

Supporting Information for: “The Influence of Unknown Media on Public Opinion”

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A Appendix A: Survey Information

A.1 Research Ethics

This research project was declared exempt under Category 2 of the common rule by Texas A&M’s Institutional Review Board. With respect to APSA Principles and Guidance, respondents were provided with an information sheet describing the survey and could choose whether or not to proceed, with consent indicated by agreeing to continue with the survey. Their participation was voluntary and respondents could break off their participation at any point during the survey. Respondents were compensated for their participation in the survey, with compensation determined by the survey provider (Lucid).

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available in the APSR Dataverse at: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/DIU0M1>.

A.2 Survey Demographics

Tables A1 and A2 display the demographics of respondents in the two surveys. In both cases the samples were drawn from a panel maintained by Lucid to match nationally representative quotas for age, ethnicity, gender and geographic location. While they remain convenience samples, the surveys provide a diverse set of respondents on which to examine the effects of unfamiliar and familiar news sources.

A.3 News Source Familiarity and Reputations

Table A3 shows the share of the sample that indicated they had heard of each news source used in the study. When they were asked this question they were presented with a checklist of news options that showed the logo and name of each news source.

The news outlets with bold names were used in the “familiar source” treatment conditions and have high levels of familiarity. The news outlets with names in italics were used in the “unfamiliar source” treatment conditions and have low levels of awareness.

Table A1: Survey 1 Demographics	
	Share in Category
Black (Non-Hispanic)	0.11
Hispanic	0.11
White (Non-Hispanic)	0.68
Other Race	0.10
College Plus	0.45
Female	0.52
Age	46.09
Income	66045.95
Democrat	0.49
Republican	0.36
Independent	0.16
Sample Size	6042

Table A2: Survey 2 Demographics	
	Share in Category
Black (Non-Hispanic)	0.10
Hispanic	0.11
White (Non-Hispanic)	0.69
Other Race	0.09
College Plus	0.44
Female	0.52
Age	46.46
Income	65202.48
Democrat	0.50
Republican	0.35
Independent	0.16
Sample Size	5068

The far right column shows a comparison for the news outlets where source awareness was also measured using similar questions by the Pew Research Center in its “U.S. Media Polarization and the 2020 Election Report”, which was based on a nationally representative survey of the public in conducted in late 2019. Reassuringly, this shows the measures of source familiarity in the two surveys we use are highly similar to those observed by Pew.

We also consider trust in these news outlets among various groups in the below tables. Source

Table A3: Media Source Familiarity

News Source	Share Aware of Source (Jan 2021)	Share Aware of Source (June 2021)	Share Aware of Source (Pew 2019)
Fox News	0.90	0.91	0.94
New York Times	0.85	0.86	0.83
USA Today	0.81	0.84	0.85
Local Newspaper	0.76	0.73	-
Huffington Post	0.63	0.61	0.63
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	0.35	0.39	-
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	0.22	0.26	-
Non-Profit Local Website	0.16	0.18	-
<i>RT</i>	0.10	0.12	-

trust was measured on a 5-point scale from 1 (“Not at all trustworthy”) to 5 (“Extremely Trustworthy”). We re-code this measure to lie between 0 and 1. We separately display the average trust in various media sources for all respondents (column 1), only those respondents who had earlier indicated they were familiar with the news source (column 2), Democrats (column 3) and Republicans (column 4).

Table A4: Media Source Trust Among Different Groups (Survey 1)

News Source	All	Aware of Source	Democrats	Republicans
Local Newspaper	0.52	0.54	0.61	0.43
New York Times	0.50	0.50	0.64	0.33
USA Today	0.48	0.48	0.56	0.38
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	0.47	0.59	0.51	0.43
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	0.47	0.55	0.52	0.42
Non-Profit Local Website	0.45	0.58	0.49	0.40
Huffington Post	0.44	0.43	0.53	0.33
Fox News	0.38	0.38	0.32	0.46
<i>RT</i>	0.37	0.39	0.40	0.34

Table A5: Media Source Trust Among Different Groups (Survey 2)

