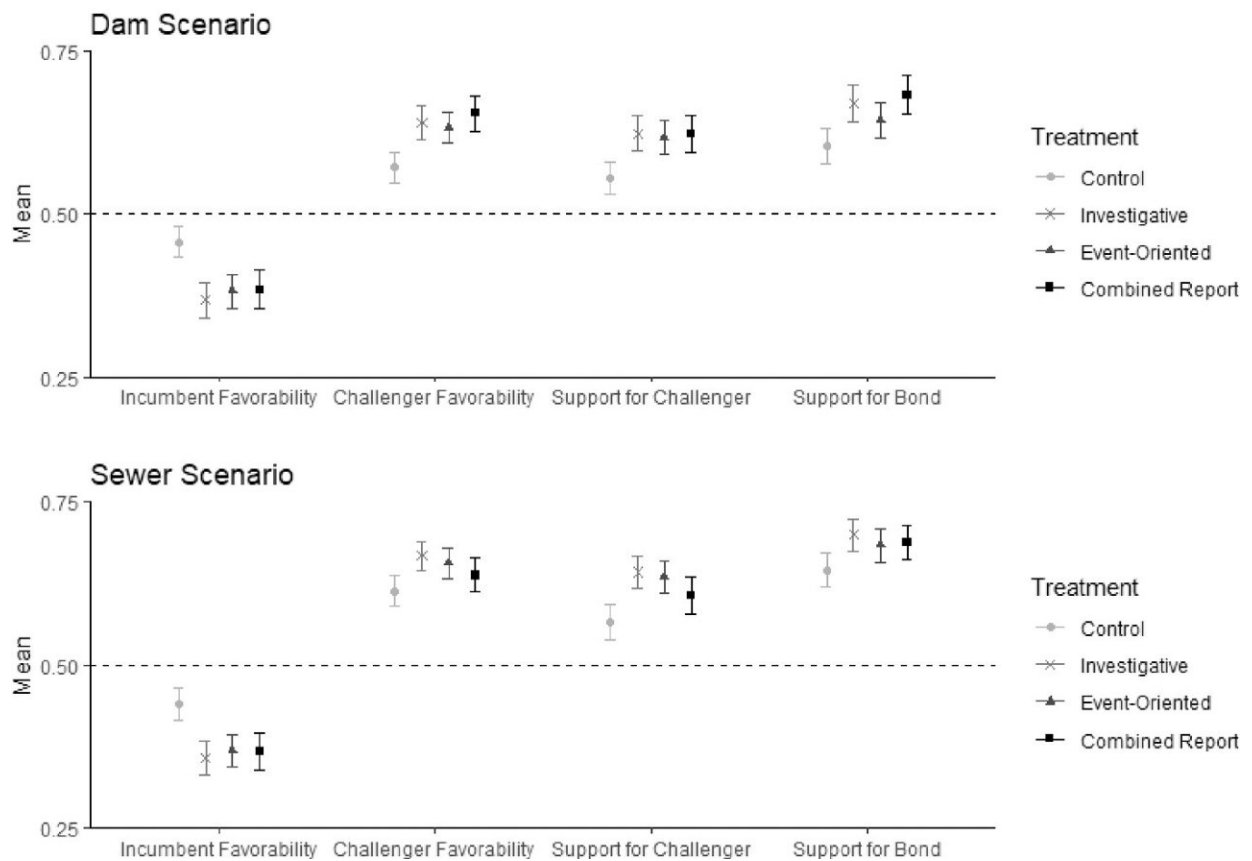


# How local journalism boosts support for fixing crumbling infrastructure

May 10 2024, by Alison Hewitt

Mean Candidate Favorability & Vote Choice



Displays the sample mean value for each outcome variable (max range 0 to 1) by experimental condition. The upper panel displays mean values for subjects in the dam scenario (n = 1,592). The lower panel displays mean values for subjects in the sewer scenario (n = 1,718). The error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Credit: *Political Behavior* (2024). DOI: 10.1007/s11109-024-09935-9

Strong local newspapers are tied to greater support for funding dams, sewers, and other basic infrastructure vital to climate resilience, according to a new study by researchers at UCLA and Duke University.

The research is [published](#) in the journal *Political Behavior*.

Just a few extra paragraphs of context increased support for spending and increased voters' willingness to hold local politicians accountable for infrastructure neglect by voting them out of office, said Megan Mullin, a UCLA [political scientist](#) focused on environmental politics.

Mullin said, "Empty newsrooms and AI reporting don't provide communities with the information they need to make investments for their own health and security. Local news reporting builds [public support](#) for infrastructure investments. Heat, floods, drought and fire are putting new stress on aging and deteriorating infrastructure, which must be maintained to protect communities against these growing climate risks. Our study shows that investing in facilities that improve our resilience to climate hazards requires investing in the health of local news.

"We saw more support for infrastructure spending when people read [news coverage](#) that provided context about infrastructure neglect and its consequences. With fewer reporters staffing newsrooms, the depth of reporting on invisible infrastructure declines."

**More information:** Andrew Trexler et al, Local News Reporting and Mass Attitudes on Infrastructure Investment, *Political Behavior* (2024). [DOI: 10.1007/s11109-024-09935-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-024-09935-9)

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