

# Transport Infrastructure, Individual Mobility and Social Mobilisation

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## Abstract

Between 1881 and 1910, Swedish society underwent two transformative developments: the large-scale roll-out of a national railway network and the nascence of grassroots social movements which became deeply embedded in the fabric of social capital well into the twentieth century. Using exogenous variation in railway access arising from initial plans for the network, I show that as localities became better-connected, they were more likely to host a local movement, saw more rapid membership growth and a greater number of distinct organisations. The mobility of individuals is a key mechanism: results are driven by passenger arrivals into connected localities, not freight arrivals. I implement a market access framework to show that, by reducing least-cost distances between localities, railways intensified the influence exerted by neighbouring concentrations of membership, thereby enabling social movement spread. These results hold also when comparing differentially-connected movements within the same locality in the same year. Subsequently – in Sweden’s first election with universal male suffrage in 1911 – localities with greater social movement mobilisation exhibited higher turnout and Social Democrat vote shares.

**Keywords:** social movements, social capital, collective action, railways, market access

**JEL Codes:** D71, D83, N33, N73, O18, Z13

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# 1 Introduction

Social movements can be powerful forces for change. In the context of European democratisation, grassroots pressure on elites was instrumental to extensions of the franchise (Aidt and Jensen, 2014; Aidt and Franck, 2015). Collective action has the power to end absolutist monarchies, as in Denmark during the upheavals of 1848, and topple economic systems, as in the case of the abolition of Austrian and Hungarian serfdom (Stearns, 1974). More recently, grassroot-level political organisation was crucial for the successes of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement (Morris, 1986; Andrews, 1997) and for popular mobilisation during the Arab Spring (Beinin and Vairel, 2013).

Despite the importance of social movements in shaping societal, political and economic developments, many questions remain open about the nature of their evolution and spread. In theories of collective behaviour, the organisation of individuals with mutual interests is key (Olson, 1965; Tilly, 1978), and relies on information about the actions of others (Granovetter, 1978; Jackson and Yariv, 2007). Facilitating communication between agents in such models, however, need not necessarily lead to better mobilisation outcomes (Gould, 1993; Hassanpour, 2014). The question therefore naturally arises: how, and through which mechanisms, does the ease of interactions between individuals shape the spread and growth of a movement? Further, what are the political consequences of the social capital that is built as a result of such processes?

These are questions which I seek to answer in this paper, taking a natural experiment from Swedish history as a testing ground. In the period 1881-1910, the large-scale roll-out of a national railway network radically transformed Swedish society (Heckscher, 1907), with the total length of the network increasing from 6,000 kilometres in 1881 to 14,000 in 1910 (Kungliga järnvägsstyrelsen, 1956). At the same time, nascent social movements emerged which came to define the Swedish economic, social and political fabric at least until the Second World War (Lundkvist, 1977). These movements included a rich network of leftist organisations and labour unions, as well as free churches and temperance movements. Uniting these disparate organisations was a shared objective of democratisation by way of extensions to the comparatively narrow Swedish franchise. By 1910, their combined membership was 700,000 from a population of approximately 5.5 million (Andrae and Lundkvist, 1998). Combining these concurrent developments, I study how the large increase in individual mobility granted by the railway system facilitated the diffusion of these movements.

I use rich historical data, combined from several sources, to construct a panel covering more than two thousand parishes over the thirty-year period 1881-1910. I reconstruct the Swedish railway network and measure the access to rail of each parish in each year based on historical railway maps. I combine this with detailed data on social movements from the Swedish Social Movements Archive (Andrae and Lundkvist, 1998), documenting in each year the presence and membership of various groups in each parish. Finally, I supplement these data with full-count population censuses, data on telegraphs and the

postal service, as well as a host of geographical data.

Equipped with this dataset, I estimate the causal effect of improved railway access on the spread of social movements. I implement an instrumental variables strategy in which I use proximity to initial proposals for the railway network to instrument for actual proximity to rail. I document the crucial role played by improvements in transport infrastructure in shaping the diffusion of social movements on both extensive and intensive margins. Following a reduction in the distance between a parish and the railway network, the probability that a movement spreads to the parish increases, membership numbers rise and there is an increase in the number of distinct organisations active in the parish. Results are robust to a range of sensitivity checks and an alternative event study empirical design.

To explore the mechanisms underlying this result, I operationalise a variant of a “market access” framework inspired by Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016). Movement membership in a given parish can be thought of as a travel cost-weighted function of movement membership in other parishes. I show that as travel costs decrease due to railway expansion, access to and influence from social movements in nearby parishes intensifies, which facilitates diffusion. Results holds even when honing in on comparisons within a given parish and year, exploiting only differential within-parish-year changes in the access of movements to their respective counterparts elsewhere (with the inclusion of parish-year fixed effects). Concurrent railway-driven developments within parishes over time, such as urbanisation or industrialisation, are therefore ruled out as the sole drivers of the patterns I uncover.

I supplement this analysis with station-level data to demonstrate that the spread of social movements is predicted by passenger arrivals in a parish but not by freight arrivals. The social mobilisation therefore is one driven by the mobility of individuals, and not by local economic activity more broadly. I use data on religious and occupational structure, measures of access to emigration and higher education opportunities as well as proxies for local technical know-how to rule out alternative mechanisms related to the demand for social movements. Further, with data on the telegraph system and postal service, I show that competing supply-side channels related to other flows of information cannot explain away my proposed mechanism.

Finally, I show that social movements shaped participation and voting outcomes in Sweden’s first election with universal male suffrage in 1911. Parishes with greater popular mobilisation in these grass-roots organisations exhibit higher turnout and a greater vote share for the Social Democrats. The roots of the Swedish model of participatory politics and a strong welfare state that emerged during the twentieth century can therefore, at least in part, be traced to the social capital embodied in the movements that flourished in this period.

This paper speaks to a recent literature exploring the impact of technology on social interactions, in particular in the process of political mobilisation. Most closely related to my study is recent work by García-Jimeno, Iglesias and Yildirim (2022), who document the role of information diffusion in shaping

collective action during the U.S. Temperance Crusade of 1873-1874. García-Jimeno, Iglesias and Yildirim (2022) is part a broader family of papers exploring how technology shapes protest activity (Acemoglu, Hassan and Tahoun, 2018; Manacorda and Tesei, 2020; Enikolopov, Makarin and Petrova, 2020; Qin, Strömberg and Wu, 2021; Aidt, Leon-Ablan and Satchell, 2022). These papers rely on protest data as measures of political engagement. An advantage of my setting is the use of actual membership numbers in grassroots organisations to capture social capital and latent support for political change from which political action could potentially emerge. Protests are also, naturally, shorter-term events, whereas I am able to capture a longer-run process of the build-up of support for democratisation. Related work on the effect of technology on political participation in elections (Falck, Gold and Heblich, 2014; Campante, Durante and Sobbrío, 2017) can take a similarly long view, but presupposes the existence of democratic elections.<sup>1</sup>

More broadly, I contribute to a literature seeking to understand the emergence of grassroots demands for democracy. The threat of revolution has been shown both theoretically and empirically to be an important predictor of the transition to democracy (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000, 2001; Aidt and Jensen, 2014; Aidt and Franck, 2015). The successful coordination of individuals with shared objectives is key to the credibility of such threats. Demands for representation may have long historical roots (Giuliano and Nunn, 2013; Bentzen, Hariri and Robinson, 2019) or be inspired by interactions with already-democratised societies (Markoff, 2015; Stegmann, 2019). In any case, to mount sufficient pressure on the political elite, fledgling democratisation movements need to solve the collective action problems described by Olson (1965) and identified experimentally by Cantoni, Yang, Yuchtman and Zhang (2019). They therefore depend critically on the underlying fabric of social capital, which has been argued in a range of settings to matter for the functioning of democracy (de Tocqueville, 1835; Putnam, 2000; Giuliano and Wacziarg, 2020; Durante, Mastroiocco, Minale and Snyder, 2023).<sup>2</sup> Here, I demonstrate that the spatial dimension of large-scale social mobilisation and social capital formation depends on the mobility and connectedness of individual actors. Railways enabled such mobility and thereby unleashed the grassroots movements pushing for Swedish democratisation.<sup>3</sup>

The technology shock I exploit in this paper stems from an expansion of transport infrastructure, the study of which has a long-standing tradition in economics and quantitative economic history. Railways

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<sup>1</sup>A parallel strand of research on the effect of technology on political unrest considers improvements not in the technology used in political coordination, but in the use of labour-saving technology in modes of production. The labour-displacing effects of new technology may result in unrest as a result of backlash by the displaced. Examples using historical settings include Caprettini and Voth (2020) and Molinder, Karlsson and Enflo (2021).

<sup>2</sup>Though social capital has been shown to hinder democracy when it becomes a vector of authoritarian ideas (Riley, 2005; Satyanath, Voigtländer and Voth, 2017) or subject to capture by elites (Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>My emphasis on personal interactions for the transmission of ideas resonates with work across a number of fields. Cross-country productivity studies highlight the role played by tacit knowledge transmission as people migrate (Andersen and Dalgaard, 2011; Bahar and Rapoport, 2018). Face-to-face interactions have similarly been shown to matter for innovation (Catalini, Fons-Rosen and Gaulé, 2020; Andersson, Berger and Prawitz, 2023) and for overcoming search and contracting frictions (Startz, 2021). An early observer of the transformative effect of Swedish railways, Heckscher (1907) predicted that the ease of in-person interaction unlocked by rail travel would have effects not attainable by existing communication technologies. Here, I document that grassroots coordination was one such effect.

have been particularly well-studied, at least since the path-breaking work of Fogel (1964) and Fishlow (1965).<sup>4</sup> Recent work has revisited the central question of the impact of railways on the U.S. economy (Donaldson and Hornbeck, 2016; Perlman, 2016; Katz, 2018; Hornbeck and Rotemberg, 2022). Railways have been shown to have long-lasting effects, across a wide range of geographical settings and time periods, by reorganising economic and demographic structures (Hornung, 2015; Berger and Enflo, 2017; Jedwab, Kerby and Moradi, 2017; Donaldson, 2018; Berger, 2019; Büchel and Kyburz, 2020; Bogart, You, Alvarez-Palau, Satchell and Shaw-Taylor, 2022).<sup>5</sup> One of the contributions of this paper is to extend the economic geography framework to explore questions related to the spatial patterns of social and political mobilisation.

Finally, given the historical setting of my paper, I contribute to the literature on the political and economic history of Sweden around the turn of the twentieth century. Both sides of my relationship of interest feature heavily in this literature. Heckscher (1906, 1907) studied the economic impact of Swedish railways already in the early twentieth century, and the topic has received renewed interest in recent years (Schön, 2012; Berger and Enflo, 2017; Berger, 2019; Lindgren, Pettersson-Lidbom and Tyrefors, 2021; Cermeño, Enflo and Lindvall, 2022; Andersson, Berger and Prawitz, 2023). Further, the grassroots movements I study have also received considerable attention, to explain both their success in mobilising (Hedström, 1994; Sandell and Stern, 1998; Hedström, Sandell and Stern, 2000; Pettersson-Lidbom and Tyrefors, 2014; Karadja and Prawitz, 2019) and their subsequent political impact (Bengtsson and Molinder, 2018; Bengtsson, 2019; Molinder, Karlsson and Enflo, 2022). My contribution is in the intersection of these strands of the literature. By using the shock of railway expansion to generate time-varying connectedness measures, I show that the reduced interaction costs granted by greater ease of travel were key to the success of the Swedish grassroots movements.

In this paper, I contribute to a large body of work assessing the role of technology in shaping social interactions and building social capital. I do so in a setting that exploits the transformative historical impact of railways in Sweden. The reductions in effective distances between locations that drove the spatial patterns of economic growth also triggered greater intercommunication between formerly distant places and people. This increase in connectedness promoted the diffusion of ideas and fundamentally shaped the interactions between disparate groups, enabling grassroots associations to organise in pursuit of democratisation.

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<sup>4</sup>Fogel (1964) introduced a social savings methodology to argue that railways only had a moderate effect on the U.S. agricultural sector. Using a different conceptualisation of social savings, Fishlow (1965) reaches a more optimistic conclusion. Concretely, Fogel (1964) compared the U.S. economy with railways to a counterfactual of extended canal and road networks, whereas Fishlow (1965) used existing alternatives in the ante-bellum period as the counterfactual.

<sup>5</sup>While the focus of this paper is on railways, both pre- and post-railway innovations in transport technology have had far-reaching effects on the spatial organisation of economic activity (Baum-Snow, 2007; Bogart, Satchell, Alvarez-Palau, You and Shaw-Taylor, 2017; Pascali, 2017; Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2018; Asturias, García-Santana and Ramos, 2019; Flückiger, Hornung, Larch, Ludwig and Mees, 2022).

## 2 Historical Background

### 2.1 Social Movements in Sweden

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social movements were an important part of the Swedish social and political fabric. From humble beginnings as local grassroots organisations in the middle of the 1800s, various temperance movements, free church associations, labour unions and leftist parties had grown into potent social forces before the First World War. By 1910, combined membership in these organisations totalled around 700,000, a sizeable figure relative to the total Swedish population of 5.5 million.

While there were differences in the social role played by the various grassroots organisations, a unifying feature was their opposition to the established political order (Lundkvist, 1977).<sup>6</sup> The movements played a crucial role in the Swedish democratisation process and served as a mechanism to mobilise citizens (Lundkvist, 1974), thereby becoming embedded in the fabric of local social capital. Free church and temperance organisations were early to voice grassroots demands for representation and an extension of the franchise. By the beginning of the twentieth century, a significant proportion of the second chamber of parliament were free church or temperance members (Möller, 2015). These groups exhibited significant engagement by women, and were particularly key for the introduction of female suffrage in 1919. Labour organisations such as the unionist movement and early social democratic party organisations also increasingly came to demand extensions of the franchise (Lundkvist, 1977). Widespread engagement in grassroots movements around the turn of the twentieth century predicts the rapid subsequent rise in voter turnout (Bengtsson and Molinder, 2018) and decline in industrial conflicts (Molinder, Karlsson and Enflo, 2022).

An important facet of Swedish social movements in this period is that, while the movements themselves were national in scope, membership tended to be local. That is, local branches could be set up with relative ease, and associations with just a handful of members were relatively common. This means that local engagement can be well-measured by the local presence of or membership in various movements. I discuss measurement in more detail in Section 3 below.

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<sup>6</sup>Free churches were integral to Swedish Christian revivalism in the nineteenth century. Their adherents formed religious communities distinct from the state church and based on voluntary membership. The Swedish temperance movement increasingly gained influence from the middle of the nineteenth century and sought to combat the social ills of alcohol production and consumption. The movement soon adopted a national scope, and large meetings were held to unite disparate organisations and direct future policy demands. Lastly, the labour movement, as embodied in the unions and leftist party organisations, arose as a means to organise predominantly industrial and craft labour. Particularly after the establishment of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (*Landsorganisationen i Sverige*), the movement took on a national character. Unifying these disparate organisations was their opposition to what was seen as an elitist political order, an increasingly national scope and a commitment to democratisation.

## 2.2 The Swedish Railway Network

Swedish transport infrastructure underwent rapid change in the second half of the nineteenth century. Traditionally, transport had taken place on primitive roads and highly seasonal waterways (Heckscher, 1954). Unpredictable and fragmented pre-railway transport networks meant that transshipment was frequent and costs were often prohibitively high (Heckscher, 1907). The introduction and rapid roll-out of a national railway network therefore dramatically changed Swedish transport by offering a faster, higher-frequency option at a lower cost.

Swedish railway construction started relatively late, and the state viewed itself as having a crucial role to play in directing the expansion of the network. To this end, several proposals were made for a “master plan” for the roll-out of rail. The first was put forth in 1845 by Count Adolf von Rosen, who proposed a main trunk line connecting the two largest cities (Stockholm and Gothenburg), with extensions and branches for a national network.

After von Rosen failed to raise enough funds to begin construction, the parliament of 1853/1854 decided that construction of the main trunk lines would be state-financed. A second proposal was made by Colonel Nils Ericson, who was given “dictatorial powers” to route the main lines (Kungliga järnvägsstyrelsen (1906), see Berger and Enflo (2017) for a discussion).<sup>7</sup> These plans aimed to connect major cities and avoided the coast due to military concerns. Despite the significant powers bestowed upon Ericson to draw the plans, they were ultimately rejected in the parliament of 1857. As such, both main proposals ultimately failed. Even so, they greatly informed eventual railway construction.<sup>8</sup>

Railway construction began in 1855, and the first short lines were operational by 1856 (Heckscher, 1954). Following a railway boom in the 1870s, the largest cities in the southern half of the country were connected by 1880. Nevertheless, several economic centres remained unconnected (Berger and Enflo, 2017). Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, there were additional periods of rapid expansion. By the eve of the First World War, the railway network connected all the major population centres, including those in the northern parts of the country. This massive expansion is best summarised in the growth of aggregate railway line length: over the period 1856-1910, the total combined length of the network increased from 66 to 13,829 kilometres.

## 2.3 Railways and the Spread of Social Movements

The large-scale expansion of the railway network had far-reaching effects. Writing in 1906, Eli Heckscher mused on the profound social impact of the large increase in mobility granted by the railway:

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<sup>7</sup>This meant that the main trunk lines were constructed relatively quickly, in contrast to transport infrastructure projects elsewhere. See, for example, Bogart (2018).

<sup>8</sup>This suggests the use of the plans as instruments for actual railways, as in Berger and Enflo (2017). I discuss this instrumental variables strategy in depth in Section 4 below. In addition, I use the parishes that were near planned railways but remained unconnected for a series of placebo checks.

“Travel has been extended to infinitely wider strata of the population ... in contrast with the past, transport has an apparent democratising effect in the present.”<sup>9</sup>

One facet of the “democratising effect” of rail is the facilitation of the spread of ideas and popular engagement with them. Hedström (1994) notes the crucial role of distance between actors in the diffusion of Swedish trade unionism, and Hedström, Sandell and Stern (2000) stress the importance of the existence of “mesolevel” networks between disparate groups of actors for the geographic spread of early social democracy. In particular, the ability of individual actors to travel was key in spreading the word of new ideas and movements:

“The channels of communication for the new [ideas] were primarily personal visits by colporteurs, preachers, agitators and others.”<sup>10</sup>

These observations resonate with recent work in economics documenting the key role of leaders in mobilising social movements (Dippel and Heblich, 2021). A notable Swedish example is the activist and early social democrat August Palm, who used the railways for so-called “agitation travels” to rouse support for the fledgling labour movement (Palm, 1904). The expansion of the railway network reduced effective distances, increased the mobility of individuals and facilitated the formation of mesolevel networks, and enabled the spatial diffusion of social movements. It is my objective in the remainder of the paper to obtain causal estimates of the impact of rail on the spread and diffusion of social movements, and to explore the mechanisms through which this effect operates.

### 3 Data

The main data set used in this paper is a panel covering 2,276 Swedish parishes over the thirty-year period 1881-1910, for a total of 68,280 parish-year observations. Data on key variables of interest are compiled from a number of sources.

#### 3.1 Data from the Swedish Social Movements Archive

Main outcomes of interest are constructed using the Swedish Social Movements Archive (Andrae and Lundkvist, 1998). The archive is the output of a research project that documents the history of four main social movements: temperance organisations, free churches, unions and left party organisations.<sup>11</sup> For each organisation, the archive details the parish where it was seated, its year of foundation and (if applicable) its year of dissolution. In addition, the archive documents the number of members in each

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<sup>9</sup>Quotation from Heckscher (1906). Author’s translation. Original text: “resandet har utsträckts till oändligt vidare kretsar af folket ... I motsats mot förr verka transportmedlen i nutiden uppenbarligen demokratiserande.”

<sup>10</sup>Quotation from Lundkvist (1977). Author’s translation. Original text: “Kommunikationskanalerna för det nya var främst personliga besök av kolportörer, predikanter, agitatorer och andra.”

<sup>11</sup>The left party organisations formed the backbone of the fledgling Social Democratic Party, which was founded in 1889 and became a dominant political force in the early twentieth century.



organisation at the end of each year. From this data, I first construct an organisation-year panel that I then collapse to a parish-year panel for my analysis.<sup>12</sup> For each parish, therefore, I can observe which of the four movement types were present in any given year, their membership figures and the total number of distinct organisations.

I report summary statistics for the social movement data in Panels A and B of Table 1 and show aggregate time series of the spread of and membership in each movement type in Figure 1. Social movements (of any type) are present in roughly half of parish-year observations, and this is driven primarily by temperance and free church organisations. Figure 1 illustrates this pattern: temperance and free church organisations were already relatively well established at the start of my sample period, whereas the establishment and diffusion of unions and left party organisations began in earnest in the second half of the 1890s.

Panel B of Table 1 reports social movement summary statistics conditional on movement presence. This panel illustrates two things. First, there is significant heterogeneity in movement size across parishes. Some parishes have movements with only a handful of members, whereas the larger parishes can have memberships in the tens of thousands. Similarly for the number of organisations: in some parishes a movement type is represented by only one organisation, while in other parishes many different organisations are active within the same movement type. Second, the panel demonstrates that unions and left parties tend to be larger, on average, than temperance and free church organisations.

### 3.2 Data on the Swedish Railway Network

The main treatment variables in this paper are measures of proximity to the railways. To this end, I construct yearly measures of the distance from each parish to the completed railway network. For each year, I digitise the railway network from maps published in historical accounts by Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån, various years). These maps detail both the state-operated trunk lines and major branch lines as well as privately-owned branch lines. I then calculate the geodesic distance from the main settlement in each parish to the nearest completed railway line in each year. The location of the main settlement is a better indicator of where the mass of the population is located than, for example, the centroid of the parish in computing measures of railway access.

In Figure 2, I show the extent of the network at the beginning (1881) and end (1910) of my sample period. I report measures of railway access in Panel C of Table 1 and in Appendix Figure C1. The median distance to rail is decreasing steadily throughout the sample period, while the proportion of parishes within a reasonable distance of rail is increasing. Aggregate measures disguise substantial heterogeneity: the distance from rail varies from 0 kilometres (for parishes on a railway line) to over 600 kilometres (for remote northern parishes before the northward extension of the network).

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<sup>12</sup>In order to ensure consistent units of observation throughout, particularly when combining the social movements data with information from the population censuses (see below), I combine multiple parishes where necessary.

For the majority of my analysis, I employ an instrumental variables strategy exploiting proximity to initial railway plans to instrument for proximity to realised railway lines. This strategy is inspired by Berger and Enflo (2017) and I collect data on the railway plans from an official publication celebrating the centenary of the Swedish railway (Kungliga järnvägsstyrelsen, 1956). As with the constructed railway lines, I digitise the railway plans and then compute the distance to these plans for each parish. Maps of the railway plans and their relationship to realised lines are shown in Figure 3, and the mean distance to the plans is reported in Panel C of Table 1. I discuss the construction of the instrument in more detail in Section 4 below.

In my exploration of the mechanisms underlying the positive effect of railway access on social movement diffusion (see Section 6), I additionally employ station-level data on passenger and freight arrivals at state-operated stations.<sup>13</sup> Using the same historical documents of Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån, various years), I identify stations associated with the parishes in my sample and digitise yearly arrivals of passengers and freight. Summary statistics are reported in Panel C of Table 1.

