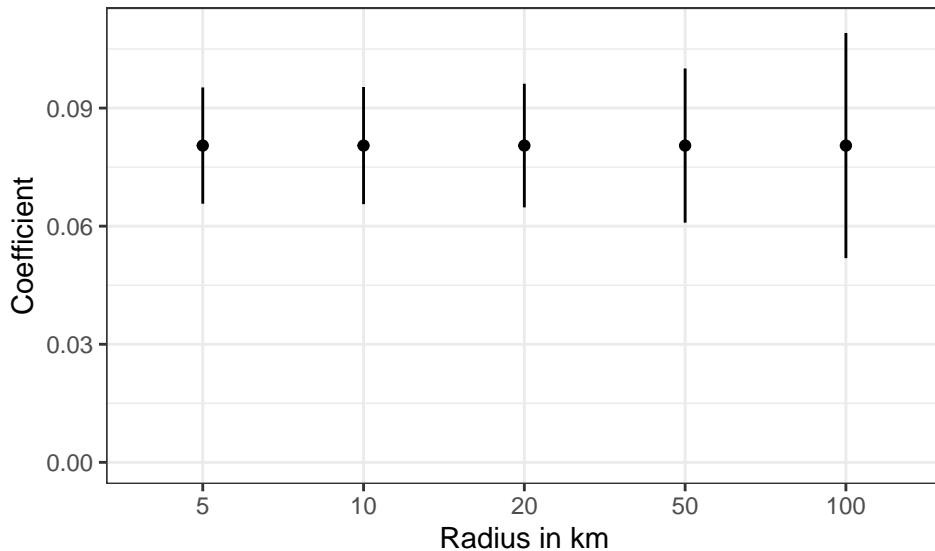


Figure A3: Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for Conley standard errors with radii of 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 km.

Table A3: Column 1 weights town-level observations by population. Column 2 drops the top and bottom 5 percent of towns by population. Column 3 treats all potential matches as treated, and Column 4 drops all ambiguous matches. Column 5 uses a probabilistic explanatory variable based on the number of potential matches between a USSC town and a town in the Census. Column 6 shows results from a logistic regression.

	Dependent variable:					
	Pop. weights	Drop top/bottom	Has Crusade			
			Treat all	Drop ambiguous	Probabilistic	Logistic
USSC society	0.088*** (0.008)	0.070*** (0.006)	0.080*** (0.006)	0.076*** (0.006)		1.610*** (0.142)
USSC society (prob.)					0.081*** (0.006)	
Log pop. 1860	0.150*** (0.004)	0.025*** (0.005)	0.043*** (0.004)	0.044*** (0.004)	0.043*** (0.004)	1.161*** (0.098)
Dist. to rail 1861	-0.023*** (0.004)	-0.039*** (0.003)	-0.042*** (0.003)	-0.039*** (0.003)	-0.041*** (0.003)	-0.596*** (0.060)
Illiteracy 1860	-0.021*** (0.004)	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.009*** (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.313*** (0.084)
Repub. vote share 1860	-0.006 (0.005)	0.006* (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.093 (0.085)
Black pop. share 1860	0.029*** (0.003)	0.016*** (0.004)	0.031*** (0.003)	0.032*** (0.004)	0.031*** (0.003)	0.151** (0.059)
Foreign-born pop. share 1860	0.017*** (0.006)	-0.006 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.043 (0.108)
German pop. share 1860	0.011*** (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.042 (0.069)
Catholic sittings per cap. 1860	-0.027*** (0.009)	0.006 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.070 (0.103)
Ag. output per cap. 1860	-0.361*** (0.035)	-0.012 (0.036)	-0.021 (0.034)	-0.029 (0.035)	-0.021 (0.034)	-1.121 (1.036)
Manuf. jobs. per cap. 1860	0.084*** (0.004)	0.033*** (0.003)	0.036*** (0.003)	0.037*** (0.003)	0.036*** (0.003)	0.462*** (0.049)
Enlistment per cap.	-0.018 (0.020)	-0.034*** (0.012)	-0.026** (0.012)	-0.023* (0.013)	-0.026** (0.012)	-0.499* (0.274)
Total church sittings per cap. 1860	-0.012 (0.017)	0.011 (0.007)	0.010 (0.008)	0.010 (0.008)	0.010 (0.008)	0.052 (0.305)
Female abol. pet.	0.016*** (0.005)	0.003 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.049 (0.044)
General Congress. pet.	0.004 (0.005)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.026 (0.045)
Political Congress. pet.	0.008* (0.005)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.085 (0.104)
Geo. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	7,429	6,752	7,429	6,712	7,429	7,429
Adjusted R ²	0.560	0.123	0.168	0.179	0.169	
Log Likelihood						-1,104.929
Akaike Inf. Crit.						2,277.858

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

D Petitions Data Construction Details

Raw data on petitions to Congress (submitted by groups and individuals) are provided by Blackhawk et al. (2021). The full database, which is transcribed from the Congressional Record, contains data on over 500,000 individual petitions submitted by citizens and organizations to members of Congress between 1789 and 1948. Of these, 70,464 can be matched to a town of origin using fuzzy string matching. I focus on geolocated petitions submitted between 1850 and 1859, which yields 5,847 qualifying petitions. We exclude all petitions originating from New York City (and exclude New York City from any analysis involving the petitions) because of inconsistencies in the original data in assigning these petitions to “New York City” vs. smaller sub-jurisdictions.