News Source	All	Aware of Source	Democrats	Republicans
New York Times	0.52	0.52	0.66	0.35
Local Newspaper	0.52	0.53	0.61	0.43
USA Today	0.51	0.51	0.61	0.39
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	0.48	0.62	0.55	0.43
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	0.48	0.57	0.55	0.42
Huffington Post	0.46	0.46	0.56	0.34
Non-Profit Local Media	0.46	0.61	0.52	0.40
Fox News	0.44	0.44	0.40	0.51
<i>RT</i>	0.38	0.51	0.44	0.33

Two points emerge from this consideration that are important for interpreting our findings. First, local newspapers and USA Today, the sources used in the “Familiar” conditions of our experiments, are among the highest in trust across those considered in the study. To the extent there are other options with higher levels of trust among some groups, they tend to be highly polarizing (e.g., New York Times for Democrats and Fox News for Republicans). Second, while the sources used in the “Unfamiliar” conditions are lower in trust than others, they do not suffer much of a penalty. The fictional news website used in Study 3 is among the most trusted, least polarizing sources in the study indicating the relatively charitable interpretation that respondents take in evaluating such media. We see this intersection of declining trust in mainstream news sources and charitable interpretations of how trustworthy unknown news sources are as explaining our findings

Using an item that was only included in the first of our surveys, we also consider the perceived bias of these different sources. This measure used a seven-point scale from 1 (“Extremely conservative”) to 4 (“Moderate; middle of the road”) to 7 (“Extremely liberal”). We re-code this variable to lie between 0 and 1. The familiar mainstream news sources, with the exception of Fox News, are generally rated as having a liberal bias. These ratings are driven largely by perceptions of liberal bias in media coverage among Republicans. Again, consistent

with our findings in the main text the unfamiliar news sources are evaluated closest to the neutral mid-point of the scale.

Table A6: Perceived Media Bias Among Different Groups (Survey 1)

News Source	All	Aware of Source	Democrats	Republicans
New York Times	0.65	0.66	0.59	0.74
Huffington Post	0.62	0.66	0.59	0.68
USA Today	0.59	0.60	0.55	0.66
Local Newspaper	0.58	0.59	0.55	0.62
Non-Profit Local Website	0.55	0.55	0.52	0.58
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	0.54	0.54	0.51	0.58
<i>RT</i>	0.53	0.50	0.48	0.60
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	0.51	0.52	0.49	0.54
Fox News	0.35	0.34	0.30	0.41

A.4 Study 1 Dependent Variables

The first principal component of these items explains 51% of the variance in these outcome measures. We standardize this measure to have mean zero and standard deviation one for the analysis. Higher values indicate more dissatisfaction with state tax policy (i.e., that the state taxes are overly burdensome and should be reduced).

Table A7: State Tax Policy - PCA Loadings

Survey Item	PC1 Loading
Satisfaction with tax system in state (5-pt scale)	-0.52
Raise Taxes/Cut Spending to address budget deficit (101-pt scale)	-0.31
Taxes pushing residents to breaking point (7-pt scale)	0.40
Taxes low/high in state (3-pt scale)	0.47
Approval of state tax policy mentioned in article (5-pt scale)	-0.51

A.5 Study 2 Dependent Variables

The first principal component of these items explains 50% of the variance in these outcome measures. We standardize this measure to have mean zero and standard deviation one for the analysis. Higher values indicate more pessimistic views of American politics (i.e., more perceived polarization/gridlock, less expected future progress).

Table A8: Perceived Polarization/Gridlock/Pessimism - PCA Loadings

Survey Item	PC1 Loading
Progress in next 4 years-Improving America’s Image (5-pt scale)	-0.42
Progress in next 4 years-Improving Economy (5-pt scale)	-0.42
Progress in next 4 years-Changing Partisan Tone (5-pt scale)	-0.42
Optimism about U.S. Future (4-pt scale)	-0.38
Common ground for Dems and Reps (5-pt scale)	-0.30
Expect improved relations for Reps and Dems (3-pt scale)	-0.37
Domestic enemies biggest threat to American way of life (1/0)	0.07
Dems and Reps want to do what is right for country (5-pt scale)	-0.30

A.6 Study 3 Dependent Variables

The first principal component of these items explains 75% of the variance in these outcome measures. We standardize this measure to have mean zero and standard deviation one for the analysis. Higher values indicate more confidence in the integrity of the 2020 presidential election and lower perceptions of voter fraud.