### 3.3 Other Data

I collect additional data from various sources. These data are used to construct control variables, conduct balance tests for my instrument and to explore alternative mechanisms. I now describe them in turn.

**Demographics and Occupational Structure.** I make use of the full-count censuses of 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910 (Riksarkivet and Minnesota Population Center, various years) to construct a range of control variables. In particular, I have data on population numbers and other demographic characteristics of the parish (such as the share of female inhabitants, the average age of inhabitants and the share of married individuals). Additionally, I construct measures of occupational structure by classifying individuals in employment into ten broad ISCO categories. I report summary statistics in Panel D of Table 1. Since censuses are decadal, some interpolation is necessary for non-census years. In my baseline results, I consider variables to be fixed in between census years.<sup>14</sup>

**Other Communications.** To explore potential alternatives to the main mechanism I propose in Section 6, I use additional data on telegraphs and the postal service. These are also hand-digitised from historical publications of Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån, various years). In particular, I track the opening and closing dates of telegraph stations and the number of incoming telegrams processed at these stations. For the postal service, I collect information on the volume of newspapers and printed matter, as well as the total volume of post, dispatched each year from 244 main post stations.

**Emigration.** Recent work has documented the impact of Swedish emigration to the United States

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<sup>13</sup>The state operated the main trunk lines as well as key branch lines, while private firms operated remaining branch lines. While my measures for proximity to rail are available for the entirety of the network, the station-level results rely on data from the subset of state-operated stations.

<sup>14</sup>I demonstrate in Section 5 that my results are robust to other interpolation regimes, such as linear interpolation or interpolation assuming a fixed growth rate.

on the fledgling labour movement (Karadja and Prawitz, 2019) and on the direction of technical change (Andersson, Karadja and Prawitz, 2022). Both for balance checks and to explore outmigration as a potential alternative mechanism, I make use of the data of Andersson, Karadja and Prawitz (2022) to capture parish-level emigration outflows.<sup>15</sup>

**Patenting.** I additionally use the data of Andersson, Berger and Prawitz (2023), measuring yearly patenting activity in each parish, to proxy for local human capital and technical know-how.

**Landed Elites.** Lindgren, Pettersson-Lidbom and Tyrefors (2019) show that railway expansion was delayed in locations where pre-suffrage political power favoured landed elites (as opposed to industrial elites). For instrument balance checks, I therefore collect additional data on the distribution of local voting power at baseline from Statistiska Centralbyrån (various years).

**Elections.** In the final part of my analysis, I relate social movement organisation to turnout and electoral outcomes in the first Swedish election with universal male suffrage in 1911. Election data are taken from Berglund (1988) and merged with the parishes in my sample.

**Topography.** Lastly, I use topographical data from NASA (2009) and land cover data from Natural Earth (various years) to construct various geographical controls, including elevation, distance to coast, distance to nodes in the railway network and distance to the capital (Stockholm).

## 4 Empirical Framework

My main relationship of interest is the effect of railway access on the proliferation and growth of social movements. However, railway connectivity is likely to be determined endogenously with social movement outcomes. Bias arising from reverse causality and omitted variables would therefore preclude a causal interpretation of estimates from a simple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Hence, I propose an instrumental variables (IV) framework in which I instrument for actual distance to the railway network using distances to initial railway plans. This instrument was first used in the Swedish setting by Berger and Enflo (2017).

In particular, I regress a social movement outcome  $Y_{it}$  on the distance to the nearest railway as measured in the previous period,  $\text{RailDist}_{i,t-1}$ :

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{RailDist}_{i,t-1} + \mathbf{X}'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

A one-lag structure for the effect of railway connectedness on social movement outcomes is intuitive in this setting for two reasons. First, the historical data I use to calculate distances to the railway show the extent of the network at the end of a given year. This means that railway lines constructed near

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<sup>15</sup>Taking a wider Scandinavian perspective, Beck Knudsen (2021) additionally documents that “stayers” were selected on their collectivist attitudes. To the extent that railways facilitated outmigration, this makes exploring emigration as a potential mechanism particularly important.

the end of the calendar year are likely to affect social movement outcomes only in the following year. Second, the administrative steps needed to set up and expand a local organisation mean that there may be a natural lag in the response of social movement outcomes to railway connectivity.<sup>16</sup>

The vectors  $\alpha_i$  and  $\gamma_t$  are parish and year fixed effects, respectively, and  $X_{it}$  is a vector of controls described as they are introduced in the analysis below. The coefficient of interest is  $\phi$ , which captures the effect of distance to rail on a given social movement outcome.

As a concrete example, suppose  $Y_{it}$  is an indicator taking a value of one if any social movement is present in parish  $i$  in year  $t$ .<sup>17</sup> Suppose further, as indeed will be the case throughout the paper, that  $\text{RailDist}_{i,t-1}$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the distance (in kilometres) to the nearest part of the railway network.<sup>18</sup> The estimated coefficient  $\phi$  would then capture the increase in the probability that any movement is present that would result from a doubling of the distance to the railway. In light of the discussion in Section 2, I expect to find  $\phi < 0$ . If railways facilitate transport and interactions between people, then greater access to rail (that is, lower distance to rail) should cause movements to proliferate.

Estimation of equation 1 by OLS is unlikely to yield a causal estimate of the effect of rail on social movements for three main reasons. First, reverse causality may generate a spurious relationship between  $Y_{it}$  and  $\text{RailDist}_{i,t-1}$ . Recall from Section 2 that railway construction was an elite endeavour in this period. Such elites may therefore have strategically routed railway lines to dampen the proliferation of the grassroots organisations I study, which would bias towards zero any estimates from an OLS regression.<sup>19</sup>

Second, independent of reverse causality, there may be underlying omitted variables driving both social movement activity and railway expansion. If these omitted factors are time-varying, they will not be absorbed by parish fixed effects. As a concrete example, if parishes undergoing industrialisation are able to both attract railway access and enable the development of grassroots movements (in labour unions, for instance), this might lead to an upward bias. Conversely, some parish leaders may be more connected to the political elite than others. They may therefore want to suppress local engagement in social movements and simultaneously be better-connected to the elites directing railway construction. This would cause a spurious negative relationship between railway connectivity and social movement outcomes even in the absence of a causal impact, and potentially obscure a positive effect of railway

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<sup>16</sup>In robustness checks, I explore other lags of the RailDist variable. These are discussed in more detail below, and reveal that effects fade out gradually with longer lags of treatment and are detectable for lags up to  $t - 5$ .

<sup>17</sup>Throughout, my social movement measures combine all four movement types: temperance movements, free churches, labour unions and leftist party organisations. As discussed in Section 2 above, the movements played slightly different social roles. They did share, however, an overarching opposition to the established political system and played a crucial role in the Swedish democratisation process. For this reason, I combine all four movements to create a measure which captures latent support for democratisation.

<sup>18</sup>I use the inverse hyperbolic sine rather than the natural logarithm to allow for zero distances. The interpretation of the estimated coefficients is similar to that of the natural logarithm. See Burbidge, Magee and Robb (1988) and Bellemare and Wichman (2020) for details. Robustness checks using the natural logarithm and an indicator for railway access (defined as having a railway line within 10 kilometres) are discussed in Section 5.

<sup>19</sup>Indeed, Lindgren, Petterson-Lidbom and Tyrefors (2019) show that local elites wielded considerable power in routing railway expansion.

access on social movement spread.

Finally, since data on the railway network come from the digitisation of historical maps (as detailed in Section 2), measurement error may be a concern. Errors arising from the digitisation process are likely to be classical, and will bias coefficient estimates towards zero. Such bias would make it more difficult to identify an effect, if it exists.

#### 4.1 The Railway Plan Instrument

The three concerns outlined above all suggest the use of an instrument to generate exogenous variation in actual distance to rail. This variation can be used to obtain causal estimates of  $\phi$  in equation 1. In particular, I propose to use an instrument exploiting the particular history of railway building in Sweden. The essence of the instrument is to use proximity to initial plans of the railway network to predict proximity to the realised network. For historical background on the railway plans, see Section 2 above. The precise definition of the instrument as well as a discussion of its validity is provided below.

Formally,  $\text{RailDist}_{it}$  is instrumented in a first stage equation given by:

$$\text{RailDist}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_d \delta_d \text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t + \mathbf{X}'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it} \quad (2)$$

The terms  $\alpha_i$ ,  $\gamma_t$  and  $\mathbf{X}_{it}$  are parish fixed effects, year fixed effects and a vector of controls as before.  $\text{RailDist}_{it}$  is the presumably endogenous distance to the railway network that needs to be instrumented. The variable  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is the time-invariant distance to the planned railway network.<sup>20</sup> To use this distance in a panel framework, I interact it with decade fixed effects –  $\mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t$  – taking 1881-1890 as the base decade.<sup>21</sup> The estimated first stage coefficients  $\delta_d$  should therefore be thought of as the change in the elasticity between planned and realised railway network expansion as the network develops.<sup>22</sup>

As discussed in Section 2 above, two main network plans were proposed before railway construction began (the von Rosen plan in 1845 and the Ericson plan in 1854). While these plans were both ultimately abandoned, they are still good predictors of where eventual construction took place. Maps of these plans and their relation to the realised network are presented in Figures 3b and 3c.

Notably, neither plan made provisions for northward railway expansion, with the drawback that the plans will be relatively worse predictors for actual railways in the northern parts of the country. To overcome this, I make use of the “nodal” destinations targeted in the proposals and construct a set of straight lines connecting these destinations, as shown in Figure 3d.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup>I will take the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of this distance throughout.

<sup>21</sup>The remaining two decades are therefore 1891-1900 and 1901-1910.

<sup>22</sup>See Andersson, Berger and Prawitz (2023) for a similar instrument in a panel setting.

<sup>23</sup>The nodal destinations are Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Östersund and Korsvinger. In all specifications, I control for the distance to these nodal destinations. Additionally, I report robustness checks dropping the nodal destinations (and other parishes near the nodal destinations). These checks are discussed in Section 5.

Based on these three counterfactual railway networks, I define my instrument  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  in the following way:

$$\text{PlanDist}_i = \min\{\text{Dist. von Rosen}_i, \text{Dist. Ericson}_i, \text{Dist. Nodal Lines}_i\}$$

That is, the instrument is the distance of parish  $i$  to the nearest of the three counterfactual railway networks.<sup>24</sup>

## 4.2 Identifying Assumptions

For the two-stage least squares framework described by equations 1 and 2 to produce causal estimates of  $\phi$ , the instrument needs to satisfy a number of validity conditions. First, the instruments need to be relevant. That is,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  needs to predict  $\text{RailDist}_{it}$ , and this effect needs to vary between decades for the time-varying instrument to have bite. In Figure 4, I report the relationship between actual and planned distance to railway in select years. As expected, the effect is strongly positive in each year, but diminishing over time. A diminishing effect is intuitive: as the network expands, more marginal locations are connected, which weakens the predictive power of the early plans.

Second, the instrument needs to be uncorrelated with the error term in equation 1 ( $\epsilon_{it}$ ) to satisfy the exclusion restriction. In other words, proximity to the railway plans should predict social movement outcomes only via the channel of actual railway access. This condition intuitively seems to be satisfied in this case, given that the proposals were drawn to connect major cities. Proximity to planned railways which were never built should therefore be uncorrelated with social and political outcomes decades later.

In Section 5, I provide a number of direct tests for this assumption. I run a series of balancing checks to show that pre-railway characteristics of parishes are uncorrelated with distance to the railway plans. This non-result holds both for the full sample of parishes and for the subset of parishes that eventually were to become connected. I also show that, at benchmark years throughout my sample period, a range of outcomes of not-yet connected parishes (including social movement outcomes, population, sectoral composition, and more) are uncorrelated with the instrument. Further, a number of placebo exercises additionally show that my ultimate outcomes of interest (social movement activity) are significantly related to proximity to the railway plans only for parishes that eventually were connected. The same is not true for parishes that remained unconnected.

Third, potential outcomes and potential treatments need to be conditionally independent of the instrument. The history of Swedish railway construction is once again helpful here, since parishes were not targeted for their potential for flourishing social engagement. In most specifications, however, I

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<sup>24</sup>In robustness checks, I show that very similar results are obtained with different instrument specifications. These include using an indicator for proximity to any plan or the distance to each plan individually. Results also hold using an alternative design with a shift-share flavour, in which I interact the minimum distance (“shares”) with the intensity of railway construction nationwide, as measured by total length of track built each year (“shifters”). I describe these checks in detail in Section 5.

control richly for geographical and demographic characteristics to guarantee (at a minimum) conditional independence.

The final requirement for a valid instrument is monotonicity (or “no defiers”). This condition intuitively seems to be satisfied, since proximity to a planned railway line is unlikely to cause some parishes to be further away from realised rail than would have been the case if they were distant from the planned line.

## 5 Main Results

I begin by exploring the relationship between railways and grassroots social movements using descriptive spatial and correlational evidence. Then, equipped with the identifying framework described in Section 4 above, I turn to results demonstrating the causal impact of railway access on the proliferation and growth of social movements. Results from a range of robustness checks and an alternative event study exercise corroborate my findings.

### 5.1 Descriptive Evidence

Before formally estimating instrumental variables regressions, I provide some illustrative correlational evidence. Figure 5 presents maps showing the spatial relationships between railway expansion and social movement presence and membership. At the beginning of the sample period, in 1881, both rail and social movements were relatively sparsely distributed. Nevertheless, the spatial patterns can be seen clearly: connectedness with the railway network is associated with a higher density of social movements. After a decade of railway expansion, in 1890, the relationship becomes even more striking. Social movements spread along the completed railway network, suggesting a key role for rail in the diffusion of these movements.

Additionally, I present correlational evidence separately by movement type in Figure 6. Starting with Figure 6a, distance to the railway network is negatively correlated with the probability of movement presence, and consistently so across all movement types. Figure 6b demonstrates a similar negative relationship between distance to rail and membership. In this sense, railway access is crucial on both the extensive and intensive margins of social movement proliferation. Finally, in Figure 6c I report correlations between access and the number of distinct organisations active in a parish. The negative relationship presented in this figure suggests that, in addition to larger total membership, proximity to rail also increases the local variety of active groups. These results together suggest that railways were key to the mobilisation of social movements. I now investigate this relationship more formally.

## 5.2 Instrumental Variables Results

I begin by estimating equations like equation 1, in which social movement outcomes are regressed on distance to the railway. As discussed, however, estimating this equation by OLS is unlikely to yield causal estimates of  $\phi$ . I therefore use an instrumental variables framework and estimate equations 1 and 2 using two-stage least squares.

### 5.2.1 First stage

I display the first-stage relationship graphically in Figure 4, and report results from a more formal estimation of the first-stage equation 2 in Table 2. In column 1, I report a relatively parsimonious specification which includes parish and year fixed effects in addition to the instruments  $\text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbb{1}\{\text{decade} = 1891 - 1900\}_t$  and  $\text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbb{1}\{\text{decade} = 1901 - 1910\}_t$ . This leaves 1881-1890 as the baseline decade. I also control for important time-invariant geographical characteristics interacted flexibly with year fixed effects. These controls capture determinants of the original railway plan proposals, and are therefore key to ensuring the (conditional) independence of the instruments.<sup>25</sup> Lastly, I control for the initial presence of social movements in the parish, interacted with year fixed effects. Since I am interested in the effect of railway expansion on the spread of social movements, this allows me to abstract away from the effect of where they initially appeared. As expected, the coefficients for the ensuing decades are negative and highly statistically significant.<sup>26</sup> The negative effects should be interpreted as the change in the elasticity between the distances to realised and planned railways over time.

In columns 2 and 3, I introduce different controls to the specification to probe the stability of the estimated coefficients. In column 2, I introduce baseline demographic characteristics interacted with year fixed effects.<sup>27</sup> Lastly, in column 3, I add a control for contemporaneous population.<sup>28</sup> The estimated coefficients remain stable and highly significant throughout the successive inclusion of richer sets of controls.

### 5.2.2 Instrument validity

The first-stage results in Table 2 show that the instrument satisfies the relevance condition. I now provide direct evidence that the validity condition also appears to be satisfied. To this end, in Figure 7, I

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<sup>25</sup>In particular, I include: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to the nodal destinations targeted by the plans, elevation and distance to the ocean. All variables have been transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation. Below, as an additional robustness check, I check sensitivity to completely dropping nodal destinations and parishes near these destinations.

<sup>26</sup>Throughout, standard errors are clustered on the level of the parish. In the discussion of my main findings below, I show that results are robust to alternative error structures accounting for the potential spatial autocorrelation of errors.

<sup>27</sup>These are baseline characteristics in the sense that they are constructed using the 1880 census, the year prior to the start of my sample period. These include: the size of the adult population, the average age, the share of married inhabitants, the share of female inhabitants, the share of employed inhabitants and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups.

<sup>28</sup>Since censuses were conducted every ten years, some interpolation between census years is necessary. In my baseline estimates, I hold population fixed in between census years. In robustness checks below, I show that results are robust to interpolating population numbers using either linear or constant growth rate interpolations instead. Throughout, I use the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of population.



first investigate the relationship between distance to the railway plans and pre-railway outcomes (such as population and manufacturing shares). In the full cross-section of parishes, I regress pre-railway outcomes on distance to the plans (Figure 7a). I repeat the same regressions for the subsample of parishes that were to become connected by 1910 (Figure 7b).<sup>29</sup> Across both sets of checks, no coefficient is significantly different from zero. This provides reassuring evidence in favour of the as-good-as-randomness of the instrument: the railway plans were not drawn in a way that systematically reflected parishes' pre-railway characteristics or their potential for social or economic development.

In the remaining panels of Figure 7, I report additional balancing checks at benchmark years from my sample period (1881, 1890, 1900 and 1910). For each of these checks, I focus attention on the sample of parishes that had not yet been connected in the respective year (and for which proximity to the railway plans thus has not yet affected them through actual railway construction). I regress an extensive set of outcomes – capturing social movements, population, sectoral composition, patenting, emigration and proxies for the strength of landed elites – on distance to the railway plans. Across all of these regressions, not one coefficient is statistically different from zero. This constitutes strong evidence in favour of the exclusion restriction (that the railway plans affect my outcomes of interest only through railway construction and not through some omitted, unobservable factor).<sup>30</sup>

A placebo exercise lends additional support to the exclusion restriction, and is reported in Appendix Table B1. I estimate variants of a reduced-form specification, where social movement outcomes are regressed on the instrument (distance to railway plans) with different sets of controls. This is done separately for parishes that were never connected to rail and for those that were indeed connected at some point in the sample period. Strikingly, social movement outcomes depend significantly and negatively on distance to railway plans only for the set of eventually-connected parishes. Estimates for never-connected parishes are smaller in magnitude, sometimes of opposite sign, and far from statistical significance. This suggests proximity to the railway plans operates on social movement outcomes via actually constructed railways and not through some other, omitted factor.

### 5.2.3 OLS and IV results

Having established that the proposed instruments appear to be valid and exhibit a strong first stage, I now discuss the main OLS and instrumental variables results. Beginning with an exploration of the extensive margin of diffusion in Panel A of Table 3, I take an indicator for the presence of any social movement as the outcome. The table takes the following structure: in columns 1, 2 and 3, I report OLS results gradually adding richer sets of controls, and I report the same specifications using a two-stage

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<sup>29</sup>Throughout, I use a 10-kilometre cutoff to define connectedness to constructed railways.

<sup>30</sup>This statement is separate to a full discussion of mechanisms, of course, as many of the factors considered here – population growth, industrialisation, outmigration, the development of technical know-how – could plausibly form part of the causal chain from railways to social movements. In Section 6, I provide additional evidence that such forces, while undeniably important, do not tell the whole story.

least squares instrumental variables framework in columns 4, 5 and 6. Controls are introduced in the same succession as for the first-stage results in Table 2.<sup>31</sup> The OLS results in columns 1, 2 and 3 are suggestive of the expected negative relationship between distance to railway and social movement presence. Coefficients are negative and statistically different from zero throughout all specifications, suggesting that less well-connected parishes (further from the railway) are less likely to see the development of local social movements.

For reasons discussed above, however, these estimates are plausibly biased towards zero, so I now turn to the IV results reported in columns 4, 5 and 6 of Panel A. The consistent negative relationship remains. Taking the richest specification in column 6, the estimated coefficient implies that doubling the distance to the railway reduces the probability of social movement presence by 9 percentage points. This is a sizeable effect compared to the unconditional outcome mean of 0.51, suggesting that proximity to rail is an important driver of the extensive margin of diffusion. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that, over the period 1881 to 1910, 11.0 percent of the extensive margin of social movement diffusion can be explained by improvements in railway access.<sup>32</sup>

In Panels B and C, I present evidence for the impact of rail on intensive margins of proliferation. First, in Panel B, I explore the effect of railway connectedness on the number social movement members in a parish. Consistently across the OLS and IV results, I find that distance to the railway network negatively impacts membership numbers. Importantly, this results holds even when controlling for population, which means that membership growth is not a mechanical result of population growth.

I report estimates of the impact on the number of distinct organisations in Panel C. This measure captures the level of diversity of representation offered by social movements. Consistent with previous results, I find that proximity to rail fostered a larger variety of local organisations. Increasing the distance to the nearest railway line is associated with a reduction in local richness of representation. Using the same back-of-the-envelope calculation as above, improvements in railway connectedness explain around 9.6 and 10.8 percent of the growth of membership and the number of organisations, respectively, over the period 1881 to 1910.<sup>33,34,35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>In addition to parish and year fixed effects, I control for initial social movement presence and geographical characteristics interacted with year fixed effects even in the most parsimonious specification. Controlling for initial presence allows me to concentrate on the *spread* of movements, while controlling for geographical characteristics (particularly the distance from nodal destinations in the railway network) is important to ensure the validity of my instrument in the two-stage least squares specification.

<sup>32</sup>Using the formula:  $\frac{\hat{\phi} \times \Delta \text{RailDist}_{1881-1910}}{\Delta Y_{1881-1910}} = \frac{0.095 \times (2.73 - 1.99)}{(0.759 - 0.121)} \approx 11.0\%$ . The coefficient  $\hat{\phi} = 0.095$  is from column 6 of Panel A in Table 3,  $\Delta \text{RailDist}_{1881-1910} = (2.73 - 1.99)$  is the change in average IHS distance to the railway between 1881 and 1910 and  $\Delta Y_{1881-1910} = (0.759 - 0.121)$  is the change in the proportion of parishes with social movement presence over the same period.

<sup>33</sup>For membership:  $\hat{\phi} = 0.472$  (column 6, Panel B, Table 3) and  $\Delta Y_{1881-1910} = (4.18 - 0.545)$ . For the number of organisations:  $\hat{\phi} = 0.190$  (column 6, Panel C, Table 3) and  $\Delta Y_{1881-1910} = (1.41 - 0.113)$ .

<sup>34</sup>Appendix Figure C2 provides some additional illustrative evidence by correlating long-differences of social movement outcomes with parishes' distance to railway plans. Across extensive and intensive margins, parishes nearer the plans experienced greater growth over the three decades in my sample period (1881-1910).

