

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Politics and Communication

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## HOME STYLE OPINION

### *How Local Newspapers Can Slow Polarization*

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## Home Style Opinion

### How Local Newspapers Can Slow Polarization

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**Abstract:** Local newspapers can hold back the rising tide of political division in America by turning away from the partisan battles in Washington and focusing their opinion page on local issues. When a local newspaper in California dropped national politics from its opinion page, the resulting space filled with local writers and issues.

We use a preregistered analysis plan to show that after this quasi-experiment, politically engaged people did not feel as far apart from members of the opposing party, compared to those in a similar community whose newspaper did not change. While it may not cure all of the imbalances and inequities in opinion journalism, an opinion page that ignores national politics could help local newspapers push back against political polarization.

**Keywords:** local news, polarization, opinion journalism, newspaper, experiment

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