Table A9: Perceptions of Voter Fraud - PCA Loadings

Survey Item	PC1 Loading
Disagree: Millions of illegal votes cast in 2020 (10-pt scale)	0.44
Confidence election was fair (5-pt scale)	0.48
Confidence Biden won 2020 election (101-pt scale)	0.46
2020 election was secure (7-pt scale)	0.44
Disagree: Voting in US prone to fraud (7-pt scale)	0.42

A.7 Study 4 Dependent Variables

The first principal component of these items explains 48% of the variance in these outcome measures. We standardize this measure to have mean zero and standard deviation one for the analysis. Higher values indicate more dissatisfaction with state tax policy (i.e., that the state taxes are overly burdensome and should be reduced).

Table A10: State Tax Policy - PCA Loadings

Survey Item	PC1 Loading
Satisfaction with tax system in state (5-pt scale)	-0.54
Raise Taxes/Cut Spending to address budget deficit (101-pt scale)	-0.34
Taxes pushing residents to breaking point (7-pt scale)	0.32
Taxes low/high in state (3-pt scale)	0.45
Approval of state tax policy mentioned in article (5-pt scale)	-0.52

A.8 Study 5 Dependent Variables

The first principal component of these items explains 52% of the variance in these outcome measures. We standardize this measure to have mean zero and standard deviation one for the analysis. Higher values indicate greater perceptions of the threat and costs of cyber attacks in the United States.

Table A11: Cyber Attack Threat - PCA Loadings

Survey Item	PC1 Loading
Concern about cyberattacks-US Government (4-pt scale)	0.51
Concern about cyberattacks-US Business(4-pt scale)	0.51
Cyberattacks pose major risk to US economy (7-pt scale)	0.48
Threat of cyberattacks to US interests (3-pt scale)	0.48
US preparation to prevent cyberattacks(4-pt scale)	-0.12

A.9 Covariates in the Analysis

To increase the precision of the effect estimates in our studies, our pre-analysis plans specified a variety of pre-treatment covariates that would predict a study’s dependent variable to include in the regressions used to estimate treatment effects.

Across all the studies, we include a three-point partisanship item separating Republicans (and those leaning towards the Republican party), “Pure” independents and Democrats (and those leaning towards the Democratic party) as a covariate. This was previously measured by Lucid and passed into the survey. This agrees with a partisanship measure from

the end of our survey in 93% of cases.

The other studies included additional covariates. In Study 2 we also include a respondent's level of affective polarization (the absolute difference in their feeling thermometer ratings of the Democratic and Republican parties). For Study 3 we include a respondent's relative feeling thermometer rating of Donald Trump compared to Joe Biden as a covariate. For Study 4 we include a pre-treatment measure of the respondent's overall views on taxation in the United States. Finally, in Study 5 we include a measure of the respondent's concerns about cyber attacks measured at the beginning of the survey.

B Appendix B: Experimental Materials

B.1 State-Specific Information

Respondents were assigned media and tax treatments based on their state of residence, which they reported at the beginning of the survey. This ensures the local media source and policy discussion are relevant for them. When evaluating local media outlets they saw a menu of options that included a large newspaper from their state, a local partisan website for their state and a non-profit news organization from their state. These options also included a fictional newspapers for each state, created using common newspaper names (i.e., “Times”, “Tribune” or “News”), but chosen so the fictional newspaper’s name did not resemble any of the area’s actual major media sources. These options are listed in Table B1.