<sup>35</sup>How does the magnitude of the effect of railways compare to those of other salient developments in this period, like urbanisation and industrialisation? In Appendix Table B2, I present a suggestive correlational comparison. Social movement outcomes in a given parish-year depend negatively on distance to the railway, as we have seen. They additionally depend positively on population size and the share employed in industry (and, conversely, negatively on the share employed in

#### 5.2.4 Comparing OLS and IV results

Throughout the reported results, a striking feature is that the IV results are consistently larger than those from the OLS estimation. This is to be expected for two main reasons. First, as discussed above, the IV estimations solves problems of endogeneity and of measurement error that bias the OLS results towards zero. In particular, since railway construction was directed by economic and political elites (which stood to lose in the event of large-scale grassroots mobilisation to extend the franchise), railway construction may have been directed into localities where the latent potential for social movement activity was lower. Such considerations would generate a spurious negative relationship between railway access and my social movement outcomes, thus biasing results from OLS regressions towards zero. By exploiting the fact that some parishes became better-connected by virtue of being in between targeted nodes in the network, my instrument circumvents such endogeneity concerns.<sup>36</sup>

Second, the instrumental variables framework estimates an effect similar to the local average treatment effect (LATE) of the “compliers”.<sup>37</sup> That is, the estimated effect of rail on social movement outcomes obtained from the IV comes from those parishes which were proximate to the constructed railway network only by virtue of being close to the planned routes, but would not have been close to rail otherwise. The difference in potential outcomes for parishes which were connected “by accident” is plausibly greater than for parishes which would have received network access regardless of proximity to planned routes. However, implementing an analysis of compliers using the procedure of Marbach and Hangartner (2020) – reported in Appendix Table B3 – it appears compliers are largely comparable to the full sample across a range of outcomes. This lends evidence against a LATE-interpretation of my findings.

#### 5.2.5 Robustness checks

Lastly, I conduct a number of checks to probe the robustness of my main results, reported in Appendices B and C.

**Instrument Specification.** In the first stages of my two-stage least squares specifications, I always use the distance to the closest railway plan when constructing my instrument. Different approaches are possible, which I explore in Appendix Table B4 (first stages) and Appendix Figure C3 (IV results). In

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agriculture). The size of the effect of railways is, not surprisingly, smaller (about one-tenth) of that of population. It is more comparable to the effects of sectoral change: the effect of railways is about one-half to one-fifth of that of the share employed in industry, depending on the outcome. I show, additionally, that proximity to rail depends positively on population size and negatively on the share employed in agriculture. Together, these insights do not just put the effect of railways on social movements into perspective. They also underscore, firstly, the importance of credible identification in this setting and, secondly, the need to consider urbanisation and industrialisation as potential mechanisms underlying the main effect of railways on social movements. The evidence I have laid out in this Section in favour of the validity of my instrumental variables strategy addresses the former. In an extensive investigation of mechanisms in Section 6, I speak to the latter.

<sup>36</sup>Recall the extensive balancing checks for my instrument discussed above and reported in Figure 7.

<sup>37</sup>The strict interpretation of local average treatment effects applies to binary treatments and instruments. Here, the treatments and instruments are continuous, and as such the interpretation of the effect is slightly more complicated, though similar.

addition the baseline results, I show results obtained by using an indicator for proximity to (being within 10 kilometres of) any railway plan to define the instrument. I further show results when using each of the individual railway plans (von Rosen, Ericson and straight line plans) in isolation. All of these approaches, which are variations of the baseline specification, yield very similar results. First stages are highly comparable, and second-stage estimates are robust across all social movement outcomes. Coefficients are statistically and economically similar to those in the baseline. As a final check, I construct a rather different instrument with a shift-share flavour. For each parish-year, I take the distance of each parish to the railway plans (“shares”) and interact it with the length of new track constructed nationwide in each year (“shifters”). The discussion of the exogeneity of the railway plans above serves as evidence in favour of exogeneity of the “shares” (Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin and Swift, 2020). This approach yields a strong first stage and second-stage estimates that are, reassuringly, very similar to those from the baseline design.

**Treatment Definition.** I consider different definitions of the treatment variable. In the findings above, the variable  $\text{RailDist}_{it}$  captured the distance to the nearest railway using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation. I restate these results in columns 1 and 2 of Appendix Table B5, for the OLS and instrumental variable specifications using the full set of controls. Panels A, B and C show the impact on my three main social movement outcomes: presence, membership and the number of organisations. The inverse hyperbolic sine transformation is useful because it allows for zero distances, while otherwise approximating the natural logarithm. In columns 3 and 4, I instead use a common method of allowing for zero values while maintaining the logarithmic transformation:  $\ln(1 + \text{distance to rail})$ . Results are qualitatively and statistically unchanged from the baseline coefficients. In columns 5 and 6, I report results using an indicator which takes a value of one if the parish is within ten kilometres of the railway. Such a definition of the treatment of course requires an arbitrary definition of what constitutes railway access (in this case a ten kilometre cut-off). Nevertheless, while results are marginally weaker than in the baseline specification, I find that a similar pattern emerges for the impact of railway access on social movement outcomes: movements develop more strongly as parishes become better-connected.<sup>38</sup>

**Interpolation between Census Years.** The analysis above makes use of a panel structure where each observation is a parish-year. When controlling for parishes’ population, however, I rely on information from the full-count population censuses, which were only conducted every decade. Some interpolation is therefore required, and in my main analysis I assume fixed values between census years.<sup>39</sup> Other

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<sup>38</sup>In a similar spirit, one can consider different definitions of treatment that explore the “fade-out” of the effect, both spatially and temporally. In Appendix Figure C4, I estimate the effect of railways within different proximity bands (that is, having railway within 10 kilometres, between 10 and 20 kilometres, and so on). Effects fade out over space, and disappear over 50 kilometres. In Appendix Figure C5, I instead look at how effects fade out over time. Instead of taking a one-year lag ( $t - 1$ ) of my main treatment variable, I allow for different lags,  $t - \ell$ , with  $\ell \in \{0, 10\}$ . While effects are strongest in  $t - 1$ , they are also evident for longer lags, up to around  $t - 5$ .

<sup>39</sup>Recall that I additionally control for baseline census characteristics (from the 1880 census) interacted with year fixed effects throughout. This controls flexibly for the fact that parishes with different baseline characteristics may develop differentially over time.

interpolation regimes are possible, however, and I explore these in Appendix Table B6.<sup>40</sup> Baseline results are again reported in columns 1 and 2 for the OLS and instrumental variable specifications. In columns 3 and 4, I use a linear interpolation between census years, and I use a constant growth rate interpolation in columns 5 and 6. Results remain consistent with my baseline findings. While OLS results for membership and the number of organisations become somewhat weaker, they are qualitatively similar and statistically indistinguishable from their baseline counterparts. Instrumental variable results remain statistically significant and of very similar magnitude to baseline estimates.

**Dropping Nodal Destinations.** My instrument relies on the history of railway construction in Sweden, in which certain nodal destinations were targeted by planners. Throughout my analysis, I control for the distance to these nodal destinations. In Appendix Table B7, I additionally show that results are robust to excluding them, and parishes in their vicinity, completely. I once again report baseline estimates in columns 1 and 2. In columns 3 and 4, I drop the four Swedish nodal destinations (Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö and Östersund). In columns 5 and 6, I additionally drop any parish within ten kilometres of these destinations. Results remain robust, with all coefficients qualitatively and statistically indistinguishable from their baseline counterparts.

**Different Standard Error Structures.** Throughout my analysis, I have allowed for arbitrary correlation of errors within parishes over time by clustering at the level of the parish. Given that the average parish is relatively small, errors may plausibly be correlated across parishes in the same area. Standard errors clustered by parish may therefore not be conservative enough. To this end, I explore alternative error structures in Appendix Table B8. Baseline results are once again reported in columns 1 and 2. In columns 3 and 4, I instead cluster errors at the level of  $0.5 \times 0.5$  degree grid cells. Allowing for correlated errors within grid cells reduces the number of clusters and consequently increases standard errors, but results nevertheless remain statistically significant. In addition, I implement Conley (1999) standard errors to allow for spatial autocorrelation up to 100 and 300 kilometres, respectively, in columns 5-8.<sup>41,42</sup> Again, results remain robust when accounting for such spatial interdependence.

**Spatial and Temporal “Leave-One-Out” Exercises.** As a final exercise, I conduct a jackknife procedure where I leave out, in turn, individual counties or individual groups of years. This is to ensure that results are not driven by a particular geographical area or time period in my sample which could plausibly have peculiar unobserved characteristics. These checks are reported in Figures C6 and C7, respectively. The structure of these figures is as follows. In each panel, I report checks for a different baseline specification: OLS and instrumental variable results for each of my three main social move-

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<sup>40</sup>My social movement “market access” framework, which I describe in Section 6, allows for more stringent fixed effect specifications that amount to comparing the connectedness of different movement types within the same parish-year. Such specifications naturally account for year-on-year changes in parishes’ populations without the need to control for them directly.

<sup>41</sup>I estimate these using the `acreg` package provided by Colella, Lalive, Sakalli and Thoenig (2020).

<sup>42</sup>Taking 300 kilometres as the maximal cut-off is supported by an assessment of spatial autocorrelation of errors using Moran’s I, which is reported in Appendix Table B9.

ment outcomes, for a total of six panels. The coefficient from the unrestricted regression using the full sample is reported as a vertical dashed line. I then plot coefficients and their corresponding confidence intervals, leaving out a county or three-year period in turn as denoted on the vertical axis. Both jack-knife exercises provide reassuring evidence that my results are not driven by a particular county or time period. Throughout, coefficients are statistically different from zero and very similar in magnitude to their baseline counterparts.

### 5.3 Event Study

As an additional empirical exercise, I now turn to an event study specification. For each parish, I identify the year in which it experienced the largest reduction in distance to the nearest railway and consider the parish as being treated in that year.<sup>43</sup> I then estimate regressions of the form:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_{\tau=-5+}^{5+} \eta_{\tau} \text{Rail}_{i,t+\tau} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

Social movement outcomes  $Y_{it}$ , controls  $X_{it}$  and fixed effects  $\alpha_i$  and  $\gamma_t$  remain as in the preceding analysis.  $\text{Rail}_{i,t+\tau}$  is the treatment indicator, which equals one in the year in which parish  $i$  was in period  $\tau$  relative to treatment, zero otherwise.<sup>44</sup> The sequence of coefficients  $\eta_{\tau}$  traces out the effect of treatment before and after the event.

I report plots of estimates of  $\eta_{\tau}$  in Figure 8 for my three main social movement outcomes: presence, membership and the number of organisations. The results of this exercise are both qualitatively and quantitatively in line with the evidence presented in the main analysis above. In the years following the most substantial reduction in distance to the railway, social movements are 2 to 3 percentage points more likely to enter a parish. There is an immediate positive effect “on impact” in  $\tau = 0$ , which grows gradually in the years following treatment. Additionally, membership is around 20 percent higher and the number of organisations increases by approximately 8 percent in the years after treatment. Importantly, these effects are not driven by differential pre-trends. As indicated by quantitatively smaller (near-zero) and statistically insignificant effects prior to treatment, treated parishes do not evolve differentially to non-treated parishes in the years before treatment.<sup>45</sup> These results, from a different but complementary empirical design, provide evidence corroborating the findings from my instrumental variables analysis.

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<sup>43</sup>Note that some parishes do not experience reductions in the distance to the nearest railway during the sample period. I keep such parishes in my estimation sample, but the treatment indicator never switches on for them. Throughout, however, parishes that were already connected – within 10 kilometres of rail – at the beginning of my sample period (1881) are excluded.

<sup>44</sup>Note that I combine periods which are five or more years away from treatment in bins:  $\tau = -5+$  for periods at least five years before treatment and  $\tau = 5+$  for periods at least five years after.

<sup>45</sup>In difference-in-difference designs with two-way fixed effects, OLS may yield misleading results in the presence of dynamic and heterogeneous treatment effects (de Chaisemartin and d’Haultfœuille, 2020, 2023). In Appendix Figure C8, I report plots of long-run placebo and dynamic effects of treatment, estimated using the `did_multiplegt` command developed by de Chaisemartin and d’Haultfœuille (2020, 2023) and based on the event study design from equation 3. The results obtained from this exercise are very similar to those from the standard event study approach.

## 5.4 Discussion

Across a range of correlational and causal evidence, I have demonstrated the crucial role played by transport infrastructure in enabling the diffusion of social movements along both intensive and extensive margins. Not only is railway access causally predictive of the entry of social movements into a parish, it also drives the growth of membership in these movements. In addition, railway proximity fosters diversity of local representation, as measured by the number of distinct organisations. I have shown that these findings are robust to a range of sensitivity checks and an alternative event study strategy. In the following section, I probe the mechanisms underlying these results. In particular, building on the market access literature, I claim that by reducing effective distances between parishes, the expansion of the railway network facilitated a social contagion of ideas. I then make use of station-level data on passenger and freight flows to show that the mobility and movement of individuals appears to be a key driver in this process. Finally, I provide evidence to rule out other competing demand- and supply-side mechanisms.

## 6 Mechanisms: Social Movement “Market Access” and Individual Mobility

Having established that proximity to the railway network drives the diffusion of social movements, I now explore the mechanisms which underlie this effect. The historiography of Swedish grassroots social movements in this period, described in Section 2 above, highlights the mobility of individual actors as a driver of movement proliferation. Newly established railway connections reduce effective distances between parishes, allowing individual preachers and agitators to travel more widely, and thereby enable the spread of social movements from one parish to the next.

### 6.1 Social Movement “Market Access”

I employ a conceptual framework akin to the “market access” measure of Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016) to estimate the effect of connecting parishes to existing hotbeds of social movement activity.<sup>46</sup> A general market access measure for parish  $i$  in year  $t$  is defined as the least-cost path weighted average of some outcome  $M_{jt}$  in other parishes  $j$ :

$$\text{MarketAccess}_{it} = \sum_{j \neq i} \text{Cost}_{ijt}^{-1} \times M_{jt}$$

Here,  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$  is a resistance term, capturing the cost associated with the least costly path between parishes  $i$  and  $j$  in year  $t$ . Further details on the calculations of these costs are provided in Appendix A.

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<sup>46</sup>The concept of market access of course has a longer tradition in several disciplines. Key contributions include Harris (1954), Redding and Venables (2004), Hanson (2005) and Redding and Sturm (2008).

Different interpretations of market access are possible, depending on the variable chosen for  $M_{jt}$ .

Given my setting, I set  $M_{jt} = \text{Membership}_{jt}$ . That is,  $\text{MarketAccess}_{it}$  is a least-cost path weighted average of movement memberships in all other parishes. This measure of market access relates very closely to the peer effects literature, and is therefore ideal for capturing the spatial contagion of membership. Essentially, every parish is a “peer” of every other parish, where the strength of the connection is determined by the transport infrastructure linking them. The term  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}^{-1} \times \text{Membership}_{jt}$  captures the access to and influence from the movement membership in parish  $j$  on parish  $i$  in year  $t$ . As the effective cost falls or the membership in  $j$  grows, a greater peer effect is exerted on  $i$  by  $j$ , thereby increasing the probability of contagion.

To empirically estimate the effect of gaining access to parishes with active social movements on subsequent movement spread, I operationalise the market access measure within my instrumental variables framework. The relevant second stage becomes:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \kappa \text{MarketAccess}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

Where  $\text{MarketAccess}_{i,t-1}$  is defined as above. Since market access may be endogenous to social movement outcomes, I instrument for it in a first stage given by:

$$\text{MarketAccess}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_d \delta_d \text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbb{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it} \quad (5)$$

The roll-out of the railway network provides me with variation in the  $\text{MarketAccess}_{it}$  measure over time, even in the absence of changes in membership. As the network expands, connectivity between parishes improves.<sup>47</sup>

In Table 4, I summarise the impact of changes in social movement “market access” on my three key social movement outcomes. Columns 1 and 2 provide OLS and IV estimates of the effect of market access on the extensive margin of movement spread. Throughout, I include the richest set of controls from previous regressions. The results support the proposed mechanism: as access to existing movement membership elsewhere improves, the likelihood that the movement spreads increases. In columns 4, 5, 7 and 8, I present results yielding a similar interpretation for the effect of market access on membership and the number of distinct organisations. The broad patterns are evident: by reducing effective distances between parishes, railways connect social movement organisations to new potential audiences. This, in turn, increases the probability that the movement spreads to new locations and subsequently sees more

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<sup>47</sup>To illustrate, Appendix Figure C9 shows how least-costs to Stockholm decreased over the sample period. Similar maps can be drawn for the least-costs to each of the 2,276 parishes in my sample. In Figure C10, I document that these improvements in connectedness asymmetrically affected initially worse-connected parishes. While costs fell by over 20 percent from 1881 to 1910 in the top quartile of parishes (as measured by initial average travel costs across all destinations), they fell by close to 40 percent in the bottom quartile over the same period. This asymmetry speaks to the two potential channels of transmission for social movements noted by McAdam (2003): diffusion (spread along existing network ties) and brokerage (spread along newly created network ties). The wider geographical reach of the railway network and asymmetric fall in travel costs seems to favour the “brokerage” interpretation.



rapid growth.

An attractive feature of the market access framework is that such measures can be constructed individually for each type of organisation. In a given parish in a given year, temperance organisations and free churches will, for instance, be differentially connected to their counterparts elsewhere. Put differently, the same improvement in aggregate parish-level connectivity from one year to the next will have different implications for the various (potential) movements in a parish.

Econometrically, the set-up therefore permits an extended fixed effects specification:

$$Y_{imt} = \alpha_{it} + \gamma_{mt} + \psi_{im} + \kappa \text{MarketAccess}_{i,m,t-1} + \epsilon_{imt} \quad (6)$$

Here,  $Y_{imt}$  is an outcome of movement  $m$  in parish  $i$  in year  $t$ .  $\text{MarketAccess}_{imt}$  is a movement-specific market access measure (the least-cost weighted average of membership in movement  $m$  across all other parishes in year  $t$ ). The crucial advantage of such a specification is the inclusion of parish-year fixed effects ( $\alpha_{it}$ ), which amounts to restricting the analysis to comparisons between different movements in the same parish in the same year. All year-on-year shocks at the aggregate parish level are absorbed. These include, importantly, population growth and demographic change, any changes in sectoral employment shares and industrialisation, as well as any parish-level improvements in market access, connectivity and communications. The additional inclusion of movement-year fixed effects ( $\gamma_{mt}$ ) accounts for any differential nationwide macro-developments in memberships across the various movement types. Finally, movement-parish fixed effects ( $\psi_{im}$ ) absorb time-invariant movement-specific differences across parishes.

Results from estimating equation 6 are reported for each of the three main social movement outcomes in columns 3, 6 and 9 of Table 4.<sup>48</sup> These indicate that better-connected movements are more likely to spread (column 3), grow their membership (column 6) and establish a greater number of distinct organisations (column 9).<sup>49</sup> Importantly, in the presence of the rich fixed effects, my main results are corroborated even when restricting attention to comparisons between movements in a given parish-year. It therefore cannot be that aggregate effects of connectivity at the parish level – such as urbanisation, industrialisation or better communications in a broad sense – are the sole driver of social movement spread and growth. Rather, it matters to where (or to whom) parishes are connected as a result of transport improvements, and how ideas subsequently flow from one place to the next. I now turn to station-level arrivals data to directly consider individuals as vectors of social movement spread.

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<sup>48</sup>These are estimated on the full sample of movement-parish-year observations (4 movements  $\times$  2,276 parishes  $\times$  29 years for a total of 264,016 observations). In these regressions, standard errors are two-way clustered by parish and movement type.

<sup>49</sup>This set-up also yields a natural extension to test for heterogeneities in this relationship across the different movement types. To this end, I estimate a variant of equation 6:  $Y_{imt} = \alpha_{it} + \gamma_{mt} + \kappa^m \text{MarketAccess}_{i,m,t-1} + \epsilon_{imt}$ . I uncover movement-specific parameters  $\kappa^m$ , which I report in Appendix Figure C11. It appears that the impact of movement-specific market access affects the different movements relatively similarly across all measures of social movement activity. All estimates for individual movements are positive and very similar in magnitude to the average effect, with the exception of a moderately larger effect for temperance movements.

## 6.2 Station-Level Results: The Importance of Individual Mobility

To support the claim that the movement of individuals drives the grassroots mobilisation in social movements, I use station-level data to demonstrate that an increase in the number of passenger arrivals in a parish is associated with heightened social movement presence and growth. Crucially, the same relationship does not hold for freight arrivals. This fact, together with the above evidence from movement-specific market access measures, dispels concerns that the diffusion effect I document is simply an artefact of increased local economic activity. Rather, the effect of passenger arrivals on social movement spread is indicative of the key role of individual mobility in spreading socially salient ideas.

As detailed in Section 3 above, I use data on the number of passengers and the volume of freight arriving at each station in each year, and match the station data to the parishes in my main sample. I create a balanced panel of the subset of parishes which at some point in the thirty-year period 1881-1910 had a local railway station. I then estimate OLS regressions of the form:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \lambda \text{Arrivals}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it} \quad (7)$$

The variable  $\text{Arrivals}_{i,t-1}$  is either the number of passengers or the volume of freight arriving into parish  $i$  in year  $t - 1$  (or both included together). Since my parish-year panel is balanced, a parish will by definition have zero passenger and freight arrivals prior to the construction of a station. To abstract away from the effect of the construction of a station *per se*, I control for the presence of a station in all regressions. The coefficient of interest,  $\lambda$ , therefore captures the effect of an increase in passenger or freight arrivals on the social movement outcome of interest,  $Y_{it}$ . If the movement of individuals is key to the spread of social movements, then we expect  $\lambda > 0$  for passenger arrivals but  $\lambda = 0$  for freight arrivals.

I report results of this exercise in Table 5. Each set of three columns takes as the dependent variable one of the social movement outcomes. In columns 1 to 3, I explore the effect of passenger and freight arrivals on the presence of any social movement organisation in the parish. The estimated coefficient reported in column 1 suggests that a doubling of the number of passenger arrivals in a parish is associated with a 4.4 percentage point increase in the probability that a social movement organisation is present there. Interestingly, there is no analogous effect of freight arrivals, as shown in column 2. When both passenger and freight arrivals are included in column 3, the effect of passenger arrivals clearly dominates.<sup>50</sup>

The remainder of the table repeats the exercise for the two other social movement outcomes, and a very similar pattern emerges. Movement membership and organisational density both depend positively

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<sup>50</sup>For these differential patterns to emerge, it must be that some stations “specialised” in either passengers or freight (such that the two types of arrivals are not extremely highly correlated). In Appendix Figure C12, I provide a characterisation. I create cross-sectional measures of stations’ passenger- or freight-specialisation: for passengers, an indicator for whether stations see above-median passenger and below-median freight arrivals over the sample period (and conversely for freight). I then check which baseline characteristics correlate with these indicators. Specialisation in passengers correlates negatively with distance to Stockholm and with the share employed in industry, while specialisation in freight correlates positively with the share employed in agriculture and negatively with shares in industry and other occupations.

on passenger arrivals, but not on freight arrivals. Throughout, the coefficients on passenger arrivals are statistically and economically different from those on freight arrivals.

Taken as a whole, these results underscore the crucial role of the mobility of individuals in the spread and growth of popular movements. Viewed together with the market access results above, a salient mechanism explaining the impact of railway access on social movement proliferation is revealed. By reducing least-cost distances between places – and, crucially, between (would-be) movements locally and ones existing elsewhere – the railway network facilitated the spread of the movement from one parish to the next by enabling individuals to travel and share their ideas.