I use topic codings provided by Blackhawk et al. (2021) (i.e., whether they were submitted by a particular interest group) and by frequent topic of interest (i.e., slavery, temperance, immigration, etc.). Petitions assigned a topic by Blackhawk et al. (2021) that is of political interest are coded as “political.” All other petitions are coded as “general.” These typically were intended to draw legislators’ attention to constituents’ or localities’ particular problems or requests, such as pensions for individual veterans or the funding of local infrastructure. Figure A4 shows the total number of geolocated petitions by year.

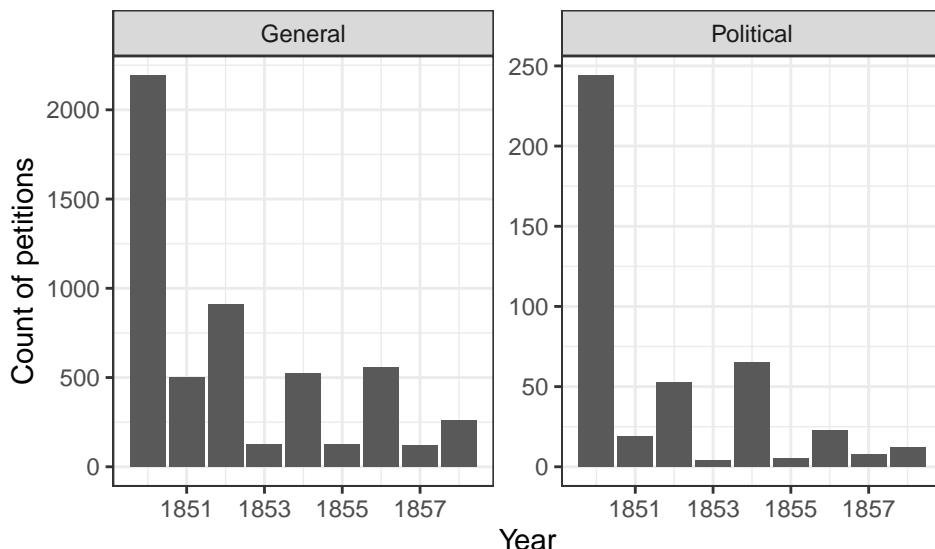


Figure A4: Number of petitions per year (Blackhawk et al. 2021). Note difference in y-axis scales.

E Sensitivity Analysis Plot

The curves on the graphs shown in Figure A5 and Figure A6 shows the changes in $\hat{\beta}$, the coefficient on the town- and county-level versions of $society_i$, that would result from varying the partial R^2 of the unobserved confounder with $society_i$ under different assumed values for the partial R^2 of the unobserved confounder with the outcome $crusade_i$ (represented by different curves for values of 1, 0.5, 0.25, and 0.1).¹⁵ Red markers on the x-axis benchmark the hypothetical sensitivity to an unobserved variable against one, two, and three times the strength of the relationship between the treatment ($society_i$) and the wartime enlistment variable (measured in mean-standardized per-capita enlistment, which I denote $enlistment_i$). This variable was chosen as the benchmark because it captures a town's pre-existing social capital and pro-social volunteerism in 1860, that is, it likely provides an imperfect measure of the unobservable that is the greatest threat to identification.

¹⁵The methodologies from Cinelli and Hazlett (2020) can be implemented and visualized using the accompanying R package **sensemakr** (Cinelli, Ferwerda, and Hazlett 2020).