Table B1: Local Media Sources for Each State

State	State Newspaper	Local Partisan Website	Fictional State Newspaper	State Non-Profit Media
Alabama	The Birmingham News	Alabama Business Daily	Alabama Tribune	Birmingham Watch
Alaska	Alaska Dispatch News	Alaska Business News	Alaska Times	CoastAlaska
Arizona	Arizona Republic	Arizona Business Daily	Arizona Times	Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting
Arkansas	Arkansas Democrat-Gazette	Arkansas Business Daily	Arkansas Tribune	Arkansas Nonprofit news network
California	Los Angeles Times	California Business Daily	California Tribune	CALmatters
Colorado	The Denver Post	Colorado Business Daily	Colorado Tribune	The Colorado Independent
Connecticut	Hartford Courant	Connecticut Business Daily	Connecticut Tribune	The Connecticut Mirror
Delaware	The News-Journal (Wilmington)	Delaware Business Daily	Delaware Tribune	Delaware Public Media
Florida	Tampa Bay Times	Florida Business Daily	Florida News	Florida Bulldog
Georgia	The Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Georgia Business Daily	Georgia Tribune	Georgia News Lab
Hawaii	Honolulu Star-Advertiser	Hawaii Business Daily	Hawaii Times	Honolulu Civil Beat
Idaho	Idaho Statesmen	Idaho Business Daily	Idaho News	Boise Dev
Illinois	The Chicago Tribune	Illinois Business Daily	Illinois News	ProPublica Illinois
Indiana	The Indianapolis Star	Indiana Business Daily	Indiana Tribune	WFYI
Iowa	The Des Moines Register	Iowa Business Daily	Iowa Times	Iowa Watch
Kansas	The Wichita Eagle	Kansas Business Daily	Kansas Tribune	The Beacon
Kentucky	The Courier-Journal	Kentucky Business Daily	Kentucky Times	KyCIR
Louisiana	The Advocate	Louisiana Business Daily	Louisiana Times	The Lens
Maine	Portland Press Herald	Maine Business Daily	Maine Times	The Maine Monitor
Maryland	The Baltimore Sun	Maryland Business Daily	Maryland Tribune	The Baltimore Brew
Massachusetts	The Boston Globe	Massachusetts Business Daily	Massachusetts Times	The Bedford Citizen
Michigan	Detroit Free Press	Michigan Business Daily	Michigan Times	East Lansing Info
Minnesota	The Minneapolis Star Tribune	Minnesota Business Daily	Minnesota Times	MinnPost
Mississippi	The Clarion-Ledger	Mississippi Business Daily	Mississippi Times	Mississippi Free Press
Missouri	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Missouri Business Daily	Missouri Herald	The Beacon
Montana	Billings Gazette	Montana Business Daily	Montana Times	Montana Free Press
Nebraska	Omaha World-Herald	Nebraska Business Daily	Nebraska Times	The Reader
Nevada	Las Vegas Review-Journal	Nevada Business Daily	Nevada Tribune	The Nevada Independent
New Hampshire	New Hampshire Union Leader	New Hampshire Business Daily	New Hampshire Times	InDepthNH
New Jersey	Star Ledger	New Jersey Business Daily	New Jersey Times	NJ Spotlight News
New Mexico	Albuquerque Journal	New Mexico Business Daily	New Mexico Tribune	Searchlight New Mexico
New York	The Buffalo News	New York Business Daily	New York Tribune	ProPublica
North Carolina	The Charlotte Observer	North Carolina Business Daily	North Carolina News	Carolina Public Press
North Dakota	Bismarck Tribune	North Dakota Business Daily	North Dakota Times	MinnPost
Ohio	Cleveland Plain Dealer	Ohio Business Daily	Ohio Times	Eye on Ohio
Oklahoma	The Oklahoman	Oklahoma Business Daily	Oklahoma Tribune	Oklahoma Watch
Oregon	The Oregonian	Oregon Business Daily	Oregon Times	Underscore
Pennsylvania	The Philadelphia Inquirer	Pennsylvania Record	Pennsylvania Times	Spotlight PA
Rhode Island	Providence Journal	Rhode Island Business Daily	Rhode Island Tribune	East Greenwich News
South Carolina	The Post and Courier	Palmetto Business Daily	South Carolina Tribune	The Nerve
South Dakota	Argus Leader	South Dakota Business Daily	South Dakota Times	South Dakota News Watch
Tennessee	Knoxville News Sentinel	Tennessee Business Daily	Tennessee Times	Tennessee Lookout
Texas	Houston Chronicle	Texas Business Daily	Texas Times	The Texas Tribune
Utah	The Salt Lake Tribune	Utah Business Daily	Utah Times	Utah Investigative Journalism Project
Vermont	Burlington Free Press	Vermont Business Daily	Vermont Tribune	The Vermont Digger
Virginia	The Virginian-Pilot	Virginia Business Daily	Virginia Tribune	Charlottesville Tomorrow
Washington	The Seattle Times	Washington Business Daily	Washington Tribune	Investigative Watch
West Virginia	Charleston Gazette-Mail	West Virginia Business Daily	West Virginia Tribune	Mountain State Spotlight
Wisconsin	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel	Wisconsin Business Daily	Wisconsin Times	Wisconsin Watch
Wyoming	Casper Star-Tribune	Wyoming Business Daily	Wyoming Times	WyoFile