### 6.3 Alternative Mechanisms

So far, I have shown that railways appear to foster social movement spread and growth by allowing parishes to gain access to existing concentrations of membership (social movement “market access”) and by enabling greater flows of people into these parishes. I now provide supporting evidence to show that a number of competing demand- and supply-side mechanisms do not rule out my favoured interpretation. The results of this exercise are reported in Table 6.<sup>51</sup>

**Religion.** First, I consider six alternative demand-side mechanisms which may respond to improvements in railway connectedness and subsequently shape demand for social movements. The temperance and free church organisations were predominantly religiously motivated and largely of a Lutheran denomination. Therefore, the share of Lutherans in a parish can plausibly affect demand for these types of organisations. In column 1 of Table 6, I report the baseline OLS estimate of the effect of market access on the three main social movement outcomes. Column 2 then introduces an additional control for the contemporaneous share of Lutherans in the parish, which leaves coefficients practically unchanged. This is not surprising, given the dominance of Lutheranism in Sweden in this period. There is very little variation in religious affiliation that could explain away the effects I document.

**Occupational Structure.** More interesting as a potential alternative demand-side mechanism are parishes’ occupational structure.<sup>52</sup> If railways foster local industrialisation, this may in turn drive demands for trade unions and workers’ party organisations as labour organises. To account for this possibility, I add controls for the contemporaneous share in ten major ISCO groups to the baseline specification. Results are reported in column 3, and show that controlling for occupational structure indeed attenuates my estimates somewhat. Estimates remain significantly different from zero, however, and are statistically indistinguishable from the baseline coefficients. Changing occupational structure therefore explains only a small part of the effects I document.

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<sup>51</sup>These results should be viewed in conjunction with the highly demanding fixed effects specification discussed above (and reported in Table 4) where I compare different movements within a given parish-year and show that movement-specific market access moves the dial for movements locally.

<sup>52</sup>Indeed, Berger (2019) shows that railways spurred rural industrialisation, with local occupational structure changing in favour of industrial employment as a result of gaining railway access.

**Market Access.** In addition to increasing “market access” to social movements, railways naturally improve parishes’ access to markets in a more traditional sense. In column 4, I therefore control additionally for a time-varying market access measure, constructed using a least-cost weighted average of the population of all other parishes in a given year. Results are highly robust, and even somewhat strengthened, with the inclusion of this additional control.

**Emigration.** A fourth potential alternative mechanism relates to the work of Karadja and Prawitz (2019), who show that Swedish emigration to the United States drove local demand for political change in sending communities. The roll-out of the railway network may have facilitated emigration, and my estimates of the effect of railway access on social mobilisation may partly capture this effect. I therefore introduce a control for the effective distance to the nearest main emigration port (either Gothenburg or Malmö). The results of this exercise are reported in column 5. Reassuringly, results do not change markedly compared to the baseline estimates.

**Universities.** As a fifth alternative demand-side mechanism, I consider the possibility that railways may have improved access to education, which in turn may have driven the demand for local organisations demanding political change. At the cross-country level, primary schooling has been shown to be a strong determinant of democratisation (Barro, 1999; Murin and Wacziarg, 2014). But in nineteenth-century Sweden, literacy and primary school enrolment were already high (Sandberg, 1979). Primary education therefore is an unlikely candidate as an alternative mechanism. Access to university education was more limited, however, not least given the concentration of institutions of higher learning in a few cities. To account for the possibility that railways may have improved access to these universities and subsequently fed back into increased social mobilisation, I control for the effective distance to the nearest city with a university.<sup>53</sup> Results are reported in column 6, and are very similar to those from the baseline specification.

**Technical Know-How.** Recent work shows that Swedish railways facilitated innovation and the development of technical know-how (Andersson, Berger and Prawitz, 2023). The same human capital may have enabled more effective mass organisation. To check whether results operate wholly through local know-how, I control for the yearly number of patents in each parish in column 7. Results remain virtually unchanged.

**Telegraphs.** Second, I investigate two broad strands of alternative supply-side mechanisms. The first relates to the concurrent development of the Swedish telegraph network. Although there are notable exceptions to the rule (particularly in northern Sweden), telegraph construction broadly followed railway expansion (Schön, 2012). Better telegraph communications, in turn, could solve collective action problems in social movement mobilisation (García-Jimeno, Iglesias and Yildirim, 2022) and facilitate

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<sup>53</sup>These are: Lund (opened in 1425), Uppsala (1477), Stockholm (1878) and Gothenburg (1891). In the case of Gothenburg, it is only considered a candidate “nearest university” from its year of opening onwards. The other three were already in operation before the first year of my sample.

political participation by improving access to information (Wang, 2022). By using telegraph station-level data on opening and closing dates and the volume of telegrams received, I construct measures both for the proximity to the nearest operating telegraph station and for the number of telegrams processed there. I include these as controls in columns 8 and 9, respectively. Their inclusion only marginally changes the baseline estimates. This is not surprising, given that my results capture the expansion of social movements into new parishes. On this margin, the face-to-face interaction between individuals cannot easily be replaced by other forms of communication, though improved telegraph communications plausibly improve coordination once local organisations have been established.

**Newspapers and post.** The second alternative supply-side mechanism is related to the first, in that it speaks to a competing channel of information transmission. In this period, the postal service relied heavily on railway transport for its deliveries. It is therefore conceivable that the effect of railway connectedness on social movement outcomes is explained by the increased ability to disseminate the written word, not by the movement of people.<sup>54</sup> To investigate this mechanism, I use post station-level data to measure the volume of newspapers and other printed matter sent from each station each year. I then construct additional market access measures capturing parishes' potential exposure to circulated post.<sup>55</sup> In particular, I calculate a measure each for newspapers, other printed matter and for total postal flows. I then include these measures as additional controls in columns 10 to 12 of Table 6. Across all outcomes and all specifications, results remain similar to the baseline. In fact, in some cases the magnitudes of the coefficients are somewhat larger, though not statistically different from the baseline coefficients. This suggests that accounting for improved access to the postal service, granted by railway expansion, cannot explain away the main result.

These findings, in combination with the station-level results presented above, strengthen an interpretation which highlights the movement of individuals and their face-to-face interaction as the key mechanism through which railways foster social movement spread.

## 7 Social Movements and the Election of 1911

In September 1911, following constitutional reform in 1907-1909, Sweden held its first election with proportional representation, mandatory party affiliation for members of parliament and universal male suffrage.<sup>56</sup> As a result of the reform, the number of eligible voters doubled (Möller, 2015).

Historical accounts of Swedish social movements have emphasised their role in building local social capital and mobilising the electorate (Lundkvist, 1974, 1977). I have shown above that by extending travel to wider strata of the population, railways aided the development of these local organisations. I

<sup>54</sup>Perlman and Sprick Schuster (2016), for example, show that the roll-out of Rural Free Delivery facilitated information transmission and shaped political engagement in the early twentieth-century United States.

<sup>55</sup>With  $s$  denoting post stations:  $\text{PostalMarketAccess}_{it} = \sum_s \text{Cost}_{ist}^{-1} \times \text{PostalVolume}_{est}$

<sup>56</sup>Specifically, all men of at least 24 years of age, who had paid their taxes, completed military service and who were not in bankruptcy or in receipt of poor relief were eligible to vote (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 1912).

now explore whether popular engagement in grassroots organisations subsequently shaped the election of 1911.

I estimate regressions of the form:

$$\text{Election Outcome}_{i,1911} = \alpha_c + \text{Social Movement}_{i,1910} + \mathbf{X}_i' \beta + \epsilon_i \quad (8)$$

That is, outcomes in the election of 1911 are a function of local social movements in the final year of my main sample period (1910), conditional on 24 county fixed effects ( $\alpha_c$ ) and controls ( $\mathbf{X}_i$ ). As in the main analysis, the vector of controls includes geographical characteristics and demographic controls from the baseline year, 1880. First, I am interested in the role of social movements in mobilising the electorate. That is, did engagement in these grassroots organisations translate into higher turnout? In Table 7, Panel A columns 1 to 3, I show that this indeed was the case. Turnout in the 1911 election is positively associated with all three social movement measures: presence, membership and the number of organisations. The same also holds when taking the first principal component of the three social movement outcomes as a composite measure in column 4. These results confirm the importance of social movements as a mechanism for popular mobilisation and political participation.

If social movements grew due to increased connectivity via railway infrastructure, then plausibly proximity to the railway should in turn correlate positively with turnout. In column 5, I show that it does. To what extent does the effect of railways on turnout depend on the intermediate development of social capital? In column 6, I unpack this directly by way of a causal mediation exercise.<sup>57</sup> The composite measure of social movement strength can explain a substantial proportion of the impact of railways on turnout: three-quarters of the effect is mediated by social movements.

I additionally test whether a stronger social movement presence impacted electoral outcomes. The Social Democrats were natural candidates for many newly-enfranchised voters – particularly compared to the conservative General Electoral League (*Allmänna valmansförbundet*) – and enjoyed a considerable increase in political influence as a result. In Panel B of Table 7, I show that the Social Democrats did particularly well where social movements were well-established. The three main measures all positively predict the vote share of the Social Democrats (columns 1 to 3), as does the composite social movement measure (column 4).<sup>58</sup> Almost all of the impact of railways on the Social Democrat vote share is mediated by the local development of these organisations. These patterns suggest that the popular mobilisation and social capital embodied in grassroots social movements played a central role in the early stages of Swedish participatory democracy.

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<sup>57</sup>Here, I use the framework of Dippel, Gold, Heblich and Pinto (2019) and the `ivmediate` package of Dippel, Ferrara and Heblich (2020).

<sup>58</sup>The social movement measures include the left party organisations which were precursors to the Social Democrats. This could plausibly generate a mechanical relationship between social movements and the electoral outcomes I study. I show in Appendix Table B10 that this is not the case; I obtain a very similar pattern if I exclude these organisations when constructing each of my measures.

## 8 Concluding Remarks

On the eve of its first election with universal male suffrage in 1911, Sweden had undergone a widespread social mobilisation. Grassroots movements – temperance organisations, free churches, unions and leftist parties – enjoyed combined membership numbers of around three-quarters of a million, out of a population of 5.5 million Swedes. What explains the development of such remarkable social capital, and what were the consequences?

In this paper, I propose that improvements in transport infrastructure played a central role in the diffusion of social movements. Exploiting a natural experiment provided by this formative episode of Swedish history, I estimate the causal effect of proximity to the newly rolled-out railway network on the spread of grassroots associations. Rail was instrumental for both extensive and intensive margins of growth: parishes near the network were more likely to host a movement, exhibited larger membership numbers and established a greater number of distinct organisations.

I have provided evidence that these effects are driven by a social mobilisation underpinned by individual mobility. Using a social movement “market access” approach, I show that railway expansion reduced effective least-cost distances between parishes. For a given parish, these reductions intensified the influence exerted by movement memberships in neighbouring parishes, thereby enabling social movement spread. These effects cannot be explained away by alternative demand- and supply-side mechanisms, and I use station-level data to demonstrate that the arrival of passengers into a parish with railway access – not the arrival of freight – predicts social movement outcomes.

Finally, I show that mobilisation in these movements shaped participation and voting outcomes in Sweden’s first election with universal male suffrage. The social capital embodied in grassroots organisations therefore played a key role in the development of participatory democracy. Engagement in popular politics has been proposed as a key factor in the relatively peaceful route to institutional reform in Sweden (Bengtsson, 2023), in contrast to more violent paths elsewhere in the region (Meriläinen, Mitrunen and Virkola, 2023). The key role of individual mobility in social mobilisation, which I uncover here, suggests that these underlying levels of social capital are themselves contingent; they depend on the technology shaping social interactions.

These insights from history provide an informative lens through which to interpret social capital in the present. It is clear that social capital remains hugely influential for trust in, the functioning of, and popular engagement with the democratic process (Giuliano and Wacziarg, 2020; Durante, Mastroiocco, Minale and Snyder, 2023). It is less clear that technology continues to play a positive role in building the “right” kind of social capital (Campante, Durante and Tesei, 2022; Manacorda, Tabellini and Tesei, 2023). It is precisely this nuance that the Swedish experience brings to the fore: by connecting previously unconnected places and people, railways enabled – in the language of Putnam (1995, 2000) – the development of “bridging” types of social capital that came to underpin vibrant popular politics.

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# Tables

Table 1: Summary statistics

	Obs.	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max.
<i>Panel A. Social movement summary statistics</i>					
Any movement present	68280	0.49	0.50	0	1
Temperance movement present	68280	0.37	0.48	0	1
Free church present	68280	0.33	0.47	0	1
Union present	68280	0.06	0.24	0	1
Left party present	68280	0.03	0.16	0	1
Total membership	68280	141.49	995.67	0	83570
Temperance movement membership	68280	57.44	209.51	0	9520
Free church membership	68280	51.22	251.23	0	12287
Union membership	68280	19.43	371.73	0	36018
Left party membership	68280	13.39	307.93	0	30327
<i>Panel B. Social movement summary statistics conditional on movement presence</i>					
Total membership	33706	286.62	1402.38	1	83570
Temperance movement membership	25083	156.36	322.52	1	9520
Free church membership	22657	154.36	417.48	1	12287
Union membership	4078	325.41	1488.18	1	36018
Left party membership	1881	486.14	1792.71	3	30327
Total number of organisations	33706	3.73	7.19	1	247
Number of temperance organisations	25083	2.57	3.83	1	117
Number of free churches	22657	1.79	1.41	1	28
Number of unions	4078	4.58	8.66	1	135
Number of left parties	1881	1.10	0.35	1	5
<i>Panel C. Railway summary statistics</i>					
Distance to rail (km)	68280	11.80	31.21	0	677
Rail within 5 km	68280	0.48	0.50	0	1
Rail within 10 km	68280	0.71	0.45	0	1
Rail within 20 km	68280	0.88	0.33	0	1
Distance to railway plan (km)	2276	34.04	59.86	0	538
Arriving passengers (thousands)	5190	33.22	100.10	0	2260
Arriving freight (thousands of tons)	5190	15.05	66.47	0	1381
<i>Panel D. Census summary statistics</i>					
Total population	9104	2222.56	7025.48	90	368408
Adult population	9104	1261.99	4576.51	57	253375
Share female	9104	0.51	0.02	0.30	0.59
Average age	9104	29.78	2.27	21.52	39.59
Share married	9104	0.34	0.03	0.19	0.50
Share ISCO 1 (managers)	9104	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.15
Share ISCO 2 (professionals)	9104	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.45
Share ISCO 3 (technicians)	9104	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.33
Share ISCO 4 (clerical)	9104	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.14
Share ISCO 5 (service & sales)	9104	0.14	0.05	0.00	0.43
Share ISCO 6 (agriculture)	9104	0.51	0.16	0.01	0.97
Share ISCO 7 (craftsmen)	9104	0.10	0.07	0.00	0.64
Share ISCO 8 (plant & machine)	9104	0.04	0.06	0.00	0.74
Share ISCO 9 (elementary)	9104	0.08	0.09	0.00	0.81
Share ISCO 10 (armed forces)	9104	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.80

**Note:** Summary statistics for key variables. **Panel A** contains summary statistics for social movement outcomes for the complete parish-year panel (2,276 parishes, 30 years). The variable “Any movement present” is an indicator equal to one if any social movement is present in the parish-year. The following four variables are indicators for the presence of particular social movements: temperance movements, free churches, unions and left parties. “Total membership” is the combined membership across all movement types, and the following four variables decompose this total into membership in the four different movements. **Panel B** contains summary statistics for the subset of parish-years where at least one social movement is present. The first five variables capture the total membership as well as membership in individual movement types, conditional on movement presence. The second set of five variables captures the total number of organisations overall as well as within each movement type, conditional on movement presence. **Panel C** contains railway summary statistics. “Distance to rail” is a measure of geodesic distance (in km) from the seat of the parish to the nearest completed railway line. The following three variables are indicators for whether a parish is within 5, 10, or 20 km of a railway line in a given year. Finally, the variable “Distance to railway plan” is the time-invariant distance from a parish to the railway plans described in the text. “Arriving passengers” and “Arriving freight” are station-level variables measuring (in thousands) the number of arriving passengers and tons of freight in each station-year. **Panel D**, lastly, provides parish-year summary statistics from census data for census years. The variables “Total population” and “Adult population” are the total number of inhabitants and adult inhabitants residing in the parish at the time of each census. “Share female” is the share of female inhabitants. “Average age” is the simple average age of inhabitants. “Share married” is the share (out of total population) of married individuals. The “Share ISCO” variables summarise the proportion of employed individuals working in major ISCO groups. Censuses were conducted in 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910.

Table 2: First stage: proximity to railway plans and railway access

	Dependent variable: IHS(distance to railway)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
IHS(distance to railway plans) $\times$ 1890	-0.118*** (0.009)	-0.133*** (0.010)	-0.130*** (0.009)
IHS(distance to railway plans) $\times$ 1900	-0.147*** (0.012)	-0.146*** (0.013)	-0.140*** (0.013)
Observations	68280	68280	68280
Parishes	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276
Outcome mean	2.324	2.324	2.324
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. $\times$ Year FE		Y	Y
Population controls			Y

**Note:** First stage regressions of the form:  $\text{RailDist}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_d \delta_d \text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it}$ . The dependent variable,  $\text{RailDist}_{it}$ , is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the distance to the nearest constructed railway line. The excluded instruments are the interaction of the distance to the nearest railway plan,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$ , with decade indicators,  $\mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t$ . 1881-1890 is the omitted decade. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.

Table 3: Railway access and social movement outcomes

	Dependent variable: see panel headings					
	OLS			IV		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>						
IHS(distance to railway) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.019*** (0.006)	-0.016*** (0.006)	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.102*** (0.036)	-0.111*** (0.038)	-0.095** (0.039)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Outcome mean	0.506	0.506	0.506	0.506	0.506	0.506
K-P F-stat				93.12	102.9	102.3
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>						
IHS(distance to railway) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.105*** (0.031)	-0.088*** (0.030)	-0.055* (0.028)	-0.557*** (0.193)	-0.665*** (0.196)	-0.472** (0.198)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Outcome mean	2.678	2.678	2.678	2.678	2.678	2.678
K-P F-stat				93.12	102.9	102.3
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>						
IHS(distance to railway) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.042*** (0.012)	-0.033*** (0.011)	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.215*** (0.076)	-0.284*** (0.066)	-0.190*** (0.065)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Outcome mean	0.814	0.814	0.814	0.814	0.814	0.814
K-P F-stat				93.12	102.9	102.3
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. × Year FE		Y	Y		Y	Y
Population controls			Y			Y

**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{RailDist}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.

Table 4: Social movement “market access”

	Dependent variable								
	Movement presence			IHS(membership)			IHS(no. organisations)		
	OLS	IV	Extended FE	OLS	IV	Extended FE	OLS	IV	Extended FE
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	
IHS(market access) $_{t-1}$	0.052*** (0.014)	0.772** (0.334)		0.211*** (0.067)	3.451** (1.625)		0.061*** (0.022)	1.210** (0.517)	
IHS(movement-spec. market acc.) $_{t-1}$			0.040* (0.014)			0.248* (0.086)			0.067* (0.028)
Observations	66004	66004	264016	66004	66004	264016	66004	66004	264016
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	.	2276	2276	.	2276	2276	.
Outcome mean	0.506	0.506	0.202	2.678	2.678	1.016	0.814	0.814	0.270
K-P F-stat		18.26			18.26			18.26	
Parish FE	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
Year FE	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
Init. movem. pres. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
Geogr. chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
Baseline chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
Population controls	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
Parish $\times$ year FE			Y			Y			Y
Movement $\times$ year FE			Y			Y			Y
Movement $\times$ parish FE			Y			Y			Y

**Note:** Columns 1-2, 4-5 and 7-8 report OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \kappa \text{MarketAccess}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ , where  $\text{MarketAccess}_{it} = \sum_{j \neq i} \text{Cost}_{ijt}^{-1} \times \text{Membersip}_{jt}$  and  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$  is the least-cost between parishes  $i$  and  $j$  in year  $t$ . In these regressions, an observation is a parish-year. Columns 3, 6 and 9 report OLS regressions of the form:  $Y_{imt} = \alpha_{it} + \gamma_{mt} + \psi_{im} + \kappa \text{MarketAccess}_{i,m,t-1} + \epsilon_{imt}$ .  $\text{MarketAccess}_{imt}$  is a movement-specific market access measure for movement  $m$  in parish  $i$  in year  $t$ , where  $\text{MarketAccess}_{imt} = \sum_{j \neq i} \text{Cost}_{ijt}^{-1} \times \text{Membersip}_{mjt}$  and  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$  is the least-cost between parishes  $i$  and  $j$  in year  $t$ . In these regressions, an observation is a parish-movement-year. See text for details. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Columns 1-3: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Columns 4-6: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Columns 7-9: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses (two-way clustered by parish and movement type in columns 3, 6 and 9). \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.



Table 5: Station-level passenger and freight arrivals and social movement outcomes

	Dependent variable								
	Movement presence			IHS(membership)			IHS(no. organisations)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
IHS(passenger arrivals) $_{t-1}$	0.043*		0.049*	0.328***		0.375***	0.112**		0.113**
	(0.023)		(0.025)	(0.124)		(0.131)	(0.048)		(0.052)
IHS(freight arrivals) $_{t-1}$		0.007	-0.007		0.049	-0.059		0.031	-0.001
		(0.012)	(0.013)		(0.068)	(0.068)		(0.027)	(0.027)
Observations	5017	5017	5017	5017	5017	5017	5017	5017	5017
Parishes	173	173	173	173	173	173	173	173	173
Clusters	173	173	173	173	173	173	173	173	173
Outcome mean	0.738	0.738	0.738	4.459	4.459	4.459	1.556	1.556	1.556
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Population controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** OLS regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \lambda \text{Arrivals}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Columns 1-3: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Columns 4-6: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Columns 7-9: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population. In all regressions, I control for the presence of a station in the parish.

Table 6: Alternative mechanisms: controlling for other demand- and supply-side factors

Dependent variable: see panel headings												
Baseline	Alternative mechanism											
	Demand-side						Supply-side					
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>												
IHS(market access) <sub>t-1</sub>	0.052*** (0.014)	0.052*** (0.014)	0.048*** (0.014)	0.079*** (0.017)	0.079*** (0.018)	0.061*** (0.019)	0.052*** (0.014)	0.052*** (0.014)	0.052*** (0.014)	0.057*** (0.017)	0.074*** (0.016)	0.074*** (0.017)
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>												
IHS(market access) <sub>t-1</sub>	0.211*** (0.067)	0.210*** (0.067)	0.177*** (0.067)	0.393*** (0.080)	0.408*** (0.085)	0.275*** (0.088)	0.211*** (0.067)	0.210*** (0.067)	0.211*** (0.067)	0.255*** (0.082)	0.355*** (0.077)	0.334*** (0.082)
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>												
IHS(market access) <sub>t-1</sub>	0.061*** (0.022)	0.061*** (0.022)	0.050** (0.022)	0.129*** (0.025)	0.126*** (0.028)	0.083*** (0.028)	0.061*** (0.022)	0.062*** (0.022)	0.063*** (0.022)	0.081*** (0.027)	0.120*** (0.025)	0.101*** (0.027)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Population controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Additional controls	None	Share Lutheran	Employment structure	Population market acc.	Eff. dist. emig. port	Eff. dist. univ.	Patenting	Dist. nearest teleg. stat.	No. teleg. received	Access to newspapers	Access to print	Access to post

**Note:** OLS regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \kappa \text{MarketAccess}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ , where  $\text{MarketAccess}_{it} = \sum_{j \neq i} \text{Cost}_{ijt}^{-1} \times \text{Membersip}_{jt}$  and  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$  is the least-cost between parishes  $i$  and  $j$  in year  $t$ . See text for details. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population. Additional controls described in main text.

