Appendix to

Local News Reporting and Mass Attitudes on Infrastructure Investment

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Table A.1.1: Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted, Dam Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative	−0.095***	0.062***	0.078***	0.065***	0.062**
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Event-Oriented	−0.072***	0.053***	0.063***	0.053**	0.030
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Combined	−0.073***	0.077***	0.075***	0.061**	0.076***
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.063*	−0.017	−0.040	0.0003	0.019
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.033)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.058	0.133***	0.037	0.020	0.007
	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.022)	(0.031)	(0.033)
News Consumption	0.001	0.009**	0.004	0.0002	0.012**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Party ID	−0.007	−0.011**	−0.002	−0.011*	−0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ideology	0.026***	−0.004	−0.015***	−0.004	−0.019**
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Registered	0.003	0.027	0.012	0.016	0.048*
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Age	−0.004***	0.002***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	(0.0005)	(0.0004)
Education	−0.002	0.014**	0.008*	0.010	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Male	0.016	−0.002	−0.009	−0.004	−0.006
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Nonwhite	−0.003	−0.064***	−0.031**	−0.041**	−0.026
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Homeowner	0.019	0.005	−0.007	−0.018	−0.042**
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.016)
Income	−0.001	0.004	0.003	0.005	0.007
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Constant	0.500***	0.366***	0.433***	0.411***	0.398***
	(0.037)	(0.033)	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.038)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	1,589	1,589	1,589	1,586	1,588
R^2	0.096	0.157	0.141	0.088	0.113
Adjusted R^2	0.087	0.149	0.133	0.079	0.105

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors. Estimates are plotted in Figure 2.

Table A.1.2: Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted, Sewer Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative	−0.087***	0.065***	0.076***	0.082***	0.063***
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Event-Oriented	−0.073***	0.045**	0.059***	0.068***	0.040*
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Combined	−0.084***	0.030	0.057***	0.052**	0.050**
	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.061	−0.018	−0.039	−0.054	0.022
	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.022)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.088**	0.119***	0.015	−0.026	0.031
	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.022)	(0.032)	(0.032)
News Consumption	−0.007*	0.004	0.005*	0.011**	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Party ID	−0.004	−0.009**	−0.002	−0.003	−0.009*
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ideology	0.015**	−0.014**	−0.015***	−0.009	−0.017**
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Registered	−0.020	0.051**	0.036*	0.018	0.016
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Age	−0.004***	0.002***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Education	0.006	0.012**	0.003	0.002	0.004
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Male	0.015	0.020	0.003	0.021	0.020
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Nonwhite	0.028	−0.032*	−0.030**	−0.018	−0.029
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Homeowner	0.045**	−0.015	−0.030**	−0.042**	−0.036*
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Income	−0.005	0.013***	0.009**	0.009*	0.007
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Constant	0.486***	0.392***	0.454***	0.418***	0.532***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.037)
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001					
Observations	1,714	1,713	1,713	1,711	1,712
R^2	0.089	0.144	0.131	0.079	0.082
Adjusted R^2	0.081	0.137	0.124	0.071	0.074

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors. Estimates are plotted in Figure 2.

Table A.1.3: Interacted Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative*Dam	−0.005	−0.002	0.002	−0.019	−0.002
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Event-Oriented*Dam	0.003	0.008	0.003	−0.017	−0.010
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Combined*Dam	0.012	0.050*	0.019	0.011	0.025
	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Investigative	−0.088***	0.064***	0.076***	0.084***	0.063***
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Event-Oriented	−0.074***	0.044**	0.059***	0.069***	0.040*
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Combined	−0.084***	0.028	0.056***	0.051**	0.050**
	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Dam	0.016	−0.039*	−0.028*	−0.006	−0.038*
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.061**	−0.018	−0.039*	−0.027	0.020
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.074***	0.124***	0.025	−0.004	0.020
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.023)	(0.023)
News Consumption	−0.003	0.006**	0.005**	0.005*	0.007**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Party ID	−0.006	−0.010***	−0.002	−0.007*	−0.007*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Ideology	0.020***	−0.009**	−0.015***	−0.007	−0.018***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Registered	−0.009	0.040**	0.024*	0.018	0.032*
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Age	−0.004***	0.002***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Education	0.002	0.013***	0.005*	0.006	0.006
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Male	0.016	0.010	−0.003	0.009	0.009
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Nonwhite	0.014	−0.047***	−0.031***	−0.029**	−0.028**
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Homeowner	0.033**	−0.004	−0.019*	−0.031**	−0.038***
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Income	−0.003	0.009**	0.006**	0.007*	0.007*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Constant	0.484***	0.399***	0.458***	0.417***	0.489***
	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.028)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	3,303	3,302	3,302	3,297	3,300
R^2	0.090	0.149	0.136	0.079	0.098
Adjusted R^2	0.085	0.144	0.131	0.073	0.093

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors. Estimates are plotted in Figure 4.

A.2 Regression Tables (Unadjusted)

Table A.2.1: Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Unadjusted, Dam Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative	−0.089***	0.068***	0.078***	0.067***	0.066***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Event-Oriented	−0.076***	0.061***	0.068***	0.061***	0.039*
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Combined	−0.073***	0.083***	0.078***	0.067***	0.078***
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Constant	0.457***	0.571***	0.557***	0.556***	0.604***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	1,592	1,592	1,592	1,588	1,590
R^2	0.017	0.016	0.026	0.011	0.011
Adjusted R^2	0.016	0.014	0.024	0.009	0.009

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors.

Table A.2.2: Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Unadjusted, Sewer Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative	−0.083***	0.054**	0.068***	0.076***	0.054**
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Event-Oriented	−0.071***	0.042*	0.056***	0.068***	0.037*
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Combined	−0.072***	0.024	0.048**	0.041*	0.042*
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Constant	0.440***	0.614***	0.588***	0.567***	0.646***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	1,718	1,717	1,717	1,715	1,716
R^2	0.014	0.006	0.015	0.011	0.005
Adjusted R^2	0.012	0.005	0.013	0.009	0.004

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors.

Table A.2.3: Interacted Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Unadjusted)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative*Dam	−0.006	0.014	0.011	−0.008	0.012
	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Event-Oriented*Dam	−0.005	0.019	0.012	−0.007	0.002
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.026)	(0.027)
Combined*Dam	−0.0004	0.059*	0.030	0.026	0.036
	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Investigative	−0.083***	0.054**	0.068***	0.076***	0.054**
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Event-Oriented	−0.071***	0.042*	0.056***	0.068***	0.037*
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Combined	−0.072***	0.024	0.048**	0.041*	0.042*
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Dam	0.017	−0.043*	−0.031*	−0.011	−0.042*
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Constant	0.440***	0.614***	0.588***	0.567***	0.646***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	3,310	3,309	3,309	3,303	3,306
R^2	0.016	0.013	0.022	0.011	0.011
Adjusted R^2	0.014	0.010	0.020	0.009	0.009

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors.

A.3 Tables of Means

Table A.3.1: Outcome Means by Experimental Condition (Dam Scenario)

	Outcome variable:			
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Control Mean	0.457	0.571	0.556	0.604
(Standard Error)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Investigative Mean	0.368	0.639	0.623	0.670
(Standard Error)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.015)
Event-Oriented Mean	0.382	0.633	0.617	0.644
(Standard Error)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Combined Mean	0.384	0.654	0.622	0.683
(Standard Error)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.015)

Note: Data from 1,592 subjects assigned to dam scenario. Means are plotted in Figure 3.

Table A.3.2: Outcome Means by Experimental Condition (Sewer Scenario)

	Outcome variable:			
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Control Mean	0.440	0.614	0.567	0.646
(Standard Error)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Investigative Mean	0.357	0.668	0.642	0.700
(Standard Error)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Event-Oriented Mean	0.369	0.656	0.634	0.683
(Standard Error)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Combined Mean	0.367	0.638	0.607	0.688
(Standard Error)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)

Note: Data from 1,718 subjects assigned to sewer scenario. Means are plotted in Figure 3.