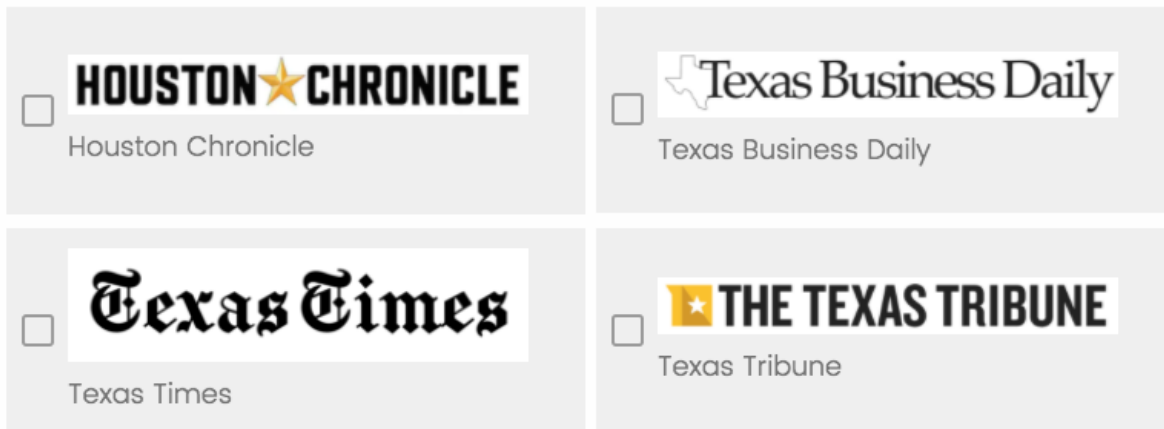
B.2 News Reputations/News Selection

When evaluating the media sources or selecting information sources in the patient preference tasks that preceded the experimental treatments in each study, respondents saw the name of the media outlet as well as its logo. Below is an example of how this looked for Texas respondents when evaluating local media.



Figure B1: Example of Local News Options

Please click on all of the news sources that you have **heard of**, regardless of whether you use them or not.

If you are unsure about a source, please DO NOT click it.



The image shows a survey interface with four news source options, each in a light gray box. Each option consists of a checkbox, a logo, and the name of the source. The options are:

- HOUSTON★CHRONICLE**
Houston Chronicle
-  **Texas Business Daily**
Texas Business Daily
- Texas Times**
Texas Times
-  **THE TEXAS TRIBUNE**
Texas Tribune

The local newspaper, partisan local news website and non-profit news website all used the news outlet’s real logo. For the fictional local news website, the logo was simply the outlet’s name in a script text.

B.3 News Articles

B.3.1 Study 1 and Study 4

For Study 1 and Study 4, those in the article conditions read a tax policy treatment that mentioned the worst performing part of a state’s tax system based on a study by the Tax Foundation’s “2020 State Business Tax Climate Index.” The components that received ratings were: property, sales, corporate and income taxes. This was used to make a broader critique of tax policy in the state, based on a June 2020 article from the *Hawkeye Reporter*, a website on the list of hyper-partisan online local media produced by Mahone and Napoli (2020) titled “Tax Relief Advocate: Iowa Can’t Expect Taxpayers to Keep Shouldering

Heavy Loads.” [Link](#).