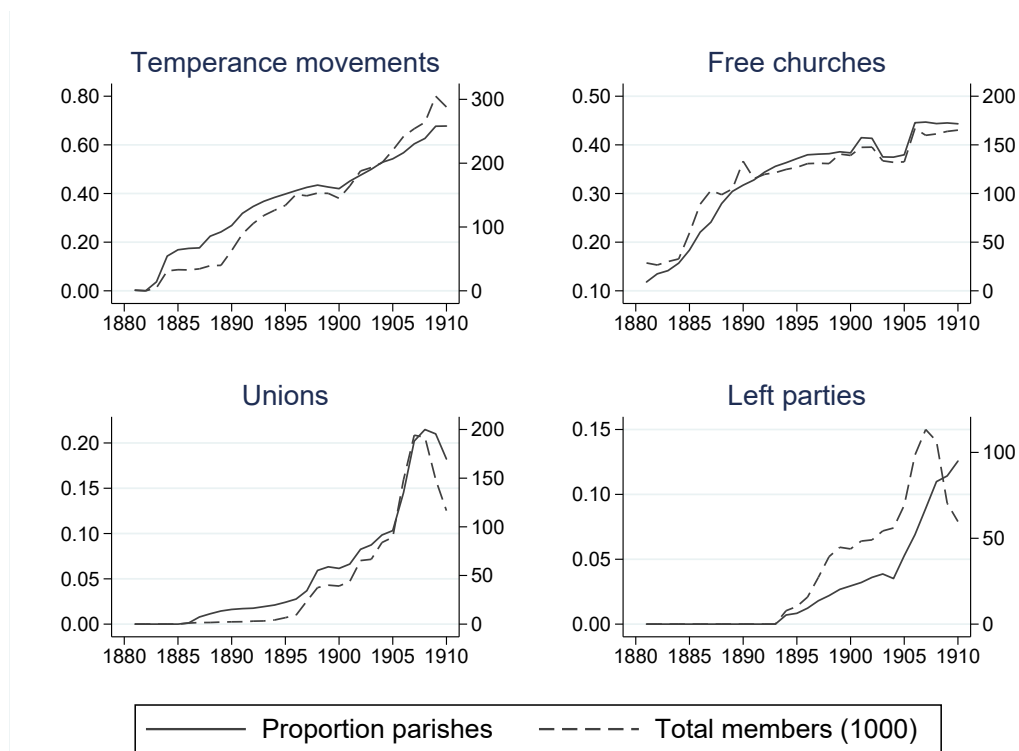
Table 7: Social movements and the election of 1911

	Dependent variable: see panel headings					
	Explanatory variable:					
	Movement presence (1)	Movement membership (2)	Number of organisations (3)	First princ. component (4)	Distance to rail (OLS) (5)	Distance to rail (IV) (6)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: Turnout, 1911</i>						
Effect of var. in col. heading	1.746*** (0.634)	0.680*** (0.120)	2.264*** (0.320)	1.624*** (0.316)	-1.536*** (0.239)	-2.930** (1.430)
Causal mediat. (%) by soc. movem.						75.92
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: Social Democrat vote share, 1911</i>						
Effect of var. in col. heading	1.331* (0.745)	0.663*** (0.152)	3.149*** (0.447)	1.760*** (0.396)	-1.540*** (0.320)	-3.094 (2.146)
Causal mediat. (%) by soc. movem.						91.98
Observations	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271
Parishes	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. control	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. char. controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Electorate size control	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** Regressions of the form  $\text{Election Outcome}_i = \alpha_c + Y_i + X_i'\beta + \epsilon_i$ . Election Outcome<sub>*i*</sub> is an outcome relating to the 1911 election, and  $Y_i$  are, in turn, different measures of the strength of social movements in parish *i* or its distance to the nearest railway line. In Panel A, the dependent variable is turnout (the number of votes cast divided by the number of eligible voters). In Panel B, the dependent variable is the vote share of left-wing parties (votes for left-wing parties divided by the total number of votes cast). In column 1,  $Y_i$  is an indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish in 1910. In column 2,  $Y_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership in 1910. In column 3,  $Y_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of organisations in 1910. In column 4,  $Y_i$  is the standardised first principal component of the social movement outcomes used in columns 1 to 3. In columns 5 and 6,  $Y_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the distance to the nearest constructed railway line. In column 6, the distance to rail is instrumented by the inverse hyperbolic sine of the distance to the nearest railway plan. The percentage of the effect of rail on each election outcome mediated by the first principal component of the social movement outcomes is estimated using the causal mediation framework of Dippel, Gold, Heblich and Pinto (2019) and the `ivmediate` Stata package (Dippel, Ferrara and Heblich, 2020). Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. County FE indicates fixed effects for 24 counties (the highest administrative aggregation). The control for electorate size is the natural logarithm of the number of eligible voters in the parish. Geography controls are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation). Baseline controls are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups).

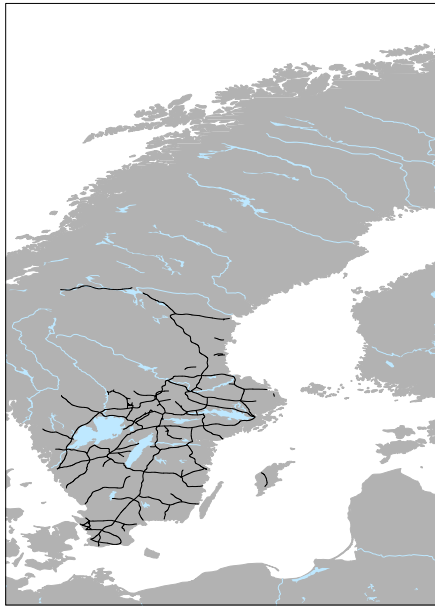
# Figures

Figure 1: Social movement spread and membership, 1881-1910

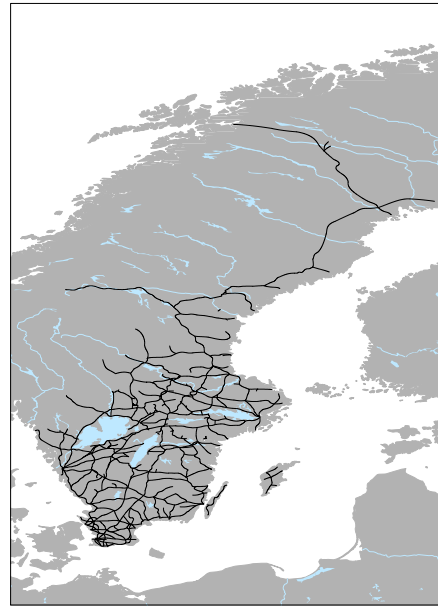


**Note:** Summary graphs showing the presence of and membership in four different social movements over the sample period 1881-1910. Solid line (left axis) shows the proportion of parishes with a given movement type present. Dashed line (right axis) shows the total national membership (in thousands) of a given movement type.

Figure 2: Railway network expansion, 1881-1910



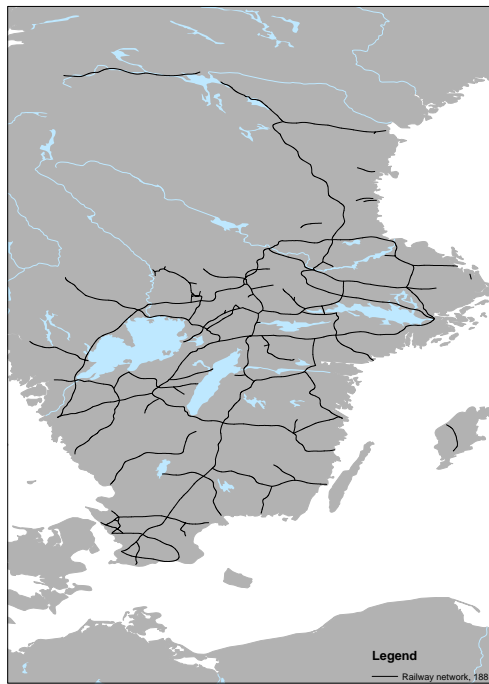
(a) Railway network in 1881



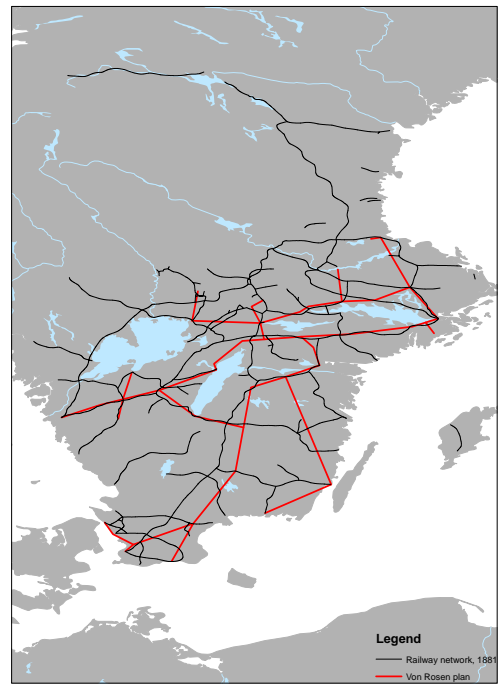
(b) Railway network in 1910

**Note:** Maps showing the extent of the Swedish railway network at the start (1881) and end (1910) of the sample period. These years are chosen to show the full extent of railway expansion over this period. The main analysis exploits year-on-year expansions of the railway network.

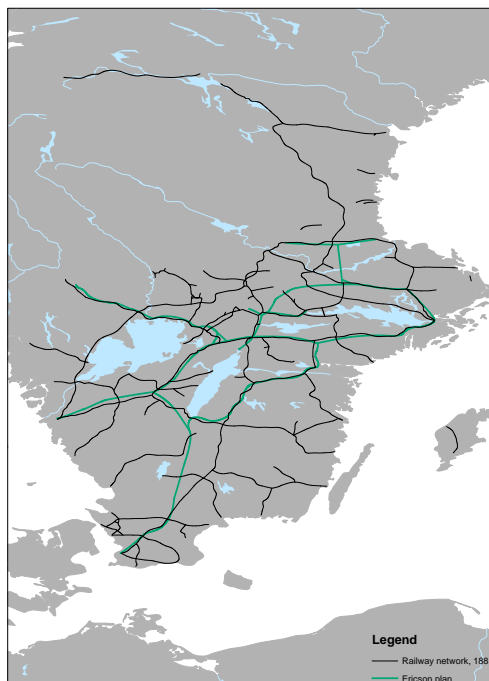
Figure 3: Railway plan instruments and actually constructed railways, 1881



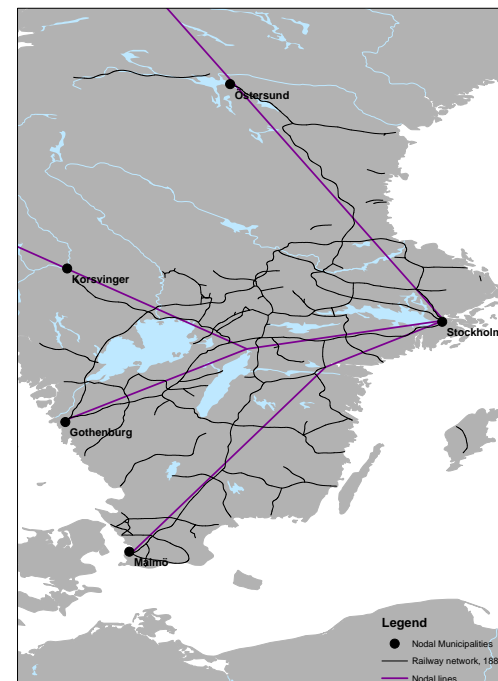
(a) Actual



(b) Von Rosen plan



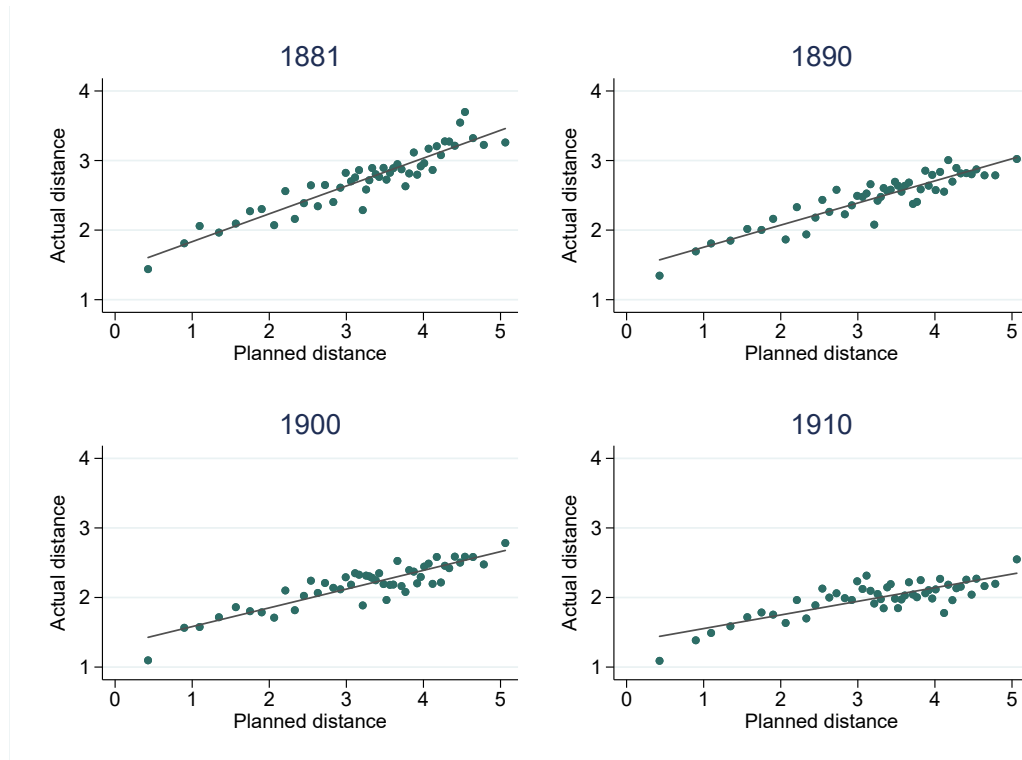
(c) Ericson plan



(d) Nodal lines

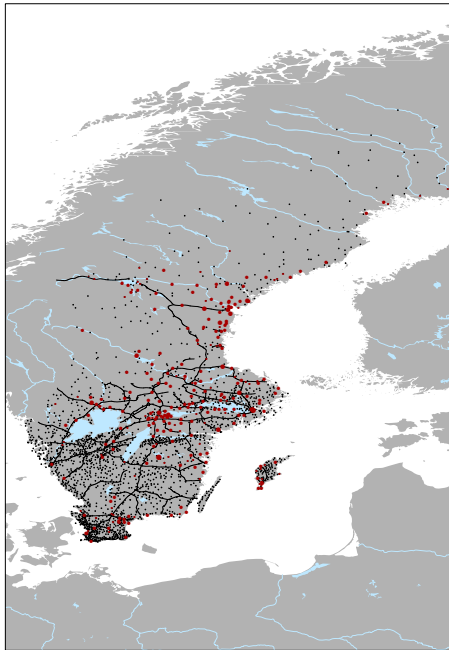
**Note:** Maps showing the spatial relationship between the actual railway network as of 1881 and the three counterfactual railway networks used in constructing my instrumental variable. See text for details.

Figure 4: First stage relationship over time

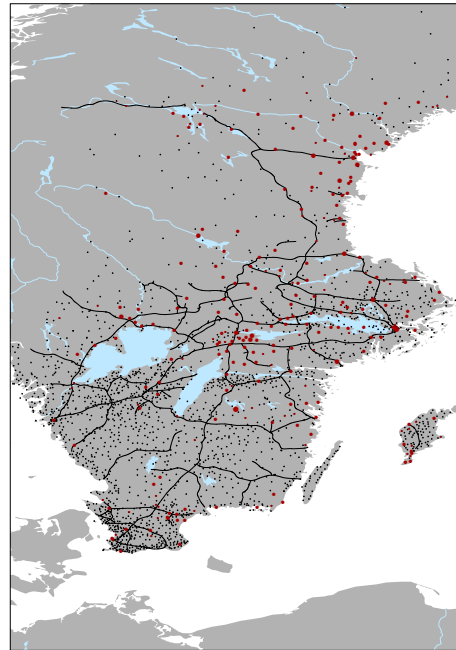


**Note:** Conditional correlations between proximity to railway and proximity to the counterfactual railway networks used in constructing my instrumental variable. Shown for select years. See text for details. All variables have been residualised with 24 county fixed effects (counties are the highest administrative aggregation) as well as controls for longitude and latitude. All distances have been transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation.

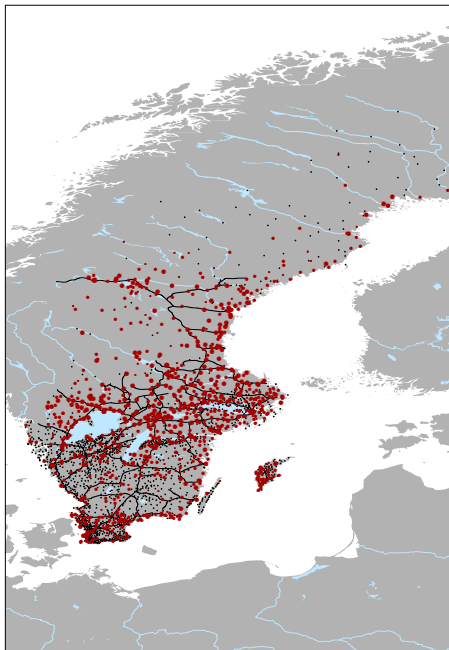
Figure 5: Spatial relationship between railways and social movements



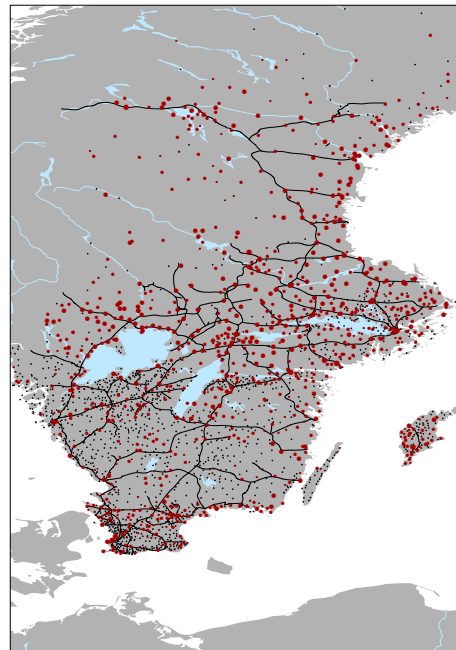
(a) 1881



(b) 1881, detail



(c) 1890

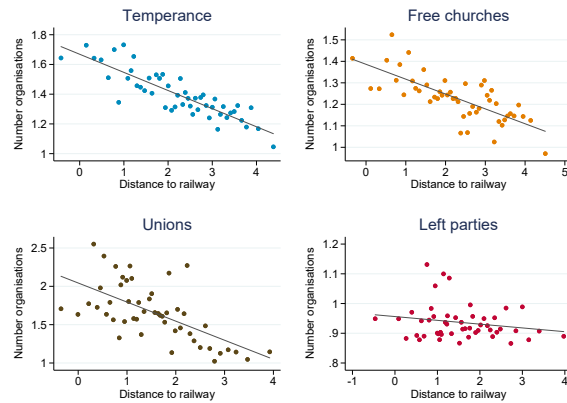
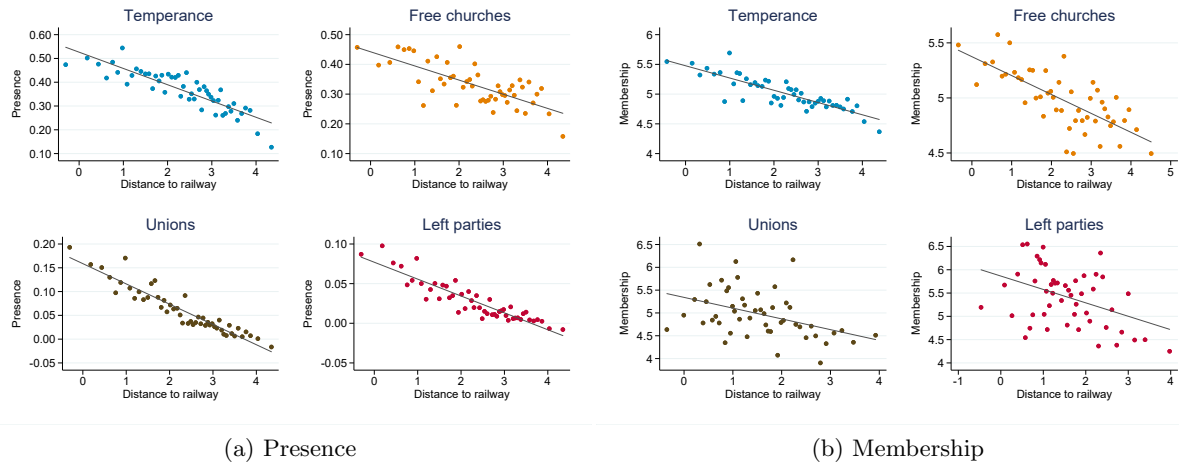


(d) 1890, detail

**Note:** Maps showing the spatial relationship between social movement presence and membership and railway access in two selected years. Black dots denote parishes. Red circles denote parishes with social movement presence. The size of the circle indicates absolute membership numbers.

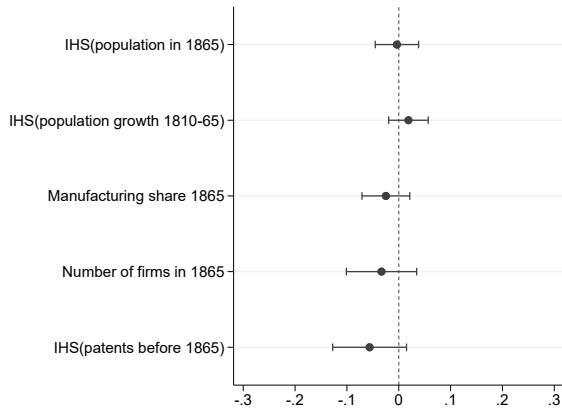


Figure 6: Correlations between railway access and social movement outcomes

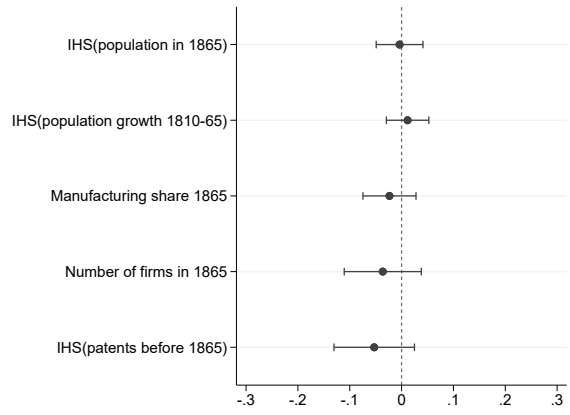


**Note:** Conditional correlations (binned scatterplots) between social movement outcomes by type and railway access. All variables have been residualised with 24 county fixed effects (counties are the highest administrative aggregation) as well as controls for longitude and latitude. The “distance to railway” and “membership” variables have been transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation.