A.4 Linear Combination Tests

Table A.4.1: Linear Combination Tests on Combined Treatment vs. Investigative or Event-Oriented Treatment

Scenario	Outcome	Null Hypothesis	Diff.	Residual	DF	χ^2	$Pr > \chi^2$
Dam	Incumbent Favor	Combined = Investigative	0.022	1,573	1	1.292	0.256
Dam	Incumbent Favor	Combined = Event-Oriented	−0.001	1,573	1	0.001	0.976
Dam	Challenger Favor	Combined = Investigative	0.015	1,573	1	0.776	0.378
Dam	Challenger Favor	Combined = Event-Oriented	0.024	1,573	1	2.049	0.152
Dam	Net Favor	Combined = Investigative	−0.003	1,573	1	0.057	0.812
Dam	Net Favor	Combined = Event-Oriented	0.012	1,573	1	0.758	0.384
Dam	Support Challenger	Combined = Investigative	−0.004	1,570	1	0.039	0.844
Dam	Support Challenger	Combined = Event-Oriented	0.008	1,570	1	0.167	0.683
Dam	Support Bond	Combined = Investigative	0.014	1,572	1	0.487	0.485
Dam	Support Bond	Combined = Event-Oriented	0.046	1,572	1	5.470	0.019*
Sewer	Incumbent Favor	Combined = Investigative	0.003	1,698	1	0.019	0.890
Sewer	Incumbent Favor	Combined = Event-Oriented	−0.011	1,698	1	0.333	0.564
Sewer	Challenger Favor	Combined = Investigative	−0.035	1,697	1	4.757	0.029*
Sewer	Challenger Favor	Combined = Event-Oriented	−0.015	1,697	1	0.866	0.352
Sewer	Net Favor	Combined = Investigative	−0.019	1,697	1	1.952	0.162
Sewer	Net Favor	Combined = Event-Oriented	−0.002	1,697	1	0.031	0.860
Sewer	Support Challenger	Combined = Investigative	−0.030	1,695	1	2.632	0.105
Sewer	Support Challenger	Combined = Event-Oriented	−0.016	1,695	1	0.784	0.376
Sewer	Support Bond	Combined = Investigative	−0.013	1,696	1	0.518	0.472
Sewer	Support Bond	Combined = Event-Oriented	0.010	1,696	1	0.296	0.587

Note: Diff. refers to coefficient on combined minus coefficient on alternate.   *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table A.4.2: Linear Combination Tests on Investigative vs. Event-Oriented Treatment

Scenario	Outcome	Null Hypothesis	Diff.	Residual	DF	χ^2	$Pr > \chi^2$
Dam	Incumbent Favor	Investigative = Event-Oriented	−0.023	1,573	1	1.519	0.218
Dam	Challenger Favor	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.009	1,573	1	0.267	0.606
Dam	Net Favor	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.015	1,573	1	1.285	0.257
Dam	Support Challenger	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.012	1,570	1	0.412	0.521
Dam	Support Bond	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.032	1,572	1	2.865	0.091
Sewer	Incumbent Favor	Investigative = Event-Oriented	−0.014	1,698	1	0.563	0.453
Sewer	Challenger Favor	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.020	1,697	1	1.684	0.195
Sewer	Net Favor	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.017	1,697	1	1.648	0.199
Sewer	Support Challenger	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.014	1,695	1	0.595	0.440
Sewer	Support Bond	Investigative = Event-Oriented	0.023	1,696	1	1.696	0.193

Note: Diff. refers to coefficient on investigative minus coefficient on event-oriented.   *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

A.5 Binarized Vote Outcomes

Table A.5.1: Binarized Vote Outcomes by Experimental Condition

	Outcome variable:			
	Challenger Vote	Bond Vote	Challenger Vote	Bond Vote
	(Dam)	(Dam)	(Sewer)	(Sewer)
Investigative	0.075*	0.081**	0.112***	0.039
	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.028)
Event-Oriented	0.095**	0.032	0.118***	0.024
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.029)
Combined	0.075*	0.081**	0.063	0.013
	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.030)
Constant	0.605***	0.700***	0.611***	0.761***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.021)
Observations	1,588	1,590	1,715	1,716
R^2	0.006	0.006	0.010	0.001
Adjusted R^2	0.004	0.004	0.009	−0.001

Note: Vote outcome variables are binarized, taking the value 1 (0) if support for challenger is more (less) likely than support for incumbent, or supporting the the bond is more (less) likely than opposing the bond. This analysis was not preregistered.

A.6 Tests for Heterogeneous Effects

Table A.6.1: Partisan Heterogeneous Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted, Dam Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative*Republican	−0.003	0.045	0.024	−0.012	0.060
	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.041)	(0.043)
Event-Oriented*Republican	−0.021	−0.011	0.005	0.022	0.027
	(0.039)	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.040)	(0.041)
Combined*Republican	0.033	−0.039	−0.036	−0.004	−0.010
	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.031)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Investigative	−0.098***	0.064**	0.081***	0.081**	0.062*
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Event-Oriented	−0.066**	0.064**	0.065***	0.053*	0.038
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Combined	−0.088***	0.099***	0.094***	0.061*	0.096***
	(0.026)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.027)	(0.028)
Republican	−0.024	−0.037	−0.007	−0.058	−0.024
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.088**	−0.013	−0.051*	−0.027	0.014
	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.067*	0.117***	0.025	0.030	−0.004
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.034)	(0.035)
News Consumption	−0.001	0.011**	0.006	0.001	0.011*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ideology	0.025***	−0.008	−0.017***	−0.005	−0.024***
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Registered	0.018	0.021	0.002	0.023	0.017
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Age	−0.004***	0.002***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	(0.0005)	(0.0005)
Education	−0.004	0.018***	0.011**	0.011*	0.007
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Male	0.022	−0.006	−0.014	−0.006	−0.023
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Nonwhite	0.004	−0.068***	−0.036**	−0.048**	−0.027
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Constant	0.476***	0.346***	0.435***	0.391***	0.457***
	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.031)	(0.045)	(0.044)
Observations	1,365	1,365	1,365	1,363	1,365
R^2	0.112	0.153	0.157	0.097	0.108
Adjusted R^2	0.102	0.143	0.147	0.086	0.097

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors. The interaction terms show the heterogeneity of treatment effects between Republican (including leaners) and Democrats (including leaners). True independents are excluded. This analysis was not preregistered.

Table A.6.2: Partisan Heterogeneous Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted, Sewer Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative*Republican	−0.084*	0.039	0.062*	0.132**	0.028
	(0.040)	(0.035)	(0.029)	(0.041)	(0.039)
Event-Oriented*Republican	−0.046	0.042	0.044	0.108**	0.026
	(0.039)	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.041)	(0.040)
Combined*Republican	−0.131**	0.028	0.080**	0.107*	0.006
	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.030)	(0.042)	(0.041)
Investigative	−0.057*	0.057*	0.056**	0.029	0.050*
	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.028)	(0.025)
Event-Oriented	−0.053*	0.040	0.046*	0.031	0.035
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.027)	(0.024)
Combined	−0.033	0.026	0.029	0.003	0.051*
	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.028)	(0.024)
Republican	0.058	−0.056*	−0.058**	−0.105**	−0.046
	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.033)	(0.031)
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.068*	−0.035	−0.051*	−0.064	−0.005
	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.035)	(0.034)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.103**	0.121***	0.009	−0.036	0.038
	(0.035)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.035)	(0.034)
News	−0.008*	0.007	0.007*	0.014***	0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ideology	0.015**	−0.017***	−0.016***	−0.007	−0.023***
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Registered	0.017	0.032	0.008	0.009	0.001
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.022)
Age	−0.004***	0.002***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.0005)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Education	0.007	0.016***	0.005	0.004	0.006
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Male	0.014	0.018	0.002	0.023	0.015
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Nonwhite	0.030	−0.034*	−0.032**	−0.006	−0.017
	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Constant	0.410***	0.422***	0.507***	0.441***	0.553***
	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.032)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Observations	1,463	1,462	1,462	1,462	1,463
R^2	0.103	0.127	0.135	0.087	0.084
Adjusted R^2	0.093	0.118	0.125	0.077	0.074

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors. The interaction terms show the heterogeneity of treatment effects between Republican (including leaners) and Democrats (including leaners). True independents are excluded. This analysis was not preregistered.