B.3.2 Study 2

For Study 2, the article discussed Joe Biden’s inauguration and noted the problems facing the administration while emphasizing how polarization would limit progress on these issues. It combined elements of articles that had appeared on RT titled “Joe Biden sworn in as 46th US president, taking helm of embattled & divided nation.” [Link](#), “Tired of the political divide in America? Don’t Worry, it’s going to get much worse” [Link](#) and “Poll finds just 15% of Americans confident in US democracy as partisan divisions only grow ahead of presidential vote” [Link](#).

B.3.3 Study 3

For Study 3 the article corrected false claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 Presidential election. It was a shortened version of an Associated Press story titled “Explainer: Election claims, and why it’s clear Biden won” [Link](#).

B.3.4 Study 5

For Study 5 the article discussed the substantial costs of cyber attacks for the US economy, noting the variety of risks that they posed to the energy sector and financial institutions. The article also emphasized the US government’s inability to prevent recent attacks. It combined elements of articles that appeared on RT titled “Oil Pipeline Cyberattack Exposes America’s Multi-Trillion Dollar Infrastructure Security Crisis” [Link](#) and “Fed Chair Warns Cyberattacks Pose Biggest Threat to US Economy” [Link](#).

C Appendix C: Supplemental Experimental Analyses

C.1 Respondent Attention

Each of surveys included a pre-treatment attention check. Respondents who did not successfully pass the attention check were not allowed to continued with the survey. We also included a post-treatment attention check that asked respondents in the treatment conditions to report the source of the news article they read.

Below we separate out the results of the post-treatment manipulation check by study. Respondents are counted as correct if they identified the source of the article they read in the manipulation check from a list of four to five options.

Table C1: Manipulation Check Results

Study	Share Correct
Study 1	71%
Study 2	76%
Study 3	74%
Study 4	68%
Study 5	80%

While the results in the studies with unfamiliar local media sources are lower, this appears to mostly stem from respondent’s misidentifying one of the unfamiliar news sources as the other. In Studies 1, 3 and 4 those assigned to the familiar local media conditions were correct 77-81% of the time in the attention checks.

C.2 Tabular Results

Table C2 displays the tabular results used to produce Figure 1 in the main text.

Table C2: Effects of Familiar and Unfamiliar Sources on Opinion

	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	-0.31*	-0.71*	-0.25*	-0.27*	-3.25*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Unfamiliar Source	0.13*	0.05	0.09*	0.17*	0.07*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Familiar Source	0.21*	0.04	0.09*	0.17*	0.08*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Independent	0.37*	0.84*	-0.09*	0.35*	-0.20*
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Republican	0.39*	1.11*	-0.10*	0.43*	-0.00
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Affective Polarization		0.00*			
		(0.00)			
Trump-Biden Therm			-0.01*		
			(0.00)		
Tax Views				-0.01	
				(0.01)	
Cyber Concern					0.91*
					(0.02)
<i>N</i>	6042	6042	6042	5068	5068

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

We also consider several post-hoc analyses that were not included in our pre-analysis plan. In Tables C3 and C4 we consider heterogeneity in these results by separating out Democrats and Republicans. The only distinctions of note are that Republicans were not responsive to the perceived polarization treatment, from either news source, in Study 2 or from the unfamiliar source in Study 5. Across the rest of the studies, the results are similar when sub-setting within each political party. Among members of both parties, the effects of the familiar sources are larger than the effects of the unfamiliar source in Study 1 and the two sources have similarly sized effects in Study 3.

This suggests our findings generalize across partisans and whether or not the content encountered from the unfamiliar sources is ideologically congenial or pushes an uncongenial

perspective.