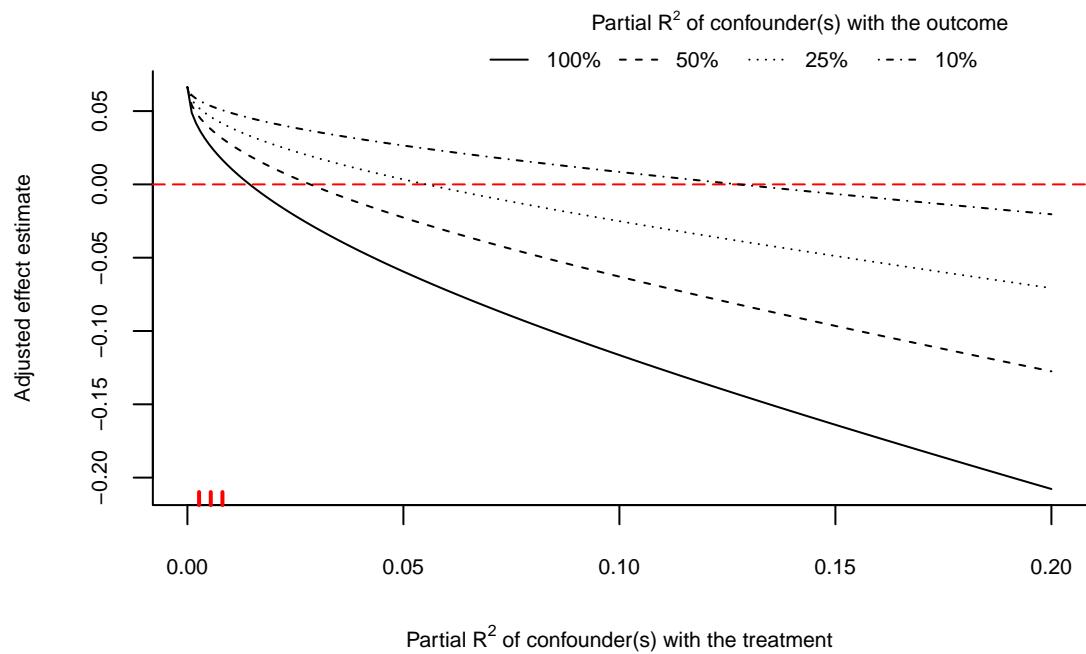


Figure A5: This plot shows the sensitivity of the main town-level result (the regression of Crusade presence on USSC society presence) to potential unobservable omitted variable bias. Red markers on the x-axis benchmark the hypothetical sensitivity to an unobserved variable against one, two, and three times the strength of the relationship between the treatment ($society_i$) and the wartime enlistment variable (measured in mean-standardized per-capita enlistment, which I denote $enlistment_i$).

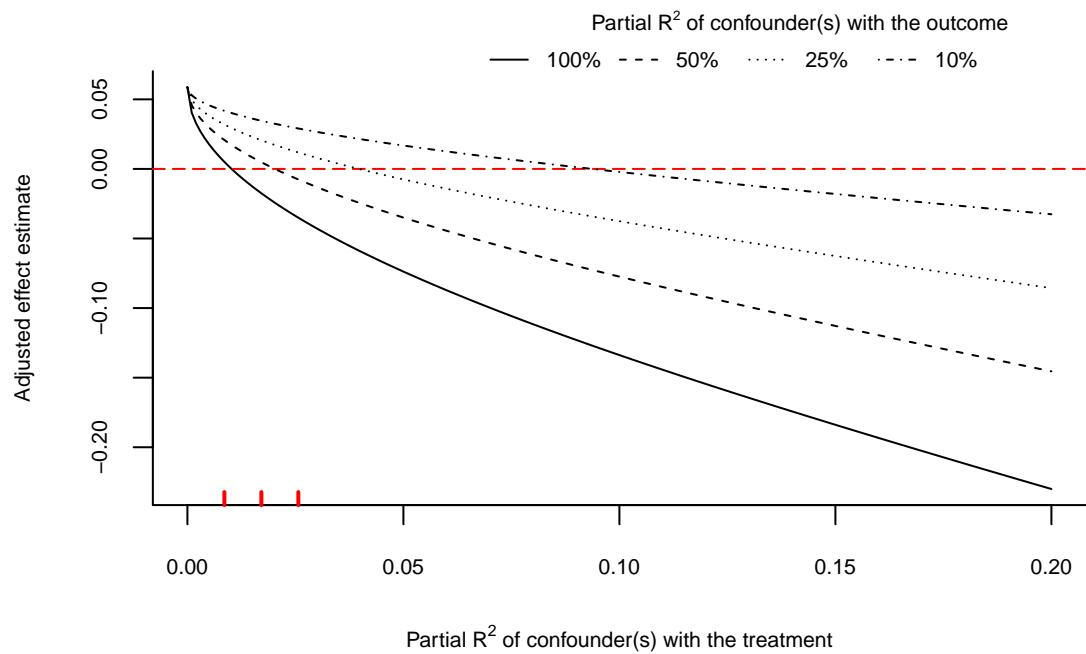


Figure A6: This plot shows the sensitivity of the main county-level result (the regression of suffrage petitioning on counties' population exposure to USSC society presence) to potential unobservable omitted variable bias. Red markers on the x-axis benchmark the hypothetical sensitivity to an unobserved variable against one, two, and three times the strength of the relationship between the treatment ($society_i$) and the wartime enlistment variable (measured in mean-standardized per-capita enlistment, which I denote $enlistment_i$).