B: Survey Information

B.1 Study Details

The authors conducted a web survey, hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform, which was fielded from August 3rd to August 15th, 2022. The authors recruited a non-probability convenience sample of 3,370 US adults via Qualtrics Panels, using quota sampling to approximate the distributions of gender, race and ethnicity, and household income among American adults. The quota sampling constraints were as follows:

Male	48 %
Female	52 %
Non-binary	Natural fallout
White	75 %
Black	13 %
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander	6 %
Native American, Alaska Native, or other race or ethnicity	6 %
Hispanic or Latino	18 %
Non-Hispanic or Latino	82 %
Less than $50,000 annual household income	35 %
$50,000 to $99,999 annual household income	35 %
$100,000 or more annual household income	30 %

To be eligible to participate, respondents were required to provide informed consent, be at least 18 years of age, and reside in the United States. Of 5,177 potential subjects who began the survey, 258 did not consent to participate and 171 were ineligible to participate. A further 1,378 failed to complete the survey (defined as proceeding past the final demographic question; another 15 respondents did not complete a survey feedback question that followed, but are retained as completes). Finally, 60 respondents were dropped from the sample for failing at least two of the following quality checks:

- *Speeding:* respondent completed the survey in less than one third of the median time for all questions common to all treatment groups.

- *Age mismatch:* reported age did not match reported birth year, within a tolerance of plus or minus two years.

- *Residence mismatch:* reported zip code did not match reported state of residence.

- *Junk open-ended response:* respondent provided a non-sequitur, gibberish, or item non-response on a pre-treatment open-ended question about their favorite news source.

These exclusions provided a final sample of N = 3,310 for analysis. The observations are not weighted. As with all survey research, the design and collection of data has limitations, and resulting estimates may involve unmeasured error that limits representativeness to the target population (US adult general population). Participants were provided a completion incentive through Qualtrics Panels. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Duke University, protocol # 2022-0426. Preregistration materials for this study are available online at https://osf.io/hbpg9.

A total of 1,592 respondents in the analysis sample were treated with an article describing the dam scenario, and 1,718 respondents were treated with a sewer scenario article. We observe slight differential breakoff between the two assigned scenarios, but this differential breakoff occurs after outcome measurement, during a later section of the survey in which we fielded an unrelated second experiment (not reported here). Missing data are therefore primarily limited to demographic controls rather than outcome measures. Results are robust to estimating unadjusted effects while including the breakoffs for which we have outcome measurement.

B.2 Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of the final sample of N = 3,310 is as follows:

Male	47.9 %
Female	51.8 %
Non-binary	0.4 %
White	63.5 %
Black	12.9 %
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander	6.0 %
Native American or Alaska Native	2.1 %
Multi-racial or other race	2.6 %
Hispanic or Latino	18.1 %
Less than $50,000 annual household income	40.2 %
$50,000 to $99,999 annual household income	30.0 %
$100,000 or more annual household income	29.9 %
Less than a high school degree	2.1 %
High school degree or GED	21.2 %
Some college but no degree	20.9 %
Associate's degree	13.3 %
Bachelor's degree	28.5 %
Postgraduate degree 14.0 %	
Age (mean)	46.2
Homeowner	59.3 %
Non-homeowner	40.7 %
Democrat	40.7 %
Independent	31.3 %
Republican	28.0 %
Liberal	34.8 %
Moderate	35.4 %
Conservative	29.8 %

B.3 Balance Tests

Table B.3.1: Balance Tests in Dam Scenario

		Investigative:		Event-Oriented:		Combined:	
Variable	Control	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value
Age	46.804	-1.547	0.200	0.758	0.520	-0.257	0.839
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.526	-0.005	0.821	-0.020	0.325	-0.012	0.592
Campaign Interest (National)	0.532	-0.007	0.750	-0.022	0.285	-0.001	0.955
Education	3.857	0.044	0.659	0.074	0.445	0.087	0.401
Homeowner	0.621	-0.022	0.512	-0.022	0.515	-0.032	0.371
Ideology	3.890	-0.124	0.281	-0.123	0.280	-0.017	0.887
Income	3.095	0.080	0.542	0.173	0.166	0.068	0.609
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.614	0.013	0.527	-0.003	0.869	-0.016	0.450
Pol. Attention (National)	0.636	0.008	0.680	-0.014	0.463	-0.008	0.709
Male	0.426	0.038	0.273	0.076	0.027	0.020	0.568
News Consumption	5.300	0.124	0.409	0.103	0.493	-0.075	0.628
Nonwhite	0.419	-0.074	0.030	-0.064	0.058	-0.082	0.019
Party ID	3.674	-0.219	0.154	-0.193	0.200	-0.182	0.248
Registered	0.860	0.014	0.570	-0.007	0.779	-0.022	0.387

Note: Data from 1,592 respondents treated with the dam scenario. The table displays the mean value of each variable for the control group, and the mean difference from the control mean for each treatment group along with the p-value of a t-test comparing these means.

Table B.3.2: Balance Tests in Sewer Scenario

		Investigative:		Event-Oriented:		Combined:	
Variable	Control	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value
Age	46.980	-2.047	0.093	-0.981	0.431	-1.702	0.181
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.516	-0.012	0.563	-0.007	0.723	0.017	0.422
Campaign Interest (National)	0.532	-0.013	0.517	-0.017	0.408	0.008	0.705
Education	3.879	-0.154	0.114	-0.005	0.963	-0.027	0.788
Homeowner	0.584	-0.026	0.439	-0.002	0.951	0.034	0.325
Ideology	3.970	-0.021	0.854	-0.040	0.731	-0.019	0.877
Income	3.293	-0.331	0.006	-0.175	0.153	-0.160	0.204
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.607	-0.026	0.186	-0.012	0.524	0.027	0.172
Pol. Attention (National)	0.624	-0.007	0.720	0.000	0.986	0.051	0.010
Male	0.488	0.012	0.719	0.022	0.514	-0.006	0.867
News Consumption	5.172	0.124	0.402	0.190	0.197	0.142	0.348
Nonwhite	0.357	0.021	0.521	-0.010	0.751	0.016	0.640
Party ID	3.702	0.033	0.831	-0.055	0.720	0.058	0.715
Registered	0.874	0.002	0.939	-0.013	0.573	-0.010	0.672

Note: Data from 1,718 respondents treated with the sewer scenario. The table displays the mean value of each variable for the control group, and the mean difference from the control mean for each treatment group along with the p-value of a t-test comparing these means.

B.4 Vignettes

Our experiment involved a total of eight vignettes (eight in each infrastructure scenario) and included two control vignettes and six treatment vignettes. For each infrastructure scenario, one treatment vignette corresponded to the "investigative" treatment, one to the "event-oriented" treatment, and one to the "combined" treatment. The "combined" vignette included two versions which varied only whether the "investigative" or "event-oriented" elements appeared first in the article. The treatment vignettes varied slightly in length, but all were between 289 words and 372 words. In keeping with the minimalist information provided by stories published by resource-starved newspapers, the control vignettes were shorter, at 201 words (dam scenario) to 202 words (sewer scenario). All vignettes were written at a high-school reading level, and the language across the dam and sewer scenarios was designed to be as similar as possible—notwithstanding the core difference of catastrophic versus nuisance failure risk. Within each scenario, we used identical news copy wherever possible; the first sentence, second paragraph, and final two paragraphs are all identical across conditions (within scenario).

To prompt actual exposure to the assigned vignette, we asked each respondent to briefly summarize the key information from the news story in their own words, and we did not allow respondents to advance in the survey until they had spent a least 20 seconds on the page. While this is certainly not a typical component of information processing from news articles, it does help ensure that our (often professionalized) respondents actually read the treatments rather than simply clicking through to the next section of the survey. The median respondent in the dam scenario spent 128 seconds on their assigned vignette and summary question, while the median respondent in the sewer scenario respectively spent 115 seconds, or about two minutes in either scenario.