Table C3: Effects of Familiar and Unfamiliar Sources on Opinion (Democrats)

	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	-0.32*	-0.46*	-0.07*	-0.01	-3.07*
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.09)
Unfamiliar Source	0.14*	0.10*	0.07*	0.15*	0.10*
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Familiar Source	0.25*	0.09*	0.08*	0.19*	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Affective Polarization		-0.00*			
		(0.00)			
Trump-Biden Therm			-0.01*		
			(0.00)		
Tax Views				-0.08*	
				(0.01)	
Cyber Concern					0.86*
					(0.02)
<i>N</i>	2948	2948	2948	2515	2515

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

Table C4: Effects of Familiar and Unfamiliar Sources on Opinion (Republicans)

	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	0.10*	0.04	-0.31*	-0.30*	-3.52*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.09)	(0.11)
Unfamiliar Source	0.11*	0.03	0.14*	0.19*	-0.05
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Familiar Source	0.18*	0.01	0.13*	0.10	0.09*
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Affective Polarization		0.01*			
		(0.00)			
Trump-Biden Therm			-0.01*		
			(0.00)		
Tax Views				0.08*	
				(0.01)	
Cyber Concern					0.99*
					(0.03)
<i>N</i>	2150	2150	2150	1751	1751

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

C.3 Self-Reported Familiarity as a Moderating Variable

In the analysis in Figure 1, familiar and unfamiliar sources are distinguished based on group-level familiarity with these outlets. Here we present a supplementary analysis pooling the control group and unfamiliar source treatment groups of the various studies to use a respondent's *perceived* familiarity with the unfamiliar source they encountered as a moderating variable (coded as 1 if a respondent said they were aware of the unfamiliar source in that study and 0 otherwise). The table with these results is below.

Table C5: Perceived Familiarity as Moderator of Unfamiliar Source Effects

	Pooled Model
Intercept	-0.06* (0.02)
Unfamiliar Source	0.11* (0.02)
Perceived Familiarity	-0.14* (0.03)
Unfamiliar Source \times Perceived Familiarity	-0.01 (0.04)
N	18954

Standard errors in parentheses

Models include study fixed effects

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

Here the interaction between perceived familiarity with the unknown source and the effect of the unfamiliar source treatment on opinion is substantively small (-0.01) and not statistically significant. This indicates that perceived familiarity with the unfamiliar source did not increase the effect of encountering its coverage.

We see this pattern as consistent with our findings from the main text. Whether separating unfamiliar and familiar news sources based on their baseline levels of familiarity among the public as a whole (as in Table 1 of the main text) or using individual-level variation in self-reported source familiarity (as in this supplementary analysis), there are limited differences in the effects of different news sources, conditional on exposure.

C.4 Conditional Effects Among Entertainment Seekers

In addition to the political source only choice tasks, we also included two entertainment-style news choice tasks in the second survey. In the entertainment choice tasks respondents had two entertainment options available (randomly assigned from five popular entertainment sources: ESPN (sports), People (lifestyle/celebrity), Food Network (food), Healthline (health) or IGN (entertainment/video games)) in addition to the political news sources.

Using these tasks, we characterize the effects of unknown news sources among entertainment seekers (those who selected one of the entertainment options) and political news seekers (those who selected one of the political options).

Both groups This shows the effect of unknown sources is slightly larger among those with a preference for entertainment news (a .13 SD effect) relative to those interested in politics (a .10 SD effect), though we note the difference in the effects between these two groups does not reach statistical significance.

Table C6: Effect of Article from Unfamiliar News Source by News Preference

	Entertainment		Politics	
	Article Effect	Share	Article Effect	Share
Tax Policy (2)	0.14 [0.03,0.25]	0.36	0.19 [0.11,0.27]	0.64
Cyber Security	0.12 [-0.01,0.24]	0.22	0.06 [0.01,0.11]	0.78
Pooled	0.13 [0.05,0.21]	0.29	0.10 [0.05,0.15]	0.71

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D Appendix D: Supplemental News Choice/News Trust Analyses

D.1 Source Selection By Choice Task

We break out each news source available in the choice menu for each study and display the probability it was selected by respondents as well as the awareness of the source. In the local news tasks in Study 1, Study 3 and Study 4, the local newspaper was the most prominently used source by respondents. In Study 2 and Study 5 there was a relatively even mix of usage of the various news sources, although we note that few selected RT when it was placed in competition with four high-profile national counterparts.