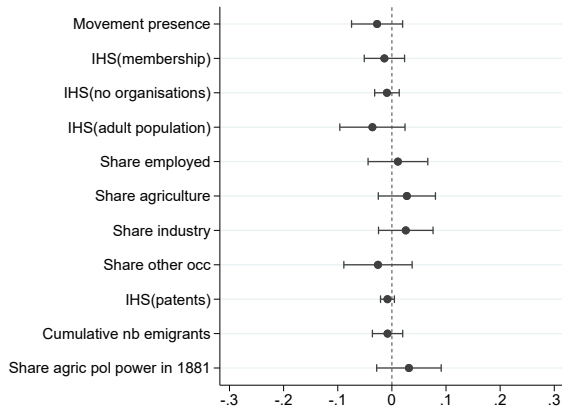
Figure 7: Balance checks for railway plan instrument



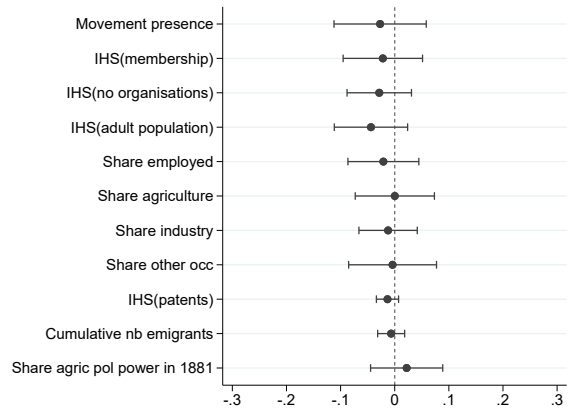
(a) Pre-rail characteristics



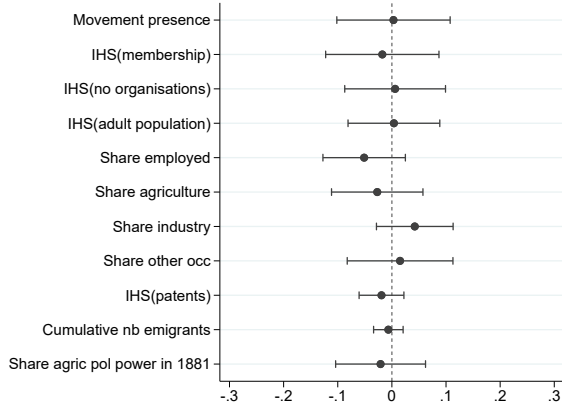
(b) Pre-rail chars. (eventually-conn. parishes)



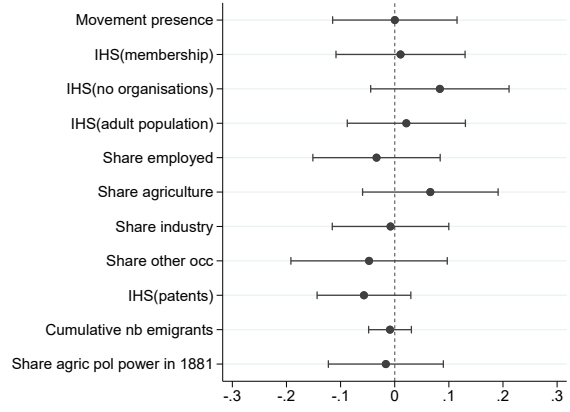
(c) 1881



(d) 1890



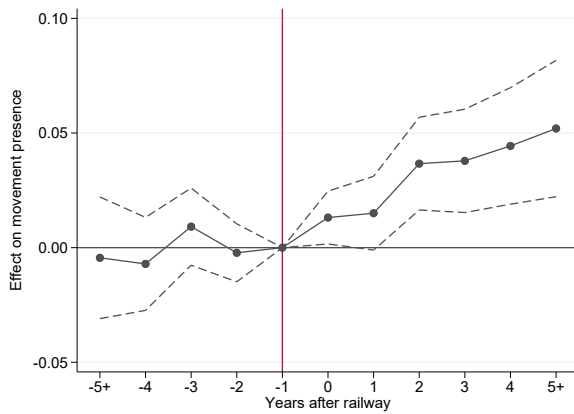
(e) 1900



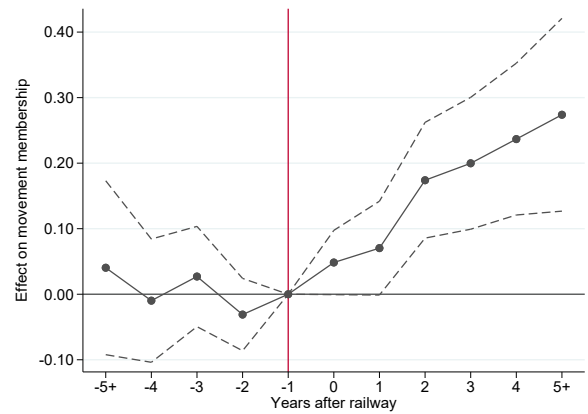
(f) 1910

**Note:** OLS regressions of the form:  $\text{Variable}_i = \alpha_c + \delta \text{PlanDist}_i + X_i' \beta + \eta_i$ . Each coefficient corresponds to a separate regression. For each regression,  $\text{Variable}_i$  is, in turn, one of a range of key balancing variables.  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the distance to the nearest railway plan. Figure (a) uses the whole sample and checks for balance on outcomes before any railway had been constructed (nationally). Figure (b) presents the same checks using the sub-sample of parishes that were within 10 kilometres of rail by 1910. Figures (c)-(f) checks for balance, respectively, on a range of outcomes for the subsamples of parishes that were not yet within 10 kilometres of rail by 1881, 1890, 1900 and 1910. Pre-rail outcomes in Figures (a) and (b) are taken from Andersson, Karadja and Prawitz (2022) and Andersson, Berger and Prawitz (2023). IHS(population in 1865) and IHS(population growth 1810-65) are the inverse hyperbolic sines of, respectively, the population in 1865 and the growth in population between 1810 and 1865. Manufacturing share 1865 is the share of manufacturing workers. Number of firms in 1865 is the number of manufacturing firms. IHS(patents before 1865) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of patents before 1865. In Figures (c)-(f), movement presence equals 1 if any movement present. IHS(membership) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the total number of members. IHS(no organisations) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of distinct organisations. IHS(adult population) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the total adult population. Share employed is the number of adults in employment divided by the total adult population. Share agriculture, share industry and share other occupations are the share of employed adults in agriculture (ISCO 6), industry (ISCO 7 & 8) and other occupations (excluding elementary and military employment). IHS(patents) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of patents. Cumulative number of emigrants is the stock of emigrants from 1867 to the year in question. Share of agricultural political power in 1881 is the share of voting power held by agricultural landed elites (vis-à-vis industrial elites). The vector  $\alpha_c$  contains fixed effects for 24 counties (the highest administrative aggregation). All regressions include geography controls: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation). All outcome variables have been standardised to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one for ease of comparability between coefficients. 90 percent confidence intervals shown.

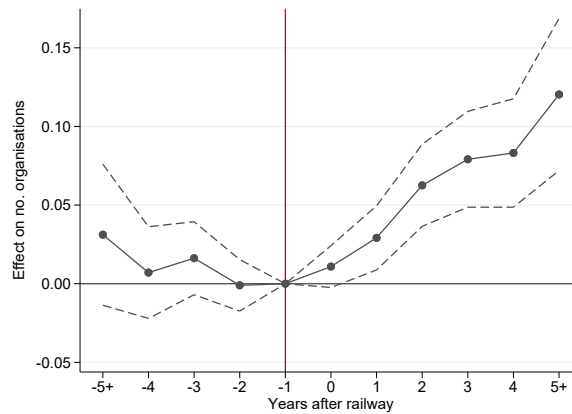
Figure 8: Event study: before and after parishes' largest reduction in distance to rail



(a) Presence



(b) Membership



(c) Number of organisations

**Note:** Event study regressions of the form  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_{\tau=-5+}^{5+} \eta_{\tau} \text{Rail}_{it} + X'_{it} \beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel (a): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel (b): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel (c): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. The sample includes all parishes not already within 10 kilometres of the railway in 1881 (the start of the sample period).  $\text{Rail}_{it}$  is an indicator equal to one in the year in which parish  $i$  experienced the greatest reduction in distance to the railway. All regressions control for initial social movement presence and geographical controls. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects.

## Appendix A: Calculating Least Costs

Key to the discussion of “market access” in Section 6 above is the use of time-varying least costs between parishes,  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$ . This Appendix provides a sketch of the calculation of these cost terms.

The cost terms  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$  are allowed to vary by year,  $t$ . Indeed, within- as well as between-variation in the least costs is crucial for identification in a panel framework. Variation in these terms comes from the expansion of the railway network, which reduces effective travel costs asymmetrically across parishes.

Each year, therefore, one can calculate least costs using the following algorithm:

1. Divide Sweden into a  $0.1^\circ \times 0.1^\circ$  grid.
2. Assign a cost to each grid cell using the following criteria: <sup>59</sup>
  - If the cell contains a major body of water (coast, river, lake), assign a cost of 0.49.
  - If the cell does not contain water, but contains railway, assign a cost of 0.63.
  - If the cell contains neither water nor railway, assign a cost of 23.1.
3. Construct a cost raster using the full grid of costs. See Figures A1a and A1c for examples.
4. For each of the 2,276 parishes in the sample, calculate the travel cost to that parish from every other parish. This is a minimisation problem over the least cost surface which picks the optimal route. See Figures A1b and A1d for examples of least costs to Stockholm.

Each year, this results in over 5 million pairwise least cost terms, which can be collected in a cost matrix:

$$\mathbf{C}_t = \begin{bmatrix} \text{Cost}_{11}^{-\theta} & \text{Cost}_{12}^{-\theta} & \dots & \text{Cost}_{1n}^{-\theta} \\ \text{Cost}_{21}^{-\theta} & \text{Cost}_{22}^{-\theta} & \dots & \text{Cost}_{2n}^{-\theta} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \text{Cost}_{n1}^{-\theta} & \text{Cost}_{n2}^{-\theta} & \dots & \text{Cost}_{nn}^{-\theta} \end{bmatrix}_t$$

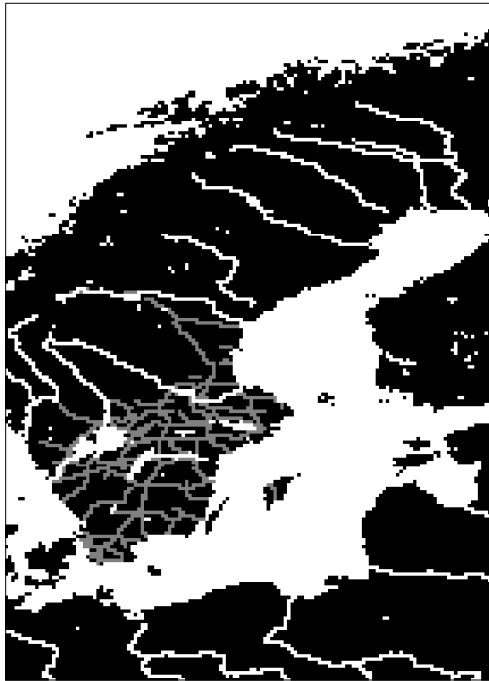
The sequence of cost matrices can then be used in various “market access”-style calculations.

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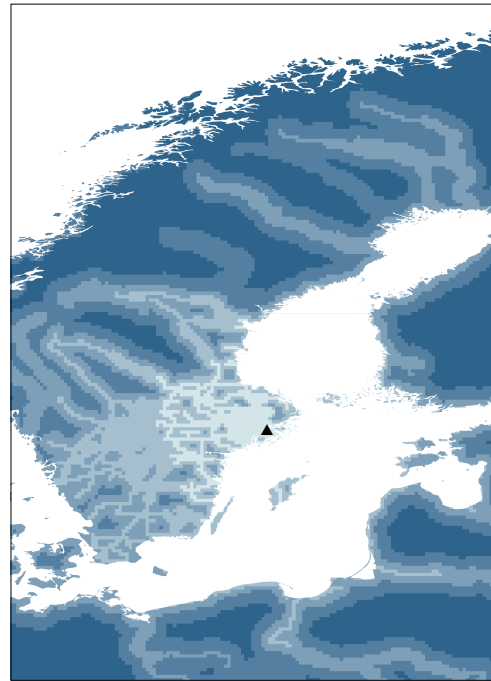
<sup>59</sup>These cost parameters follow Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016), who in turn follow Fogel (1964). Perlman (2016) also uses the same cost values.

## Figures for Appendix A

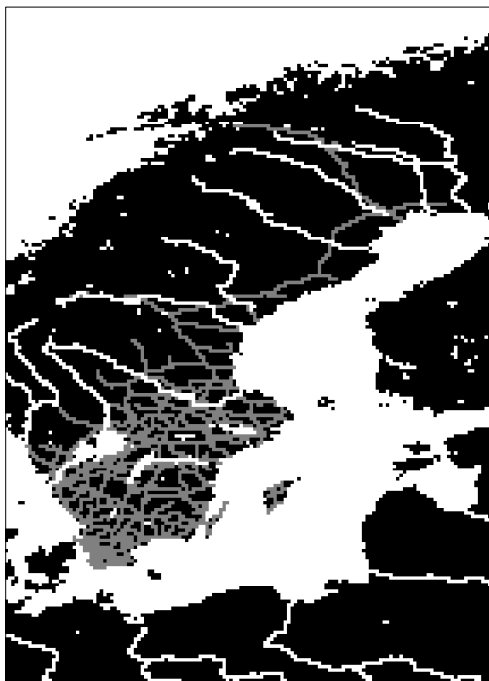
Figure A1: Calculating least costs



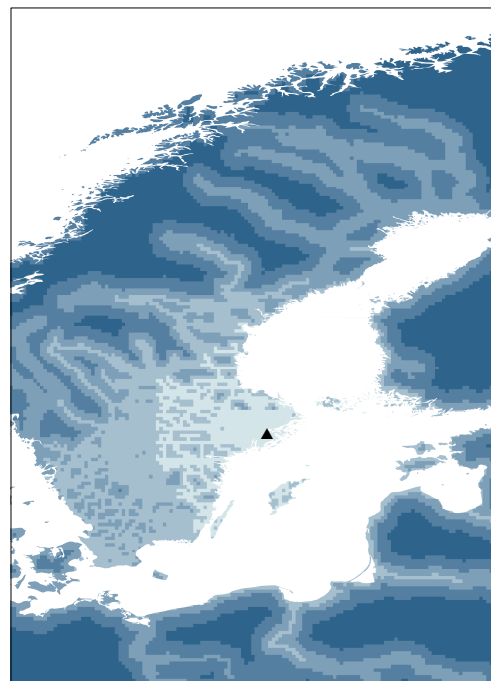
(a) Cost raster, 1881



(b) Least costs to Stockholm, 1881



(c) Cost raster, 1910



(d) Least costs to Stockholm, 1910

**Note:** Maps showing the construction of least cost maps and the cost raster used in this construction for the start (1881) and end (1910) of the sample period. See main text and the text in this appendix for details.

## Appendix B: Additional Tables

Table B1: Reduced form for never-connected and eventually-connected parishes

	Sample of parishes					
	Never-connected			Eventually-connected		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>						
IHS(distance to railway plans)	0.009 (0.018)	-0.002 (0.019)	0.005 (0.018)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.006)
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>						
IHS(distance to railway plans)	0.065 (0.111)	0.001 (0.116)	0.052 (0.103)	-0.083* (0.043)	-0.092** (0.041)	-0.067** (0.032)
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>						
IHS(distance to railway plans)	0.020 (0.038)	0.004 (0.037)	0.021 (0.031)	-0.035** (0.016)	-0.037** (0.015)	-0.020* (0.010)
Observations	12090	12090	12090	56190	56190	56190
Parishes	403	403	403	1873	1873	1873
Clusters	403	403	403	1873	1873	1873
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE		Y	Y		Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE		Y	Y		Y	Y
Baseline chars. × Year FE			Y			Y

**Note:** Reduced-form regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_c + \delta \text{PlanDist}_i + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it}$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations.  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the distance to the nearest railway plan. All regressions include 24 county fixed effects (counties are the highest administrative aggregation) as well as controls for longitude and latitude. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects.

Table B2: Magnitude comparisons for predictors of railway access and social movement outcomes

	Outcome (standardised)			
	Movement presence	Membership	Number of organisations	Distance to railway
Distance to railway	-0.044*** (0.014)	-0.041*** (0.013)	-0.044*** (0.015)	
Population	0.445*** (0.052)	0.921*** (0.056)	1.425*** (0.076)	-0.316*** (0.055)
Share employed	-0.011 (0.015)	0.010 (0.014)	0.031** (0.014)	0.017 (0.012)
Share agriculture	-0.096*** (0.017)	-0.150*** (0.017)	-0.198*** (0.019)	0.036** (0.015)
Share industry	0.104*** (0.016)	0.183*** (0.015)	0.251*** (0.018)	0.019 (0.015)
Share other occupations	0.011 (0.014)	0.023* (0.013)	0.023* (0.013)	0.014 (0.010)
Observations	68280	68280	68280	68280
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276	2276
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** Regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \beta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$ , where  $Y_{it}$  is a standardised (railway or social movement) outcome and  $X_{it}$  is a standardised covariate. Each coefficient is from a separate regression. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects.

Table B3: Analysis of compliers

	Mean of each variable for:				Compliers / full sample (5)
	Full (1)	Compliers (2)	Never- takers (3)	Always- takers (4)	
Latitude	58.415	59.323	58.769	58.157	1.016
Longitude	14.901	15.329	15.365	14.752	1.029
IHS(distance to Stockholm)	13.123	12.803	12.741	13.237	0.976
IHS(adult population)	7.351	7.319	7.298	7.363	0.996
Share female	0.509	0.507	0.511	0.509	0.996
Average age	28.528	27.673	28.732	28.723	0.970
Share married	0.340	0.330	0.353	0.341	0.973
Share employed	0.280	0.292	0.265	0.278	1.042
Share agriculture	0.502	0.503	0.551	0.497	1.003
Share industry	0.100	0.073	0.079	0.108	0.735
Share other occ	0.262	0.280	0.259	0.258	1.066

**Note:** Analysis of compliers implementing the procedure and `ivdesc` package of Marbach and Hangartner (2020). Means of a range of baseline characteristics are reported for the full sample (column 1), compliers (2), never-takers (3) and always-takers (4). The ratio of means in the complier subsample to means in the full sample are reported in column 5. For this analysis, a binary treatment (taking a value of one if the parish is within 10km of rail by 1910) and a binary instrument (taking a value of one if the parish is within 10km of any railway plan) are assumed for simplicity.



Table B4: First stage with different instrument specifications

	Dependent variable: IHS(distance to railway)					
	Instrument defined by:					
	Distance closest (1)	Within 10km of any plan (2)	Distance von Rosen (3)	Distance Ericson (4)	Distance straight line (5)	Shift- share (6)
Instrument $\times$ 1890	-0.118*** (0.009)	0.192*** (0.021)	-0.123*** (0.011)	-0.110*** (0.016)	-0.128*** (0.018)	
Instrument $\times$ 1900	-0.147*** (0.012)	0.239*** (0.032)	-0.126*** (0.015)	-0.113*** (0.021)	-0.184*** (0.025)	
Shift-share						-0.385*** (0.034)
Observations	68280	68280	49260	43470	43500	68280
Parishes	2276	2276	1642	1449	1450	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	1642	1449	1450	2276
Outcome mean	2.324	2.324	2.515	2.599	2.621	2.324
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** First stage regressions of the forms:  $\text{RailDist}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_d \delta_d \text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it}$  (columns 1-5) and  $\text{RailDist}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \xi \text{Shift-share}_{it} + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it}$  (column 6). The dependent variable,  $\text{RailDist}_{it}$ , is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the distance to the nearest constructed railway line. In columns 1-5, the excluded instruments are the interaction between different definitions of proximity to railway plans,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$ , with decade indicators,  $\mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t$ . 1881-1890 is the omitted decade. Column 1 reports the baseline first stage ( $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is the distance to the nearest plan). In column 2,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is an indicator taking a value of 1 if parish  $i$  is within 10 kilometres of any plan. In columns 3-5,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is, in turn, the distance to the von Rosen, Ericson and straight line plans. In each of these regressions, parishes within 10 kilometres of either of the other plans are omitted. In column 6, the excluded instrument is a shift-share measure interacting the distance of each parish from the nearest railway plan,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$ , with the length of railway constructed nationwide each year,  $\text{Length}_t$ . Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.

Table B5: Robustness to different treatment definitions

	Definition of <i>distance to rail</i> variable					
	IHS(distance to rail)		ln(1 + distance to rail)		1{rail within 10km}	
	OLS (1)	IV (2)	OLS (3)	IV (4)	OLS (5)	IV (6)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>						
Distance to rail <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.095** (0.039)	-0.017** (0.007)	-0.101** (0.042)	0.034** (0.013)	0.331** (0.144)
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>						
Distance to rail <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.055* (0.028)	-0.472** (0.198)	-0.075** (0.033)	-0.503** (0.210)	0.119* (0.063)	1.711** (0.734)
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>						
Distance to rail <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.190*** (0.065)	-0.024** (0.011)	-0.203*** (0.069)	0.019 (0.021)	0.720*** (0.248)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
K-P F-stat		102.3		109.7		51.70
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Population controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{DistRail}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Columns 1 and 2 report baseline results using the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of distance to rail. Columns 3 and 4 use the natural logarithm (using 1 + distance to allow for zero distances). Columns 5 and 6 use an indicator equal to one if the parish is within 10 kilometres of the railway. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.

Table B6: Robustness to different population interpolations

	Population interpolation					
	Fixed between census years		Linear interpolation		Constant growth rate interpolation	
	OLS (1)	IV (2)	OLS (3)	IV (4)	OLS (5)	IV (6)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>						
IHS(distance to rail) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.095** (0.039)	-0.011* (0.006)	-0.092** (0.040)	-0.011* (0.006)	-0.092** (0.040)
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>						
IHS(distance to rail) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.055* (0.028)	-0.472** (0.198)	-0.035 (0.028)	-0.447** (0.200)	-0.035 (0.028)	-0.448** (0.199)
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>						
IHS(distance to rail) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.190*** (0.065)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.180*** (0.065)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.180*** (0.065)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
K-P F-stat		102.3		101.5		101.5
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Population controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{DistRail}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Columns 1 and 2 report baseline results using population numbers fixed between census years. Columns 3 and 4 interpolate population numbers linearly between census years. Columns 5 and 6 interpolate population numbers between census years using a constant growth rate. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects.