To test whether respondents were meaningfully exposed to the vignettes, we asked respondents (after the outcome questions) to identify the main problem with the infrastructure system they read about (correct response: "It's very old") from among four randomly-ordered multiple-choice options. Large majorities—79 percent of respondents assigned to the dam scenario and 75 percent of respondents assigned to the sewer scenario—answered the manipulation check correctly, indicating that exposure to our treatment was largely successful.

The following pages provide reproductions of all eight vignettes, including both versions of each "combined" treatment vignette.

Franklin city council election Tuesday, aging dam repair also on ballot

By James Westin
Published today at 11:34 a.m.

41

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the aging Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign.

Originally built in 1940, the old dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. The city's Public Works director once said the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls look like an old man's bushy eyebrows.

The proposed reconstruction on the ballot would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the dam, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend the dam's usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a danger."

Figure B.4.1 Dam Scenario Control

Gazette investigation reveals decades of neglect on aging dam

By James Westin

⤷   💬 41

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the aging Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign. A three-month investigation by Franklin Gazette reporters reveals that the dam poses a major safety risk for the city.

Originally built in 1940, the old dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. The city's Public Works director once said the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls look like an old man's bushy eyebrows.

But it isn't just appearance. State inspectors have also cited Franklin's dam as dangerous for over four decades, and the Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's own safety officials stretching back to at least 1992. Yet Franklin's city council has often delayed maintenance on the dam, voting down funding for structural repairs 13 times, according to city records.

A collapse of the Madison Pond Dam could be devastating. More than 1,200 homes are at risk of flooding in the event of dam failure, according to a 2017 state-issued report. The businesses along Franklin's historic downtown riverfront are also at risk.

The proposed reconstruction on the ballot would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the dam, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend the dam's usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a danger."

Figure B.4.2 Dam Scenario "Investigative Treatment"

Aging Franklin dam in spotlight after Arlington dam collapse

By James Westin
Published today at 11:34 a.m.

↪   💬 41

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the aging Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign. The debate has become all the more urgent after heavy rains last week caused the collapse of a dam in the neighboring town of Arlington, forcing thousands to evacuate.

Originally built in 1940, the old dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. The city's Public Works director once said the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls look like an old man's bushy eyebrows.

But it isn't just appearance. The now-collapsed dam in Arlington, located only a few miles away, was just as old. And last week, the rushing waters flooded more than 1,200 Arlington homes. The town's business district also suffered an estimated $80 million in economic damage.

Some worry that Franklin might suffer a similar tragedy if the Madison Pond Dam were to experience a failure. Franklin's city council has often delayed maintenance on the dam, voting down funding for structural repairs as recently as last year.

The proposed reconstruction on the ballot would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the dam, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend the dam's usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a danger."

Figure B.4.3 Dam Scenario "Event-Oriented" Treatment

Neglected Franklin dam in spotlight after Arlington dam collapse

By James Westin

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the aging Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign. A three-month investigation by Franklin Gazette reporters reveals that the dam poses a major safety risk for the city—a risk all the more urgent after heavy rains caused the collapse of a dam in the neighboring town of Arlington last week, forcing thousands to evacuate.

Originally built in 1940, the old dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. The city's Public Works director once said the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls look like an old man's bushy eyebrows.

But it isn't just appearance. State inspectors have also cited Franklin's dam as dangerous for over four decades, and the Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's own safety officials stretching back to at least 1992. Yet Franklin's city council has often delayed maintenance on the dam, voting down funding for structural repairs 13 times, according to city records.

Heavy rains just last week caused the collapse of another old dam, located only a few miles away in the neighboring town of Arlington. The rushing waters flooded more than 1,200 Arlington homes. The town's business district also suffered an estimated $80 million in economic damage. Some worry that Franklin might suffer a similar tragedy if the Madison Pond Dam were to experience a failure.

The proposed reconstruction on the ballot would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the dam, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend the dam's usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a danger."

Figure B.4.4 Dam Scenario "Combined" Treatment ("Investigative" First)

Neglected Franklin dam in spotlight after Arlington dam collapse

By James Westin

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

41

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the aging Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign. The debate has become all the more urgent after heavy rains caused the collapse of a dam in the neighboring town of Arlington last week, forcing thousands to evacuate. A three-month investigation by Franklin Gazette reporters reveals that Franklin's own dam poses a major safety risk for the city.

Originally built in 1940, the old dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. The city's Public Works director once said the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls look like an old man's bushy eyebrows.

But it isn't just appearance. The now-collapsed dam in Arlington, located only a few miles away, was just as old. And last week, the rushing waters flooded more than 1,200 Arlington homes. The town's business district also suffered an estimated $80 million in economic damage. Some worry that Franklin might suffer a similar tragedy if the Madison Pond Dam were to experience a failure.

In fact, state inspectors have cited Franklin's dam as dangerous for over four decades, and the Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's own safety officials stretching back to at least 1992. Yet Franklin's city council has often delayed maintenance on the dam, voting down funding for structural repairs 13 times, according to city records.

The proposed reconstruction on the ballot would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the dam, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend the dam's usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a danger."

Figure B.4.5 Dam Scenario "Combined" Treatment ("Event-Oriented" First)

Franklin city council election Tuesday, aging sewers repair also on ballot

By James Westin

41

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign.

Originally laid in 1940, the sewer pipes that run beneath the streets of Franklin's historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods are now well past their expected lifespan. The city's Public Works director once joked that many are leakier than an over-filled jelly donut.

The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the sewer upgrade, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend our sewers' usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a constant problem."

Figure B.4.6 Sewer Scenario Control

Gazette investigation reveals decades of neglect on aging sewer system

By James Westin

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

41

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign. A three-month investigation by Franklin Gazette reporters reveals that state inspectors have warned about corroding pipes, failing pumps, and faulty valves for decades.

Originally laid in 1940, the sewer pipes that run beneath the streets of Franklin's historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods are now well past their expected lifespan. The city's Public Works director once joked that many are leakier than an over-filled jelly donut.

The Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent warnings and pleas from city officials stretching back to at least 2002. Yet Franklin's city council has often delayed sewer maintenance, voting down new funding for major repairs 13 times, according to city records.

Burst pipes could be a nightmare for nearby residents. Sewage overflows can block roadways, seep into lawns, and even flood right up to front doors. In summer the smell would linger for weeks, and spilled wastewater poses a major public health risk. Officials warn that pipe breaks will soon become a regular occurrence.

The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the sewer upgrade, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend our sewers' usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a constant problem."

Figure B.4.7 Sewer Scenario "Investigative Treatment"

Aging sewer system in spotlight after sewage overflows

By James Westin

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

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With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign. Last week, a burst pipe became a "nightmare" reality for residents of Eagle Street in the Westview neighborhood.

Originally laid in 1940, the sewer pipes that run beneath the streets of Franklin's historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods are now well past their expected lifespan. The city's Public Works director once joked that many are leakier than an over-filled jelly doughnut.

On Eagle Street, raw sewage poured out to block the roadway, seeped into lawns, and even flooded right up to the front doors of several homes. Officials warn that the spill poses a major public health risk.

Many Franklin residents are starting to worry about the sewer pipes beneath their own streets. Franklin's city council has often delayed sewer maintenance, voting down new funding for major repairs 13 times, according to city records.

The proposed reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the sewer upgrade, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend our sewers' usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a constant problem."

Figure B.4.8 Sewer Scenario "Event-Oriented" Treatment

Neglected sewer system in spotlight after sewage overflows

By James Westin

Published today at 11:34 a.m.

↪ 💬 41

With Franklin's city elections now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign. A three-month investigation by Franklin Gazette reporters reveals that state inspectors have warned about corroding pipes, failing pumps, and faulty valves for decades—a problem all the more apparent after a burst pipe became a "nightmare" reality last week for residents of Eagle Street in the Westview neighborhood.

Originally laid in 1940, the sewer pipes that run beneath the streets of Franklin's historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods are now well past their expected lifespan. The city's Public Works director once joked that many are leakier than an over-filled jelly donut.

The Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent warnings and pleas from city officials stretching back to at least 2002. Yet Franklin's city council has often delayed sewer maintenance, voting down new funding for major repairs 13 times, according to city records.

On Eagle Street, raw sewage poured out to block the roadway, seeped into lawns, and even flooded right up to the front doors of several homes. Officials warn that the spill poses a major public health risk. Many Franklin residents are starting to worry about the sewer pipes beneath their own streets.

The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

In the hotly-contested race for mayor, four-term incumbent Mayor David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the funding for the sewer upgrade, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "routine maintenance can extend our sewers' usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a constant problem."

Figure B.4.9 Sewer Scenario "Combined" Treatment ("Investigative" First)

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Published today at 11:34 a.m.

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Figure B.4.10 Sewer Scenario "Combined" Treatment ("Event-Oriented" First)

B.5 Survey Questionnaire

Consent and Screening

Key Information
Protocol ID #: 2022-0426
Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey by researchers at Duke University. To better understand how people respond to news, this research study will ask you to answer a series of questions about you and your opinions about topics in the news. We think that the survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. As specified by the online research company that invited you to participate in this survey, you will receive an incentive for your participation. You may withdraw at any time and you may refuse to answer any question, but you must proceed to the final screen of the survey in order to receive payment. The research will not benefit you personally. We know of no risks resulting from participating in the study. Your participation is voluntary. We do not ask for your name or any other information that might identify you. Although collected data may be made public or used for future research purposes, your identity will always remain confidential. If you have any questions about the research please contact the researchers at [contact information]. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, contact Duke University's Campus Institutional Review Board at [contact information]. If writing to the Campus IRB, please reference protocol ID #2022-0426.
- I consent to participate, begin the study.
- I do NOT consent.

We first have a few questions to confirm your eligibility for the survey.

What is your age? Please enter a whole number.
- (Text entry)

In which state do you currently reside?
- I do not reside in the United States
- Alabama
- ...
- Wyoming

Background

Thank you. You have qualified for the survey. We want to begin by asking you some questions about topics in the news.
During a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on TV, radio, printed newspapers, the Internet, or social media, not including sports?
- 0 days
- 1 day
- ...
- 7 days

Politics can be fast-paced, and many people do not follow every new story. How often do you pay attention to what's going on in <u>national</u> politics?
- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

How often do you pay attention to what's going on in politics in your <u>home town and state</u>?
- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns, while others follow campaigns closely. How about you? Generally speaking, how interested are you in <u>national</u> political campaigns?

- Not at all interested
- Slightly interested
- Moderately interested
- Very interested
- Extremely interested

Generally speaking, how interested are you in political campaigns in your <u>home town and state</u>?
- Not at all interested
- Slightly interested
- Moderately interested
- Very interested
- Extremely interested

What is your favorite source of news?
- (Text entry)

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?
- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party (please specify)

[If Democrat] Would you call yourself a strong Democrat, or a not very strong Democrat?
- Strong
- Not very strong

[If Republican] Would you call yourself a strong Republican, or a not very strong Republican?
- Strong
- Not very strong

[If Neither] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?
- Closer to the Democratic Party
- Closer to the Republican Party
- Neither

Where would you place yourself on this scale?
- Extremely liberal
- Mostly liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Mostly conservative
- Extremely conservative

Are you registered to vote?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

<center>*Treatment*</center>

On the next page, we'll show you an article from the *Franklin Gazette*, the local newspaper of a fictitious city of roughly 200,000 people located in the United States.

We want to know what people learn from articles like these. You will be asked to briefly summarize the information presented in your own words. Before you write your summary, please read the article carefully and reflect on the information presented. To make sure you have enough time to read and write your summary, the "proceed" button will not appear until you have been on the page for at least 20 seconds.

[Assigned Vignette (see Appendix B.4 for vignette text)]

In your own words, how would you briefly summarize the key information from this news story?
- (Text entry)

Post-treatment

Next, we want to ask you a few questions about your reaction to the news story you just read.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of David Garfield, the incumbent Franklin mayoral candidate who opposes the infrastructure bond?
- Completely favorable
- Moderately favorable
- Slightly favorable
- Neither favorable nor unfavorable
- Slightly unfavorable
- Moderately unfavorable
- Completely unfavorable

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Ben Fontaine, the challenger for the Franklin mayoral seat who supports the infrastructure bond?
- Completely favorable
- Moderately favorable
- Slightly favorable
- Neither favorable nor unfavorable
- Slightly unfavorable
- Moderately unfavorable
- Completely unfavorable

Considering what you know of these two candidates, which would you be most likely to support if you were to vote in the election today?
- Certain to vote for Garfield
- Very likely to vote for Garfield
- Somewhat likely to vote for Garfield
- Somewhat likely to vote for Fontaine
- Very likely to vote for Fontaine
- Certain to vote for Fontaine

If you were to vote in Franklin's election today, how would you likely vote on the proposed municipal bond measure? The ballot question reads as follows: *"Shall the issuance of bonds in the amount of $2,617,000 for [dam / sewer] improvements, and the levying of a tax in payment thereof, be approved?"*
- Certain to vote in favor
- Very likely to vote in favor
- Somewhat likely to vote in favor
- Somewhat likely to vote against
- Very likely to vote against
- Certain to vote against

[If dam scenario:] According to the story you read earlier, what's the main problem with the Madison Pond Dam?
- It's very old
- It's too small
- It's noisy for nearby residents
- It's preventing salmon from swimming upriver

[If dam scenario:] According to the story you read earlier, what's the main problem with Franklin's sewer system?
- It's very old
- It's incomplete
- It's infested with rats
- It's contaminating the local river

Finally, we have a few background questions for statistical purposes.

In what year were you born? Please enter a 4-digit number.
- (Text entry)

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
- Less than a high school diploma
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college but no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Something else

Which of the following race or ethnic groups do you most identify with? (Multiple selection allowed.)
- Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or Alaska Native
- White
- Multi-race or other

Which of the following best describes your current housing status?
- I own my home (outright, jointly, or with mortgage/home equity loan)
- I rent my home
- I have another living arrangement (housed but not for rent payment)
- I do not currently have housing

Finally, which of the following describes your total annual household income from 2021—that is, the total income everyone living in your household made together, before taxes, in 2021?
- Less than $10,000
- $10,000 to $29,999
- $30,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $69,999
- $70,000 to $99,999
- $100,000 to $149,999
- $150,000 or more

C: Pilot Study

C.1 Pilot Study Details

The authors conducted a web survey, hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform, which was fielded on April 26th, 2022. The authors recruited a non-probability convenience sample of 802 US adults via the Prolific recruitment platform. To be eligible to participate, respondents were required to provide informed consent, be at least 18 years of age, and reside in the United States. Of 890 potential subjects who began the survey, 78 did not consent to participate or otherwise returned the assignment to Prolific, and a further 10 failed to complete the survey within the maximum allowable time (30 minutes). None of the 802 complete observations were dropped from the analysis; only 6 exhibited evidence of speeding (less than one third of median completion time), and only 1 failed an explicit attention check question, and nearly all responses to an open-ended question were deemed sufficiently coherent and germane. The final sample for analysis was thus N = 802 for the pilot study. The observations are not weighted. As with all survey research, the design and collection of data has limitations, and resulting estimates may involve unmeasured error that limits representativeness to the target population (US adult general population). Participants were provided a $1.00 completion incentive through Prolific. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Duke University, protocol # 2022-0426. Preregistration materials for this pilot study are available online at https://osf.io/fnhzb.

Key Differences from the Main Study

The pilot study design and instruments differed slightly from those of the main study. The vignettes were slightly changed after the pilot study; in particular, the election of interest was changed from a city council race to a mayoral race. The pilot study did not include multiple versions of the "combined reporting" vignettes, and used a single article ordering across both the dam and sewer scenarios. The pilot study included fewer quality assurance checks and did not ask about zip code or income in the demographics section.