Table D1: Source Selection by Choice Task

Outlet	Study	Pr(Selected)	Share Aware of Source
Non-Profit Local Website	1	0.08	0.16
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	1	0.17	0.35
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	1	0.30	0.22
Local Newspaper	1	0.41	0.76
<i>RT</i>	2	0.03	0.10
Huffington Post	2	0.08	0.63
USA Today	2	0.22	0.81
New York Times	2	0.31	0.85
Fox News	2	0.34	0.90
Non-Profit Local Website	3	0.11	0.16
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	3	0.13	0.22
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	3	0.22	0.35
Local Newspaper	3	0.51	0.76
Non-Profit Local Website	4	0.09	0.18
<i>Partisan Local Website</i>	4	0.13	0.26
<i>Fake Local Website</i>	4	0.24	0.39
Local Newspaper	4	0.51	0.73
<i>RT</i>	5	0.03	0.12
Huffington Post	5	0.09	0.61
USA Today	5	0.24	0.84
New York Times	5	0.29	0.86
Fox News	5	0.35	0.91

D.2 Trust in Unfamiliar News Sources

We assess the recognition heuristic below by regressing trust in a news source on whether or not respondents are familiar with it. The expectation from previous work is that familiar news outlets should be more trusted than news outlets a respondent is not familiar with.

Table D2: News Source Trust by Familiarity

	Bivariate	W/ Person and Source FEs
Familiar with Source	0.07* (0.002)	0.06* (0.002)
Observations	99,990	99,990
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.05 Robust Standard Errors, Clustered by Respondent	

We find evidence of this in our analysis. Familiarity with a news source is associated with greater trust in it, trust in familiar news sources is 7 percentage points higher than trust in unfamiliar news sources across our studies. This pattern persists when incorporating person and source fixed effects into the analysis as we did with news selection in the survey.

We note that while this difference is in the expected direction, it is not particularly large. This may help to explain the relatively similar effects of unfamiliar and familiar news sources on opinion, conditional on exposure to them, though we note the increased trust and news media use that familiar news outlets receive are both consistent with the expectations of the recognition heuristic.

We also consider the sources of trust in the unfamiliar news sources used in the experimental treatments of these studies (RT, the partisan local website and the fictional local website). We pool the evaluations of these studies and regress trust in these sources on a respondent's overall trust in the media (measured with multi-item batteries included in each study and

re-scaled to have mean zero and standard deviation one) and their partisanship.

Table D3: Predicting Trust in Unfamiliar Sources

(Intercept)	0.44* (0.003)
Overall Media Trust	0.12* (0.002)
Independent	-0.01* (0.005)
Republican	0.02* (0.004)
Observations	33,330
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.05 Robust Standard Errors, Clustered by Respondent

Here partisanship has a small role in evaluations of these sources, with Republicans slightly more trusting of these outlets than Independents or Democrats. A one standard deviation increase in overall media trust has a larger role in trust of these sources, predicting a 12 percentage point increase in trust of the unfamiliar news sources. This suggests those who trust the media in general extend this trust to news sources they are not familiar with.

D.3 Trust and Unfamiliar Source News Use

To consider the relationship between overall media trust and use of unfamiliar news sources, we combine four separate media trust items included in the survey into a scale using principal components analysis (re-scaled to have mean zero and standard deviation one) and use this to predict whether or not respondents selected the unfamiliar source in the news selection tasks.

This shows there is a relationship between these variables that persists when including partisanship as a control, but that the overall magnitude is relative weak. This is to say, a one

standard deviation increase in media trust was predicted to make individuals 1 percentage point less likely to select the unfamiliar source in the study. The relationship persists after we condition on political partisanship, showing it is not due to differences in media trust across the political parties. This is relevant, and aligns with the expectation we placed in our pre-analysis plan, but also suggests the need for considering other factors beyond overall media trust that might explain the use of unfamiliar media.

Table D4: Pr(Select Unfamiliar Source) by Overall Media Trust

	Bivariate	W/Party
(Intercept)	0.15*	0.14*
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Media Trust	-0.01*	-0.01*
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Independent		0.01
		(0.01)
Republican		0.02*
		(0.01)
<i>N</i>	28262	28262

Robust standard errors, clustered by Respondent, in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$