Table B7: Robustness to dropping targeted parishes

	Sample					
	Full		Dropping nodes		Dropping parishes <10km from nodes	
	OLS (1)	IV (2)	OLS (3)	IV (4)	OLS (5)	IV (6)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>						
IHS(distance to rail) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.095** (0.039)	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.093** (0.040)	-0.012** (0.006)	-0.091** (0.040)
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>						
IHS(distance to rail) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.055* (0.028)	-0.472** (0.198)	-0.055* (0.029)	-0.464** (0.201)	-0.047* (0.028)	-0.461** (0.199)
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>						
IHS(distance to rail) <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.190*** (0.065)	-0.018* (0.010)	-0.196*** (0.065)	-0.016 (0.010)	-0.194*** (0.064)
Observations	66004	66004	65888	65888	64902	64902
Parishes	2276	2276	2272	2272	2238	2238
Clusters	2276	2276	2272	2272	2238	2238
K-P F-stat		102.3		102.6		105.4
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. × Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Population controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{DistRail}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Columns 1 and 2 report baseline results using the full sample. Columns 3 and 4 drop targeted (“nodal”) parishes. Columns 5 and 6 drop all parishes within 10 kilometres of targeted (“nodal”) parishes. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.

Table B8: Robustness to different error structures

	Standard errors							
	Clustered				Conley spatial			
	by parish		by $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$ cell		up to 100km		up to 300km	
	OLS (1)	IV (2)	OLS (3)	IV (4)	OLS (5)	IV (6)	OLS (7)	IV (8)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>								
IHS(distance to rail) $_{t-1}$	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.095** (0.039)	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.095* (0.052)	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.095** (0.042)	-0.013** (0.007)	-0.095** (0.039)
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>								
IHS(distance to rail) $_{t-1}$	-0.055* (0.028)	-0.472** (0.198)	-0.055* (0.031)	-0.472* (0.278)	-0.055* (0.030)	-0.472** (0.220)	-0.055* (0.032)	-0.472** (0.188)
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>								
IHS(distance to rail) $_{t-1}$	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.190*** (0.065)	-0.017 (0.011)	-0.190** (0.095)	-0.017 (0.010)	-0.190*** (0.072)	-0.017 (0.010)	-0.190*** (0.063)
Observations	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004	66004
Parishes	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276	2276
Clusters	2276	2276	234	234	2276	2276	2276	2276
K-P F-stat		102.3		36.88		48.98		32.06
Parish FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline chars. $\times$ Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Population controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{DistRail}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Columns 1 and 2 report baseline results with standard errors clustered by parish. Columns 3 and 4 cluster by  $0.5 \times 0.5$  degree grid cells. Columns 5-8 allow for spatial autocorrelation by implementing Conley (1999) standard errors with a 100 (columns 5 and 6) or 300 (columns 7 and 8) kilometre distance cut-off using the `acreg` package by Colella, Lalive, Sakalli and Thoenig (2020). Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors in parentheses. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Baseline characteristics are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects. Population controls is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the contemporaneous adult population.

Table B9: Assessing spatial autocorrelation of residuals using Moran's I

	Spatial autocorrelation up to			
	100km (1)	200km (2)	300km (3)	400km (4)
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: movement presence</i>				
Moran's I	0.0209	0.0083	0.0025	0.0003
p-value	0.0000	0.0000	0.0003	0.1546
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: IHS(membership)</i>				
Moran's I	0.0200	0.0065	0.0001	-0.0010
p-value	0.0000	0.0000	0.5232	0.3497
<i>Panel C. Dependent variable: IHS(no. organisations)</i>				
Moran's I	0.0187	0.0088	0.0012	0.0001
p-value	0.0000	0.0000	0.0455	0.3430

**Note:** Moran's I statistics for the residuals of regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{DistRail}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel A: indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel B: inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel C: inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. All regressions control for an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects, geographical characteristics (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation, all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation and interacted with year fixed effects) and baseline characteristics (demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects). Each column reports the Moran's I statistic of the residuals in the cross-section of parishes in 1910, allowing for spatial dependence up to 100, 200, 300 and 400 kilometres in columns 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively. P-values for the test for the difference of each Moran's I from zero reported underneath each statistic.

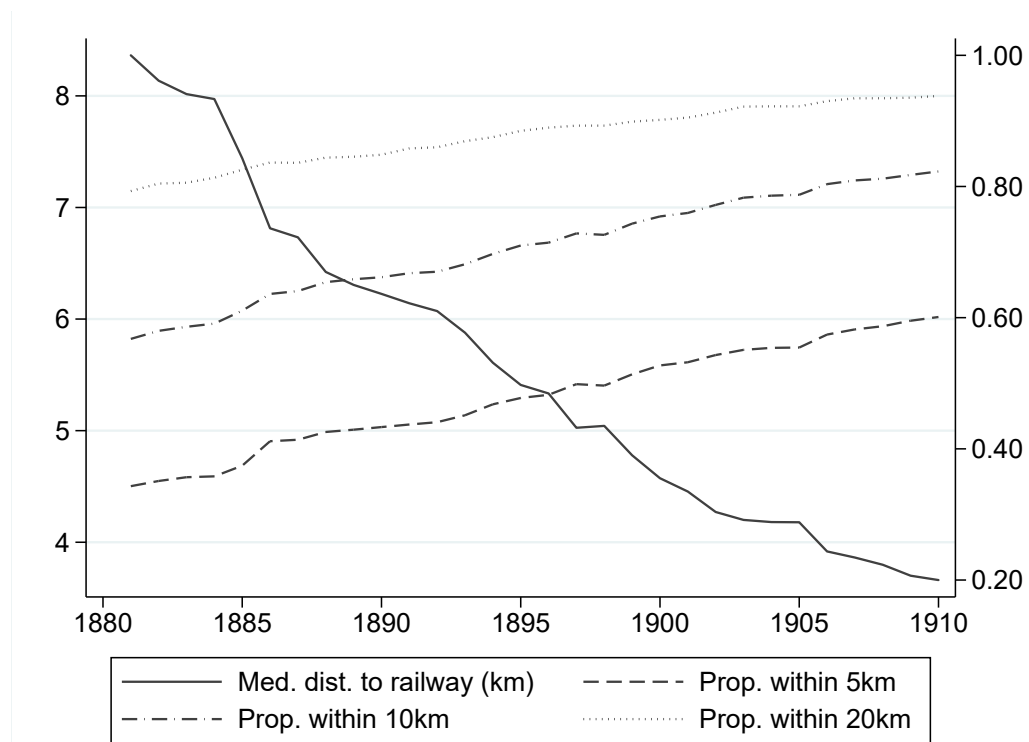
Table B10: Social movements and the election of 1911 (dropping left parties)

Dependent variable: see panel headings						
Explanatory variable:						
Movement presence	Movement membership	Number of organisations	First princ. component	Distance to rail (OLS)	Distance to rail (IV)	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	
<i>Panel A. Dependent variable: Turnout, 1911</i>						
Effect of var. in col. heading	1.708*** (0.633)	0.654*** (0.120)	2.193*** (0.327)	1.559*** (0.317)	-1.536*** (0.239)	-2.930** (1.430)
Causal mediat. (%) by soc. movem.					74.72	
<i>Panel B. Dependent variable: Social Democrat vote share, 1911</i>						
Effect of var. in col. heading	1.250* (0.745)	0.610*** (0.152)	2.932*** (0.451)	1.617*** (0.393)	-1.540*** (0.320)	-3.094 (2.146)
Causal mediat. (%) by soc. movem.					90.53	
Observations	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271
Parishes	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271	2271
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Init. movem. pres. control	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Geogr. char. controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baseline controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Electorate size control	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Note:** Regressions of the form  $\text{Election Outcome}_i = \alpha_c + Y_i + X'_i\beta + \epsilon_i$ . Election Outcome<sub>*i*</sub> is an outcome relating to the 1911 election, and  $Y_i$  are, in turn, different measures of the strength of social movements (excluding left parties) in parish *i* or its distance to the nearest railway line. In Panel A, the dependent variable is turnout (the number of votes cast divided by the number of eligible voters). In Panel B, the dependent variable is the vote share of left-wing parties (votes for left-wing parties divided by the total number of votes cast). In column 1,  $Y_i$  is an indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish in 1910. In column 2,  $Y_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership in 1910. In column 3,  $Y_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of organisations in 1910. In column 4,  $Y_i$  is the standardised first principal component of the social movement outcomes used in columns 1 to 3. In columns 5 and 6,  $Y_i$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the distance to the nearest constructed railway line. In column 6, the distance to rail is instrumented by the inverse hyperbolic sine of the distance to the nearest railway plan. The percentage of the effect of rail on each election outcome mediated by the first principal component of the social movement outcomes is estimated using the causal mediation framework of Dippel, Gold, Heblich and Pinto (2019) and the `ivmediate` Stata package (Dippel, Ferrara and Heblich, 2020). Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate significance at the 10, 5 and 1 percent levels, respectively. County FE indicates fixed effects for 24 counties (the highest administrative aggregation). The control for electorate size is the natural logarithm of the number of eligible voters in the parish. Geography controls are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation). Baseline controls are demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups).

## Appendix C: Additional Figures

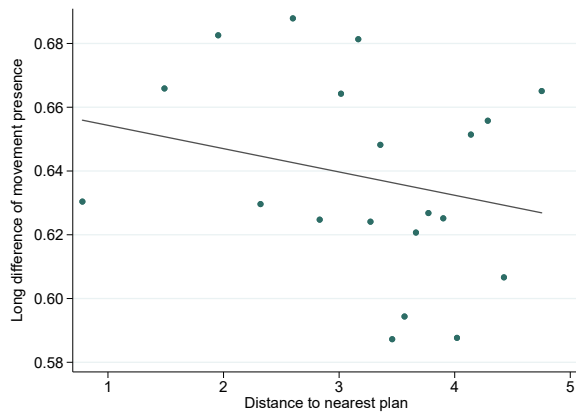
Figure C1: Railway access over time, 1881-1910



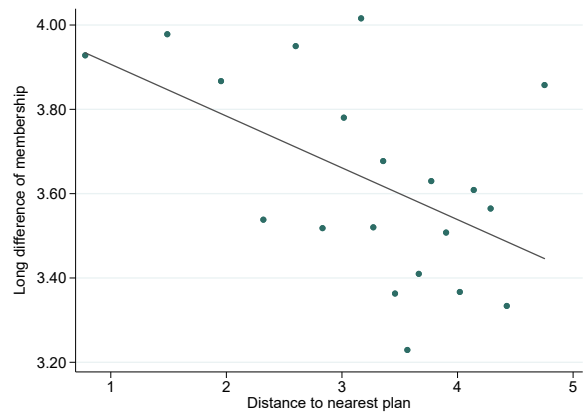
**Note:** Summary graphs showing railway access over the sample period 1881-1910. Solid line (left axis) shows the median distance (in km) to rail in each year. Dashed lines (right axis) respectively show the proportion of parishes within 5, 10 and 20 km of rail in each year.



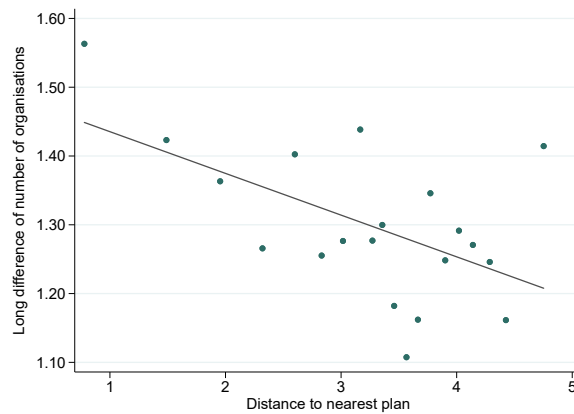
Figure C2: Long differences of social movement outcomes against distance to railway plans



(a) Movement presence



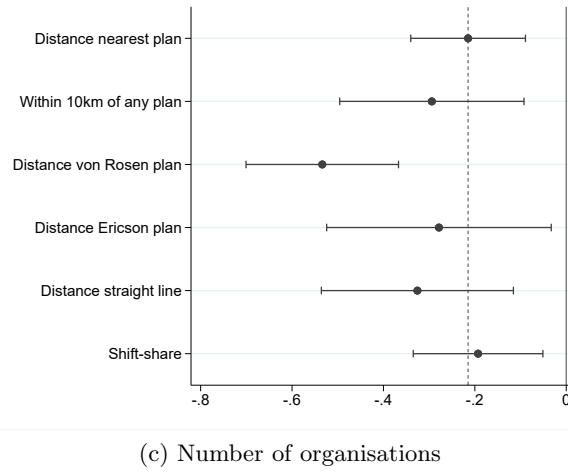
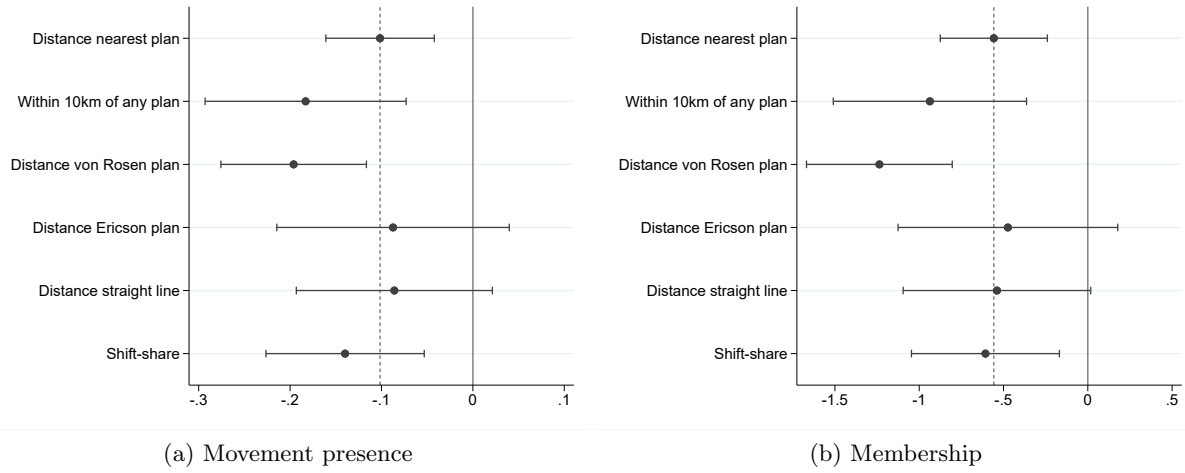
(b) Membership



(c) Number of organisations

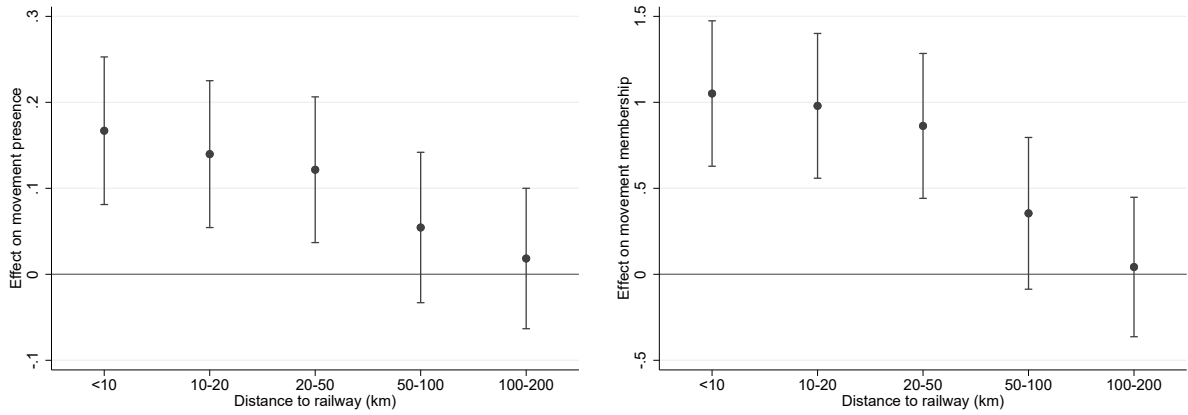
**Note:** Long differences in social movement outcomes over three decades (1910 values less 1881 values, vertical axes) correlated with distance to initial railway plans (horizontal axes). Figures (a), (b) and (c) are for movement presence, membership and the number of organisations, respectively. All variables have been residualised with 24 county fixed effects (counties are the highest administrative aggregation) as well as controls for longitude and latitude, initial movement presence and geographical controls (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation)). The “distance to nearest plan”, “membership” and “number of organisations” variables have been transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation.

Figure C3: IV estimates using different instrument specifications



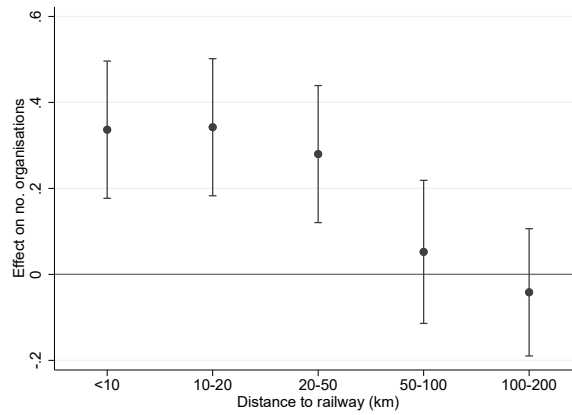
**Note:** IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{RailDist}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Each figure reports several estimates of  $\phi$ , with different instrument specifications in the first stage. For the first five estimates in each figure, the first stage is:  $\text{RailDist}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_d \delta_d \text{PlanDist}_i \times \mathbf{1}\{\text{decade} = d\}_t + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it}$ . In turn,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$  is the distance to the nearest plan (first estimate, baseline), an indicator taking a value of 1 if parish  $i$  is within 10 kilometres of any plan (second estimate), or the distance to the von Rosen, Ericson and straight line plans (third to fifth estimates; in each of these regressions, parishes within 10 kilometres of either of the other plans are omitted). For the sixth estimate, the first stage is:  $\text{RailDist}_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \xi \text{Shift-share}_{it} + X'_{it}\beta + \nu_{it}$ . That is, the excluded instrument is a shift-share measure interacting the distance of each parish from the nearest railway plan,  $\text{PlanDist}_i$ , with the length of railway constructed nationwide each year,  $\text{Length}_t$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Figure (a): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Figure (b): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Figure (c): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. All regressions include controls for initial movement presence and geographical characteristics (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects).

Figure C4: Effect of railways within different proximity bands



(a) Movement presence

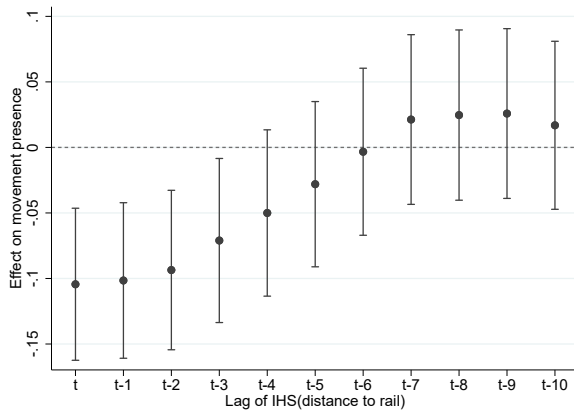
(b) Membership



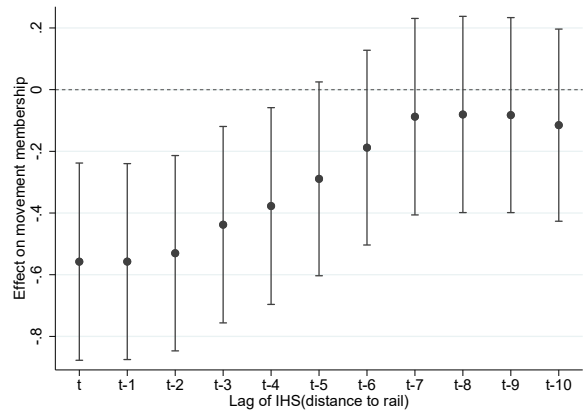
(c) Number of organisations

**Note:** OLS regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi^{\text{proximity band}} \text{Rail}_{i,t-1}^{\text{proximity band}} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . That is, each figure reports estimates of a single regression, where a social movement outcome is regressed on a set of indicators for railway being present within the given proximity bands. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Figure (a): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Figure (b): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Figure (c): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. All regressions control for an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881), geographical characteristics (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation)) and demographic characteristics in the baseline 1880 census (adult population, average age, share married individuals, share females, share employed, and employment shares in 10 major ISCO groups) interacted with year fixed effects.

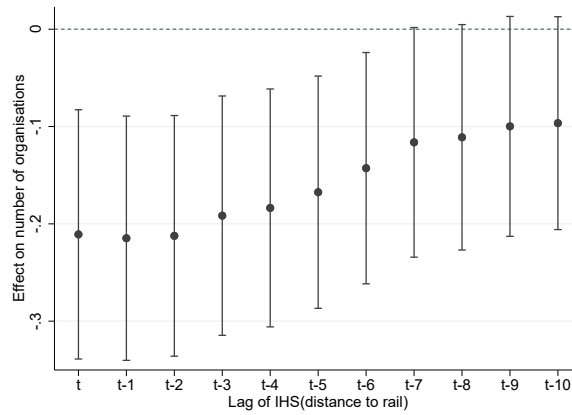
Figure C5: Alternative lags of distance to railway



(a) Movement presence



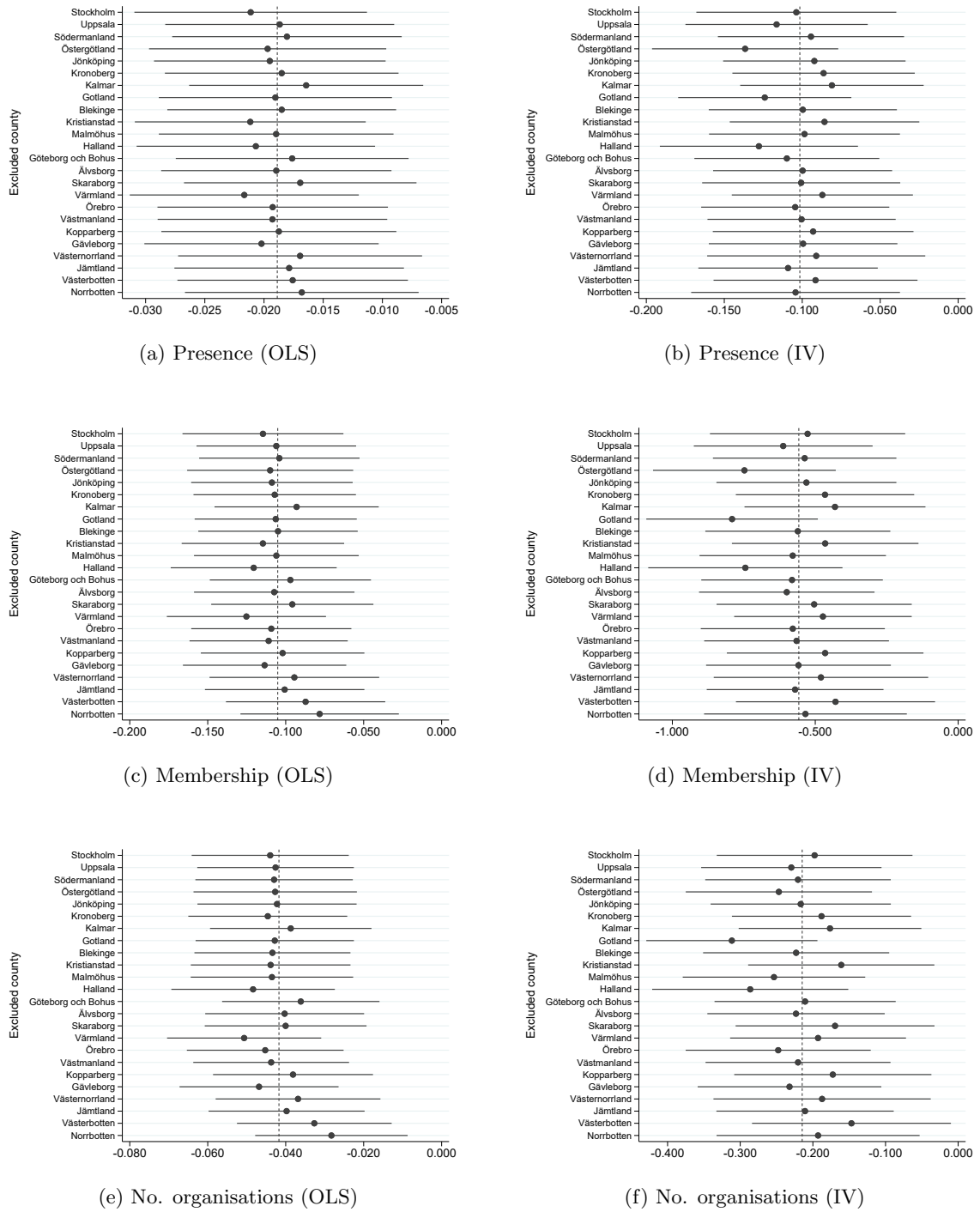
(b) Membership



(c) Number of organisations

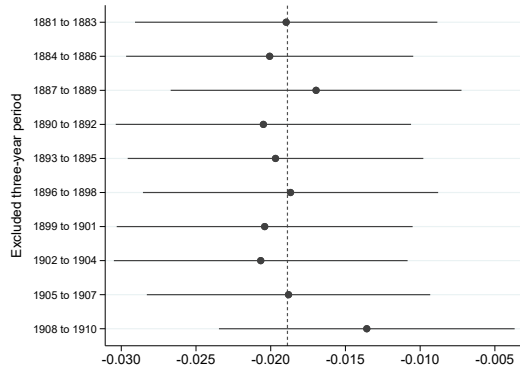
**Note:** IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{RailDist}_{i,t-\ell} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ , where  $\ell \in \{0, 10\}$  represents different lags of the RailDist variable. Each coefficient is from a separate regression. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Figure (a): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Figure (b): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Figure (c): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. All regressions control for an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) and geographical characteristics (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation)) interacted with year fixed effects.