For the pilot study, we preregistered only three hypotheses, equivalent to H1, H2, and H3 discussed in the main text. We preregistered an analysis plan that examines the results as two parallel 2x2 designs (using an interaction term to assess the combined report condition relative to the investigative and event-oriented conditions), rather than the 1x4 analysis design that we ultimately preregistered for the main study. The conclusions of both studies are equivalent with either approach to analysis. Given the much smaller sample size for the pilot study, we assessed the pilot primarily for direction and magnitude of the point estimates before proceeding to the larger main study.

C.2 Pilot Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of the final pilot study sample of N = 802 is as follows:

Male	39.8 %
Female	58.6 %
Non-binary	1.6 %
White	78.8 %
Black	5.1 %
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander	6.0 %
Native American or Alaska Native	0.4 %
Multi-racial or other race	4.1 %
Hispanic or Latino	5.6 %
Less than a high school degree	0.5 %
High school degree or GED	12.5 %
Some college but no degree	21.4 %
Associate's degree	10.8 %
Bachelor's degree	39.4 %
Postgraduate degree	15.3 %
Age (mean)	41.9
Homeowner	48.7 %
Non-homeowner	51.3 %
Democrat	47.7 %
Independent	36.0 %
Republican	16.2 %
Liberal	57.5 %
Moderate	20.6 %
Conservative	21.9 %

C.3 Pilot Balance Tests

Table C.3.1: Pilot Study Balance Tests in Dam Scenario

		Investigative:		Event-Oriented:		Combined:	
Variable	Control	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value
Age	40.817	1.484	0.455	-0.435	0.831	-0.298	0.883
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.438	0.004	0.924	0.000	0.999	0.011	0.788
Campaign Interest (National)	0.491	0.002	0.924	-0.022	0.593	0.021	0.593
Education	4.174	-0.097	0.596	0.011	0.951	-0.018	0.931
Homeowner	0.450	-0.003	0.724	0.025	0.724	0.032	0.658
Ideology	2.945	0.288	0.201	0.509	0.035	0.067	0.786
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.523	-0.028	0.439	0.000	0.994	-0.047	0.219
Pol. Attention (National)	0.585	-0.034	0.344	0.000	0.996	-0.016	0.688
Male	0.367	0.002	0.977	0.066	0.337	0.019	0.794
News Consumption	5.138	-0.011	0.970	0.357	0.216	0.380	0.202
Nonwhite	0.229	-0.045	0.421	-0.003	0.965	-0.025	0.684
Party ID	2.936	0.025	0.918	0.466	0.085	-0.104	0.706
Registered	0.963	-0.050	0.132	-0.027	0.383	-0.047	0.186

Note: Data from 387 respondents treated with the dam scenario. The table displays the mean value of each variable for the control group, and the mean difference from the control mean for each treatment group along with the p-value of a t-test comparing these means.

Table C.3.2: Pilot Study Balance Tests in Sewer Scenario

		Investigative:		Event-Oriented:		Combined:	
Variable	Control	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value	Difference	P-Value
Age	42.745	0.174	0.933	-0.331	0.878	0.404	0.848
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.418	0.055	0.140	0.046	0.234	0.052	0.185
Campaign Interest (National)	0.515	0.027	0.491	-0.013	0.749	0.000	0.991
Education	4.286	0.062	0.728	0.088	0.629	-0.127	0.481
Homeowner	0.469	0.044	0.526	0.076	0.287	0.045	0.523
Ideology	2.929	0.455	0.066	0.556	0.024	0.309	0.219
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.467	0.047	0.205	0.043	0.237	0.073	0.047
Pol. Attention (National)	0.592	0.040	0.299	-0.041	0.291	0.015	0.712
Male	0.418	0.001	0.985	-0.004	0.952	-0.042	0.546
News Consumption	5.684	0.013	0.961	-0.421	0.139	-0.248	0.374
Nonwhite	0.286	-0.106	0.073	-0.053	0.395	-0.127	0.030
Party ID	2.837	0.315	0.236	0.406	0.124	0.421	0.126
Registered	0.918	0.001	0.973	-0.001	0.983	0.032	0.372

Note: Data from 406 respondents treated with the sewer scenario. The table displays the mean value of each variable for the control group, and the mean difference from the control mean for each treatment group along with the p-value of a t-test comparing these means.

Franklin city council election Tuesday, aging dam repair also on ballot

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

Originally built in 1940 by the Public Works Administration, the aging Madison Pond Dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. In a colorful letter to the editor last year, one local even compared the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls to their grandfather's bushy eyebrows.

With Franklin's municipal election now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign, and the subject of frenzied final pitches from candidates. The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

The most hotly-contested race is for the city council District 4, where incumbent David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the proposed bond funding for the dam, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "a smaller investment, using existing revenue, can extend the dam's usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a danger."

Figure C.4.1 Pilot Dam Scenario Control

Gazette investigation reveals decades of neglect on aging dam

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

Originally built in 1940 by the Public Works Administration, the aging Madison Pond Dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. In a colorful letter to the editor last year, one local even compared the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls to their grandfather's bushy eyebrows.

But a three-month investigation by *Franklin Gazette* reporters reveals that the dam is also a safety risk. State inspectors have cited the dam as dangerous for over four decades, and the *Gazette*'s investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's own safety officials stretching back to at least 1992. Yet Franklin's city council has regularly delayed dam maintenance, voting down funding for structural repairs to the dam 13 times.

A collapse of the Madison Pond Dam could be devastating. More than 1,200 homes are at risk of flooding in the event of dam failure, according to a 2017 state-issued report. The report also warned that Franklin's historic downtown riverfront, which sits only a mile below the dam, could also experience widespread flooding, causing significant damage to Franklin's economy.
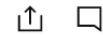
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Figure C.4.2 Pilot Dam Scenario "Investigative Treatment"

Debate intensifies over Franklin infrastructure bond after dam collapse in Arlington

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

Originally built in 1940 by the Public Works Administration, the aging Madison Pond Dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. In a colorful letter to the editor last year, one local even compared the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls to their grandfather's bushy eyebrows.

But last week, heavy rains caused the collapse of a twin dam built in the neighboring town of Arlington around the same time. Since then, the debate over Franklin's own dam has sharply intensified.

When Arlington's dam broke, the rushing waters forced thousands to evacuate, flooded approximately 1,200 homes, closed dozens of roads, and caused an estimated $80 million in economic damage to Arlington's business district alone. Two deaths have been linked to the collapse. Some worry that Franklin might suffer a similar tragedy if the Madison Pond Dam were to experience a failure.

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Figure C.4.3 Pilot Dam Scenario "Event-Oriented" Treatment

Debate intensifies over neglected Franklin dam after collapse in Arlington

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

Originally built in 1940 by the Public Works Administration, the aging Madison Pond Dam that sits above Franklin's historic downtown is often called an eyesore. In a colorful letter to the editor last year, one local even compared the leafy saplings that sprout from the dam's walls to their grandfather's bushy eyebrows.

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In fact, a *Gazette* investigation published last year found that the dam is a major safety risk. State inspectors have cited the dam as dangerous for over four decades, and the *Gazette*'s investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's own safety officials stretching back to at least 1992. Yet the city council has regularly delayed dam maintenance, voting down funding for structural repairs to the dam 13 times.

With Franklin's municipal election now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct the Madison Pond Dam has become a central issue of the campaign, and the subject of frenzied final pitches from candidates. The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

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Figure C.4.4 Pilot Dam Scenario "Combined" Treatment

Franklin city council election Tuesday, aging sewers repair also on ballot

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

This year's campaign season has folks talking about something unusual: raw sewage. We don't often think about the pipes that run beneath our streets, connecting our toilets to a wastewater treatment plant on the edge of town. The bulk of Franklin's sewers were originally laid in 1940, and are now well past their expected lifespan. Todd Pruitt, the city's Director of Public Works, once joked that many are "crumbling faster than my grandfather's rusty old Volkswagen Beetle."

