Media, Pulpit, and Populist Persuasion: Evidence from Father Coughlin

- Can charismatic leaders exploit the media to shape political outcomes?
- I study the political impacts of Father Coughlin’s radio program
  - 30 million weekly listeners in the 1930s
  - Blended populist demagoguery, fascist sympathies, and anti-Semitism
- I find that Father Coughlin’s radio program
  - Reduced votes for FDR in presidential elections
  - Lowered civilian support for the WWII effort
  - Increased anti-Semitic sentiment