Figure C6: Robustness to excluding counties in turn

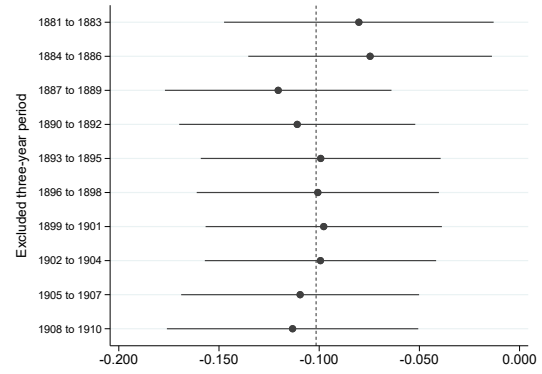


**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{RailDist}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Each coefficient estimate is from a separate regression where one county is left out (as indicated on the vertical axis). The vertical dashed line indicates the baseline coefficient from the unrestricted regression. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panels (a) and (b): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panels (c) and (d): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panels (e) and (f): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. All regressions control for an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects and geographical characteristics (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation)) interacted with year fixed effects.

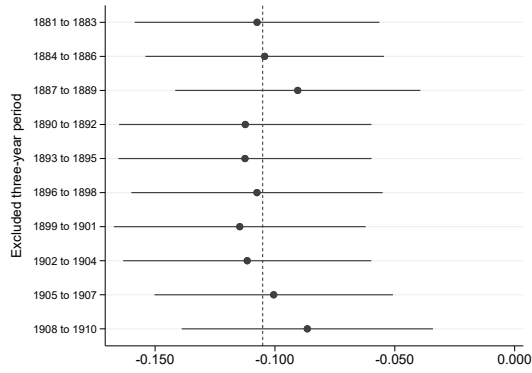
Figure C7: Robustness to excluding three-year periods in turn



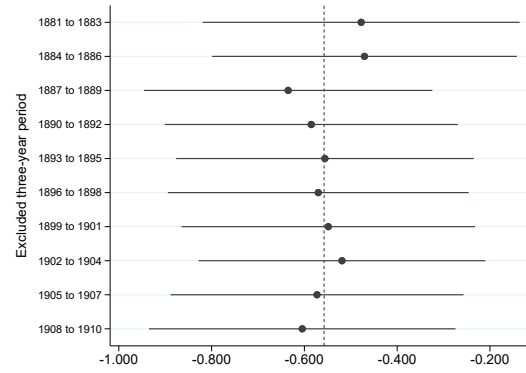
(a) Presence (OLS)



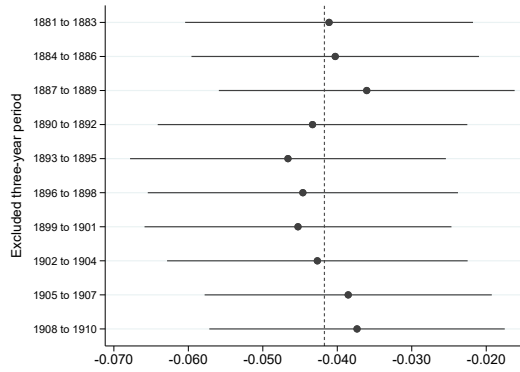
(b) Presence (IV)



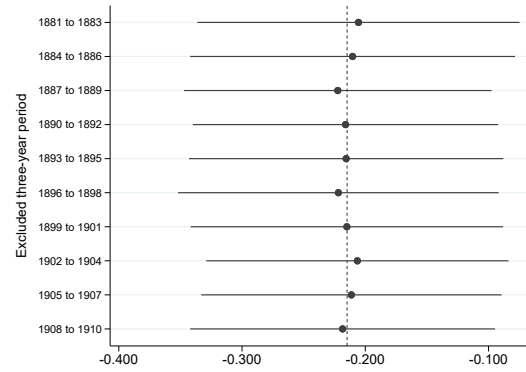
(c) Membership (OLS)



(d) Membership (IV)



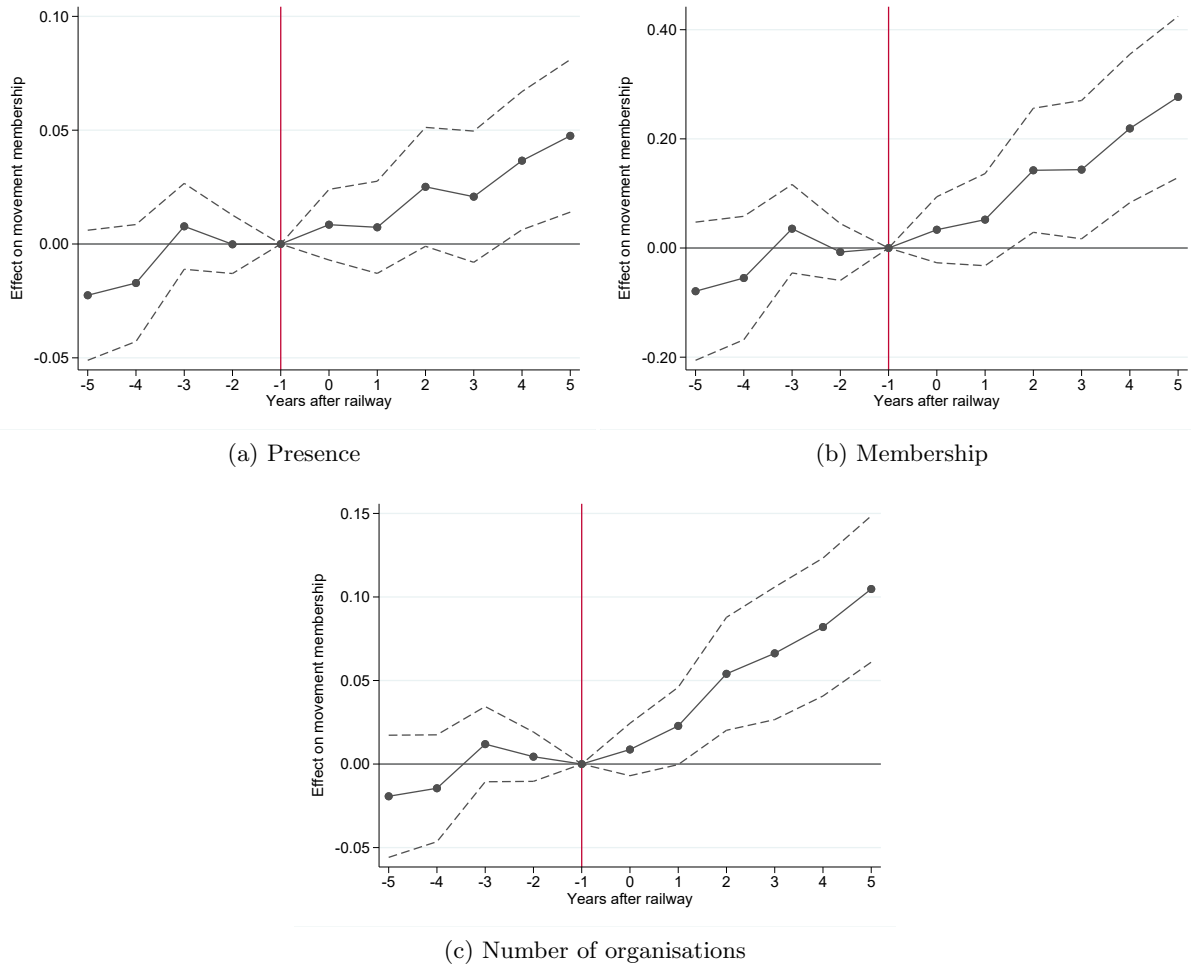
(e) No. organisations (OLS)



(f) No. organisations (IV)

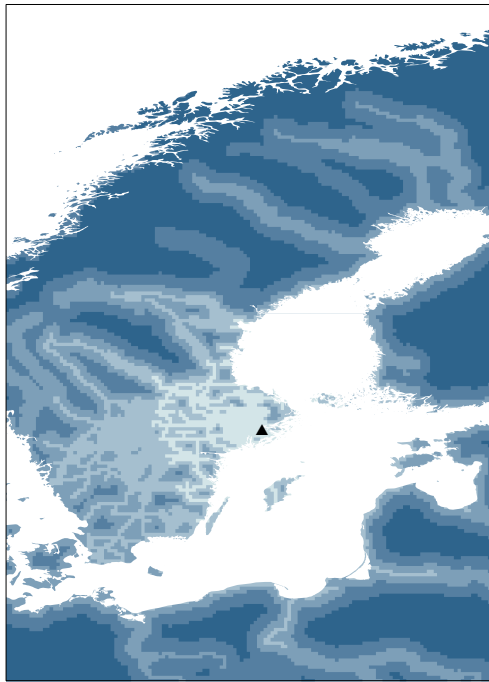
**Note:** OLS and IV regressions of the form:  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \phi \text{RailDist}_{i,t-1} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Each coefficient estimate is from a separate regression where one three-year period is left out (as indicated on the vertical axis). The vertical dashed line indicates the baseline coefficient from the unrestricted regression. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panels (a) and (b): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panels (c) and (d): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panels (e) and (f): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. All regressions control for an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects and geographical characteristics (distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation)) interacted with year fixed effects.

Figure C8: Event study: robustness to dynamic and heterogeneous treatment effects

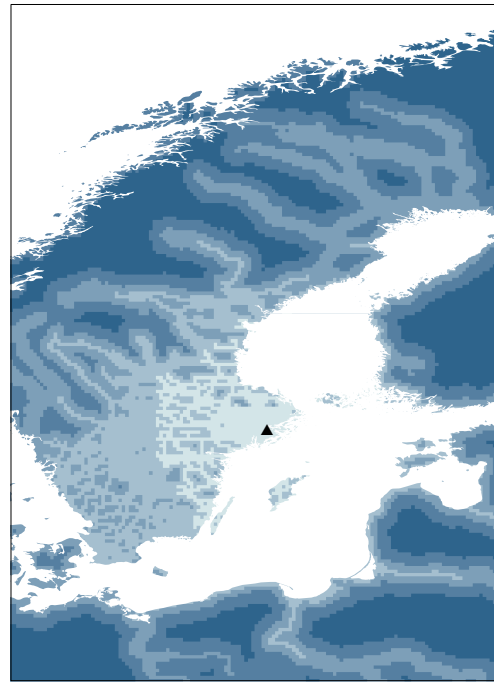


**Note:** Event study regressions of the form  $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_{\tau=-5+}^{5+} \eta_{\tau} \text{Rail}_{it} + X'_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ . Dependent variables are defined as follows. Panel (a): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Panel (b): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Panel (c): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown. The sample includes all parishes not already within 10 kilometres of the railway in 1881 (the start of the sample period).  $\text{Rail}_{it}$  is an indicator equal to one in the year in which parish  $i$  experienced the greatest reduction in distance to the railway. All regressions include controls for initial social movement presence and geographical controls. Initial social movement presence is an indicator for the presence of any social movement in the first sample year (1881) interacted with year fixed effects. Geographical characteristics are: distance to the capital (Stockholm), distance to nodal towns, distance to coast, elevation (all transformed using an inverse hyperbolic sine transformation) interacted with year fixed effects. Estimated using the `did_multiplegt` package provided by de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfœuille (2020, 2023).

Figure C9: Least costs to Stockholm over time



(a) Least costs, 1881

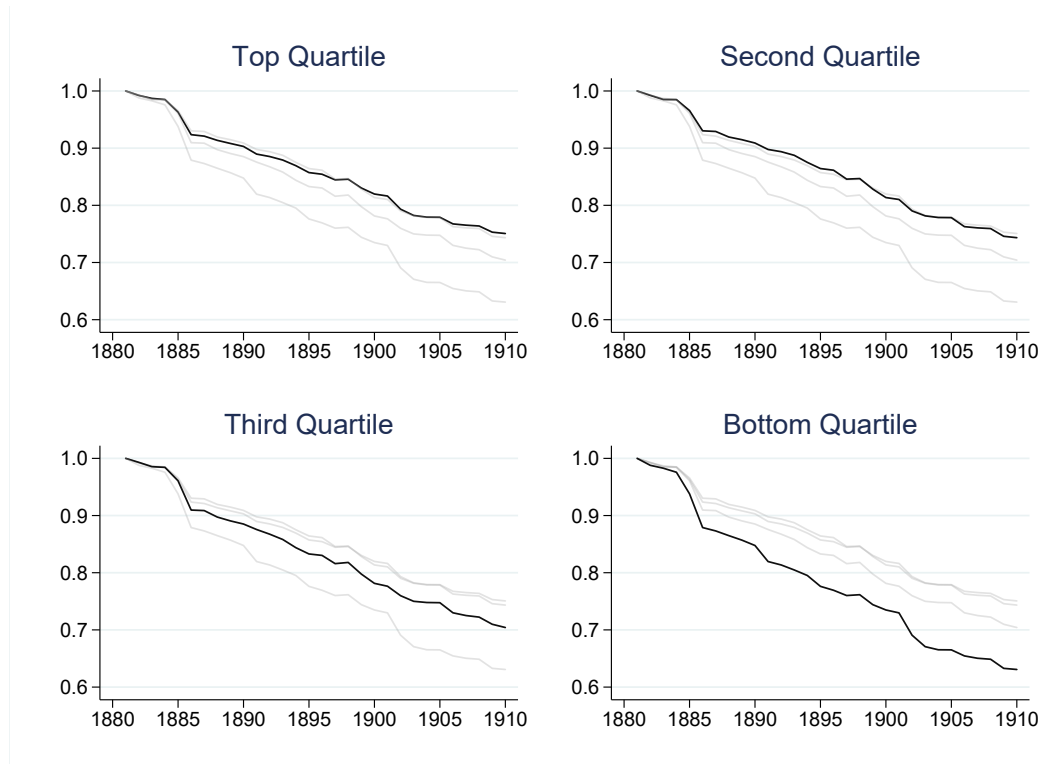


(b) Least costs, 1910

**Note:** Maps showing least costs to Stockholm at the start (1881) and end (1910) of the sample period. Logarithmic scale: a darker colour is twice as costly as the nearest lighter colour. See text and Appendix A for details on the construction of the least cost measures.

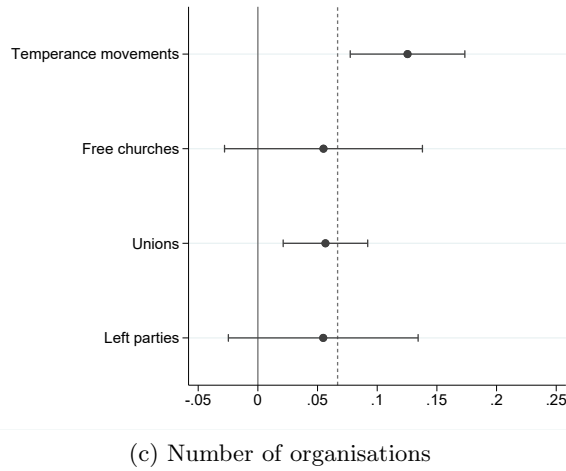
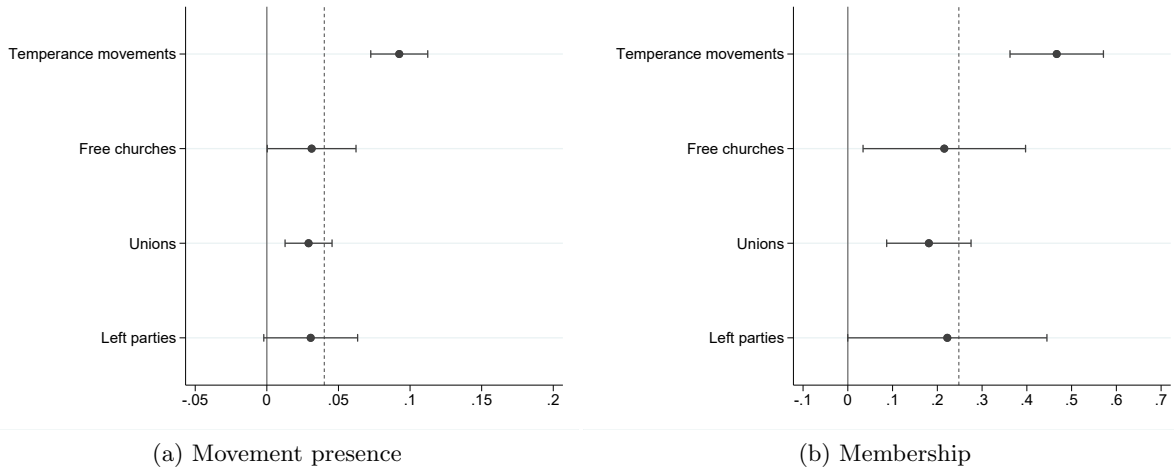


Figure C10: Least cost reductions over time



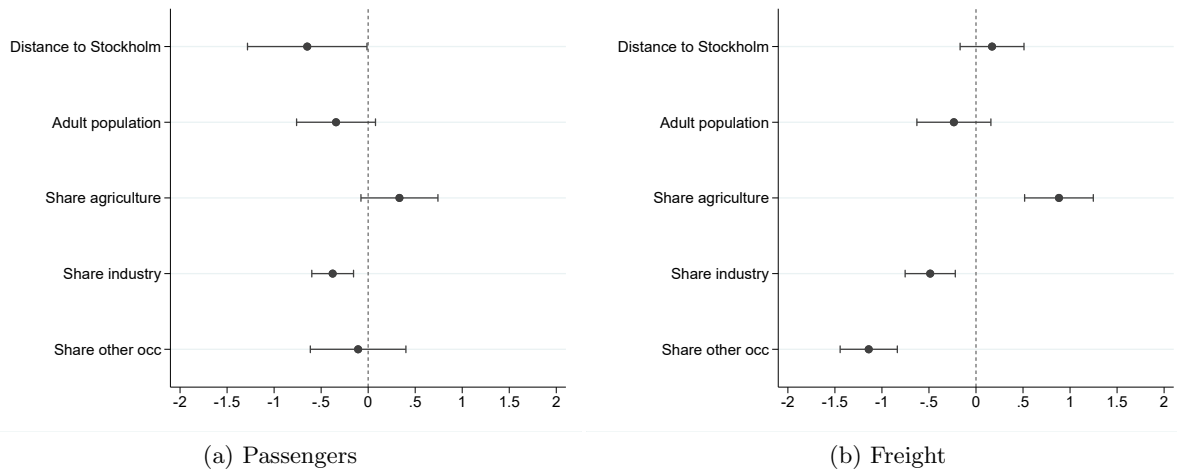
**Note:** Graphs showing the reductions in average least costs over time in relation to initial average least cost (cost normalised to 1 in 1881). Parishes split according to initial cost as of 1881: the top quartile contains parishes with the lowest average cost (that is, the best-connected parishes), the second quartile those with the second lowest average cost, and so on.

Figure C11: Heterogeneity of market access effects across movement types



**Note:** OLS regressions of the form:  $Y_{imt} = \alpha_{it} + \gamma_{mt} + \psi_{im} + \kappa^m \text{MarketAccess}_{i,m,t-1} + \epsilon_{imt}$ .  $\text{MarketAccess}_{imt}$  is a movement-specific market access measure for movement  $m$  in parish  $i$  in year  $t$ , where  $\text{MarketAccess}_{imt} = \sum_{j \neq i} \text{Cost}_{ijt}^{-1} \times \text{Membersip}_{m,jt}$  and  $\text{Cost}_{ijt}$  is the least-cost between parishes  $i$  and  $j$  in year  $t$ . A separate parameter  $\kappa^m$  is estimated for each movement type, in a single regression, and these are reported in each figure. The dashed line indicates the average  $\kappa$  across all movements. Dependent variables are defined as follows. Figure (a): indicator equal to 1 if any movement organisation is present in the parish. Figure (b): inverse hyperbolic sine of total movement membership. Figure (c): inverse hyperbolic sine of number of organisations. Standard errors two-way clustered by parish and movement type; 90 percent confidence intervals shown.

Figure C12: Predictors of passenger- and freight-specialised stations



**Note:** Cross-sectional bivariate regressions of the form:  $X_i = \alpha + \beta \mathbf{1}\{\text{Type-specialisation}\}_i + \epsilon_i$ .  $X_i$  is a standardised covariate (distance to Stockholm, adult population, or occupation shares).  $\mathbf{1}\{\text{Type-specialisation}\}_i$  are indicators for whether railway stations in parish  $i$  are specialised in either passenger (Figure (a)) or freight arrivals (Figure (b)). For passenger arrivals, the specialisation indicator switches on for parishes who have above-median average passenger arrivals but below median average freight arrivals over the sample period (1881-1910). Conversely for freight specialisation. Standard errors clustered by parish; 90 percent confidence intervals shown.