With Franklin's municipal election now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign, and the subject of frenzied final pitches from candidates. The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

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Figure C.4.5 Pilot Sewer Scenario Control

Gazette investigation reveals decades of neglect on aging sewer system

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

This year's campaign season has folks talking about something unusual: raw sewage. We don't often think about the pipes that run beneath our streets, connecting our toilets to a wastewater treatment plant on the edge of town. The bulk of Franklin's sewers were originally laid in 1940, and are now well past their expected lifespan. Todd Pruitt, the city's Director of Public Works, once joked that many are "crumbling faster than my grandfather's rusty old Volkswagen Beetle."

A three-month investigation by Franklin Gazette reporters reveals that Mr. Pruitt is not the first to raise concerns. State inspectors have warned about corroding pipes, failing pumps, and faulty valves for decades, and the Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's officials stretching back to at least 2002. Yet Franklin's city council has regularly delayed maintenance, voting down funding for repairs to the system 13 times.

Burst pipes can be a nightmare for nearby residents. Sewage overflows can block roadways, seep into lawns, and even flood right up to front doors. Clean-up can take days, and in summer the smell is known to linger for weeks. The contaminants carried in spilled wastewater can pose a major public health risk. And the problem is getting worse: "Sewer pipe breaks are only going to happen more often if we don't do something," Mr. Pruitt told the council.

With Franklin's municipal election now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign, and the subject of frenzied final pitches from candidates. The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

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Figure C.4.6 Pilot Sewer Scenario "Investigative Treatment"

Sewage overflows sharpen debate over upcoming infrastructure bond vote

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

This year's campaign season has folks talking about something unusual: raw sewage. We don't often think about the pipes that run beneath our streets, connecting our toilets to a wastewater treatment plant on the edge of town. The bulk of Franklin's sewers were originally laid in 1940, and are now well past their expected lifespan. Todd Pruitt, the city's Director of Public Works, once joked that many are "crumbling faster than my grandfather's rusty old Volkswagen Beetle."

Just yesterday, a burst pipe became a "nightmare" reality for residents of Eagle Street in the Westview neighborhood. Raw sewage poured out to block the roadway, seeped into lawns, and even flooded right up to the front doors of several homes. Officials say that clean-up could take days, warning that residents should avoid the area until the pipe and roadway can be patched.
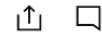
With Franklin's municipal election now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign, and the subject of frenzied final pitches from candidates. The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

The most hotly-contested race is for the city council District 4, where incumbent David Garfield is defending his seat against challenger Ben Fontaine. Garfield has urged voters to reject the proposed bond funding for the sewer upgrade, taking issue with the tax hike. Speaking to supporters yesterday, Garfield argued that "a smaller investment, using existing revenue, can extend our sewers' usable life, without any new burden on taxpayers." Garfield's challenger, Ben Fontaine, is campaigning in favor of the bond. At a rally Saturday, Fontaine urged his supporters to "vote yes on the bond—we need to invest in our infrastructure before it becomes a constant problem."

Figure C.4.7 Pilot Sewer Scenario "Event-Oriented" Treatment

Sewage overflows sharpen debate over upcoming infrastructure bond vote

By James Westin

Updated today at 9:02 a.m.

This year's campaign season has folks talking about something unusual: raw sewage. We don't often think about the pipes that run beneath our streets, connecting our toilets to a wastewater treatment plant on the edge of town. The bulk of Franklin's sewers were originally laid in 1940, and are now well past their expected lifespan. Todd Pruitt, the city's Director of Public Works, once joked that many are "crumbling faster than my grandfather's rusty old Volkswagen Beetle."

Just yesterday, a burst pipe became a "nightmare" reality for residents of Eagle Street in the Westview neighborhood. Raw sewage poured out to block the roadway, seeped into lawns, and even flooded right up to the front doors of several homes. Officials say that clean-up could take days, warning that residents should avoid the area until the pipe and roadway can be patched.

An investigation published last year by Franklin Gazette reporters found that this isn't an isolated problem. State inspectors have warned about corroding pipes, failing pumps, and faulty valves for decades, and the Gazette's investigation found dozens of urgent pleas from the city's officials stretching back to at least 2002. Yet Franklin's city council has regularly delayed maintenance, voting down funding for repairs to the system 13 times. And the problem is getting worse: "Sewer pipe breaks are only going to happen more often if we don't do something," Mr. Pruitt told the council.

With Franklin's municipal election now just days away, a municipal bond proposal to reconstruct much of the city's sewer system has become a central issue of the campaign, and the subject of frenzied final pitches from candidates. The reconstruction would be funded by a property tax increase, and is expected to cost the average Franklin homeowner about $40 more per year.

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Figure C.4.8 Pilot Sewer Scenario "Combined" Treatment

C.5 Pilot Survey Questionnaire

Consent and Screening

Key Information
Protocol ID #: 2022-0426
To better understand how people respond to news, this research study will ask you to answer a series of questions about news consumption and reactions to a fictitious news article. The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. After completing the survey, you will be paid $0.75 for your participation. We do not ask for your name or any other information that might identify you. Although collected data (without your Prolific ID) may be made public or used for future research purposes, your identity will always remain confidential. The research will not benefit you personally. We know of no risks resulting from participating in the study. Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time, and you may refuse to answer any question, but you must proceed to the final screen of the study in order to receive your completion code, which you must submit in order to be paid. In accordance with Prolific policies, we may reject your submission if the survey was not completed correctly, you fail to complete attention checks appropriately, or the instructions were not followed. If you have any questions about the research please contact the researchers at [contact information]. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, contact Duke University's Campus Institutional Review Board at [contact information]. If writing to the Campus IRB, please reference protocol ID #2022-0426.

- I consent to participate, begin the study.
- I do NOT consent.

Before we begin, please record your Prolific ID here.

- (Text entry)

Background

We first want to ask you some questions about topics in the news.
During a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on TV, radio, printed newspapers, the Internet, or social media, not including sports?

- 0 days
- 1 day
- ...
- 7 days

Politics can be fast-paced, and many people do not follow every new story. How often do you pay attention to what's going on in <u>national</u> politics?

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

How often do you pay attention to what's going on in politics in your <u>home town and state</u>?

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns, while others follow campaigns closely. How about you? Generally speaking, how interested are you in <u>national</u> political campaigns?

- Not at all interested
- Slightly interested
- Moderately interested
- Very interested
- Extremely interested

Generally speaking, how interested are you in political campaigns in your <u>home town and state</u>?
- Not at all interested
- Slightly interested
- Moderately interested
- Very interested
- Extremely interested

What is your favorite source of news?
- (Text entry)

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?
- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party (please specify)

[If Democrat] Would you call yourself a strong Democrat, or a not very strong Democrat?
- Strong
- Not very strong

[If Republican] Would you call yourself a strong Republican, or a not very strong Republican?
- Strong
- Not very strong

[If Neither] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?
- Closer to the Democratic Party
- Closer to the Republican Party
- Neither

Where would you place yourself on this scale?
- Extremely liberal
- Mostly liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Mostly conservative
- Extremely conservative

Are you registered to vote?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Treatment

On the next page, we'll show you an article from the *Franklin Gazette*, the local newspaper of a fictitious city of roughly 200,000 people located in the United States.

We want to know what people learn from articles like these. You will be asked to briefly summarize the information presented in your own words. Before you write your summary, please read the article carefully and reflect on the information presented. To make sure you have enough time to read and write your summary, the "proceed" button will not appear until you have been on the page for at least 20 seconds.

[Assigned Vignette (see Appendix C.4 for vignette text)]

In your own words, how would you briefly summarize the key information from this news story?
- (Text entry)

Next, we want to ask you a few questions about your reaction to the news story you just read.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of David Garfield, the incumbent Franklin city council candidate who opposes the infrastructure bond?
- Completely favorable
- Moderately favorable
- Slightly favorable
- Neither favorable nor unfavorable
- Slightly unfavorable
- Moderately unfavorable
- Completely unfavorable

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Ben Fontaine, the challenger for the Franklin city council seat who supports the infrastructure bond?
- Completely favorable
- Moderately favorable
- Slightly favorable
- Neither favorable nor unfavorable
- Slightly unfavorable
- Moderately unfavorable
- Completely unfavorable

Considering what you know of these two candidates, which would you be most likely to support if you were to vote in the election today?
- Certain to vote for Garfield
- Very likely to vote for Garfield
- Somewhat likely to vote for Garfield
- Somewhat likely to vote for Fontaine
- Very likely to vote for Fontaine
- Certain to vote for Fontaine

If you were to vote in Franklin's election today, how would you likely vote on the proposed municipal bond measure? The ballot question reads as follows: *"Shall the issuance of bonds in the amount of $2,617,000 for [dam / sewer] improvements, and the levying of a tax in payment thereof, be approved?"*
- Certain to vote in favor
- Very likely to vote in favor
- Somewhat likely to vote in favor
- Somewhat likely to vote against
- Very likely to vote against
- Certain to vote against

[If dam scenario:] According to the story you read earlier, what's the main problem with the Madison Pond Dam?
- It's very old
- It's too small
- It's noisy for nearby residents
- It's preventing salmon from swimming upriver

[If dam scenario:] According to the story you read earlier, what's the main problem with Franklin's sewer system?
- It's very old
- It's incomplete
- It's infested with rats
- It's contaminating the local river

Demographics

Finally, we have a few background questions for statistical purposes.
In what year were you born? Please enter a 4-digit number.

- (Text entry)

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
- Less than a high school diploma
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college but no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Something else

Which of the following race or ethnic groups do you most identify with?
- Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or Alaska Native
- White
- Multi-race or other

Which of the following best describes your current housing status?
- I own my home (outright, jointly, or with mortgage/home equity loan)
- I rent my home
- I have another living arrangement (housed but not for rent payment)
- I do not currently have housing

C.6 Pilot Results

Table C.6.1: Pilot Study Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted, Dam Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative	−0.172***	0.119***	−0.291***	0.125***	0.140***
	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.052)	(0.034)	(0.032)
Event-Oriented	−0.078*	0.041	−0.119*	−0.013	0.031
	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.054)	(0.039)	(0.037)
Investigative*Event	0.128**	−0.075	0.203*	−0.057	−0.080
	(0.047)	(0.043)	(0.081)	(0.055)	(0.049)
Pol. Attention (Local)	−0.042	0.052	−0.095	0.009	0.036
	(0.064)	(0.053)	(0.105)	(0.072)	(0.064)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.060	0.057	0.004	−0.024	0.042
	(0.058)	(0.051)	(0.099)	(0.066)	(0.061)
News Consumption	−0.001	0.003	−0.004	0.016*	0.002
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Party ID	0.009	−0.014	0.024	−0.009	−0.024*
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Ideology	0.047***	−0.037***	0.084***	−0.040**	−0.031**
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Registered	0.039	−0.044	0.083	−0.069	−0.036
	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.067)	(0.050)	(0.048)
Age	−0.003**	0.002*	−0.005**	0.0003	0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education	−0.001	−0.001	0.001	−0.003	0.008
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Male	−0.022	0.011	−0.033	−0.012	0.014
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.041)	(0.028)	(0.026)
Nonwhite	0.036	−0.028	0.064	−0.057	−0.006
	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.050)	(0.034)	(0.032)
Homeowner	−0.030	0.026	−0.056	0.056	0.010
	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.044)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Constant	0.390***	0.668***	−0.278*	0.732***	0.663***
	(0.069)	(0.067)	(0.122)	(0.085)	(0.085)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	387	387	387	387	387
R^2	0.220	0.203	0.248	0.152	0.193
Adjusted R^2	0.191	0.173	0.220	0.120	0.163

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors.

Table C.6.2: Pilot Study Average Treatment Effects on Outcomes (Adjusted, Sewer Scenario)

	Dependent variable:				
	Incumbent Favorability	Challenger Favorability	Net Favorability (Challenger)	Support for Challenger	Support for Bond
Investigative	−0.043	0.033	−0.076	0.046	0.032
	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.054)	(0.035)	(0.030)
Event-Oriented	−0.040	0.016	−0.056	0.065	0.009
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.053)	(0.035)	(0.032)
Investigation*Event	0.035	−0.044	0.079	−0.099*	−0.025
	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.081)	(0.050)	(0.043)
Pol. Attention (Local)	0.080	−0.059	0.139	−0.106	−0.049
	(0.056)	(0.052)	(0.100)	(0.063)	(0.054)
Campaign Interest (Local)	0.095	−0.046	0.140	−0.035	−0.039
	(0.054)	(0.050)	(0.096)	(0.061)	(0.048)
News Consumption	−0.016*	0.011	−0.027*	0.010	0.016*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Party ID	−0.0001	−0.0004	0.0003	−0.009	0.002
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.018)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Ideology	0.045***	−0.030**	0.074***	−0.036**	−0.051***
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.020)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Registered	0.004	0.025	−0.022	0.022	0.028
	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.081)	(0.051)	(0.049)
Age	−0.001	0.0003	−0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education	−0.012	0.003	−0.015	0.004	0.006
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Male	0.054*	−0.042	0.095*	−0.065*	−0.020
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.043)	(0.027)	(0.022)
Nonwhite	0.041	−0.067*	0.108*	−0.090*	−0.075**
	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.052)	(0.035)	(0.029)
Homeowner	0.005	−0.020	0.025	0.009	−0.038
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.045)	(0.027)	(0.021)
Constant	0.258***	0.784***	−0.525***	0.800***	0.821***
	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.130)	(0.085)	(0.082)
	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001				
Observations	406	406	406	406	406
R^2	0.182	0.119	0.167	0.154	0.207
Adjusted R^2	0.153	0.088	0.137	0.124	0.178

Note: Regressions are estimated with robust standard errors.

D: Exemplar Content Analysis

D.1 Flint Water Crisis

In January 2016, an ongoing drinking water disaster in Flint, Michigan, rose to national prominence after the Michigan governor declared a "state of emergency" for the city. The issue subsequently received broad news coverage from major national outlets. National attention to the issue was sufficient to garner a reaction from then-President Barack Obama, visits from presidential candidates, and hearings in the halls of Congress.

Yet the crisis began much earlier. Flint's drinking water was heavily contaminated with lead due to a 2014 cost-saving change in the drinking water supply, and a failure by state regulators to implement anti-corrosive treatments that could have prevented Flint's aging lead pipes from leaking the poisonous metal into the drinking water. A Pew study found that local residents began searching for news about the drinking water long before the issue gained national attention.[1] Nevertheless, once national attention caught hold, only about 2 in 5 U.S. newspaper articles about the disaster in January 2016 made any mention of the fact that a 2014 municipal budget crisis in Flint that caused a state takeover and enabled the switch to a cheaper (but more corrosive) water source, thus precipitating the entire disaster. That is, a majority of all coverage across the U.S. failed to provide this key piece of local context and government responsibility.

To estimate the proportion of U.S. newspaper articles about the 2016 Flint, Michigan, drinking water crisis that discussed the city's precipitating 2014 budget crisis, we searched the NexisUni database for newspaper articles that met the following parameters:

1. Published in January 2016.
2. English language.
3. U.S. newspaper (non-international).
4. Longer than 50 words.
5. Not an obituary.
6. Contains the words "Flint," "Michigan," and "water."

This procedure produced a list of 647 news articles. We then narrowed the search to identify which articles included some mention of the 2014 budget crisis by requiring that articles must meet the following additional parameters:

7. Contains the word "2014."
8. Contains at least one of "budget," "cheaper," "save money," "financial," or "cost."

This reduced the list to 273 articles, indicating that $273/647 = 42.2\%$ included mention of the 2014 budget crisis. To further refine this estimate, we grouped identical (or nearly identical) articles together and excluded articles from University Wire, a wire service that serves college campus newspapers and generated a large proportion of the articles in the original sample. This procedure reduced the list of articles that satisfied parameters #1-6 to a total of 256, and the list of those that also satisfied parameters #7-8 to a total of 93. These figures provide our final estimate that $93/228 = 40.8\%$ of the sample included mention of the 2014 budget crisis.

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[1]Eva Matsa, Katerina, Amy Mitchell, and Galen Stocking. 2017. "Searching for News: The Flint Water Crisis." Pew Research Center, April 27th.