SLIDE1

Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Simon Kiss, at Wilfrid Laurier University where I'm the director of the Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy. This is Rafael Campos-Gottardo, one of the graduates of our program and a LISPOP RA and now in the Master's program at McGill.

We're here to share some exploratory work we've done with some survey data LISPOP commissioned during the 2018 provincial election campaign specifically on digital media consumption and polarization in Canada, or more specifically, the Ontario 2018 election campaign.

SLIDE 2

I'm just going to start by highlighting the data file, because one of the virtues of what we have to offer here is less shedding light on the topic, this is a very modest contribution. But I do want to highlight the data file, because we've made it public for others to use here, it is in the final stages of being archived, it and it has a rich set of questions on that can shed light on this topic. So along with all the standard political behaviour questions about party ID and vote intention and vote history, it has a rich set of questions about social media use, legacy media consumption and digital media consumption, I would be really happy for anyone and everyone to explore it.

So, the survey was fielded to a consumer sample from SSI, now Dynata, weighted to Ontario's age, gender and education, in the middle of the campaign to voting day.

The 2018 election was Doug Ford’s first election victory. He had a background that might elicit strong feelings, being affiliated with his brother, former Toronto mayor Rob Ford and something of an outsider to mainstream provincial politics. At the same time, it was the end of 15 years of Liberal rule, so lots of scandals had accumulated over the life of that government. So there were good reasons to expect a degree of polarization in that campaign.

SLIDE 3 VALIDATION OF THE SAMPLE

As a way of validating the sample, we compared the vote intention of likely voters in the sample with the final result and it doesn't do badly. The NDP is overrepresented in the sample, but at the same time the NDP actually did lead in the polls for about two weeks in the middle of the campaign.

SLIDE 4

We wanted to dive into whether or not social media use or online news consumption was related to either affective or policy polarization, and this is a really brute summary of the headline findings.

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SLIDE 5 KEY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

- distinguished between news consumption and social media usage

- measure different things

SLIDE 6 KEY DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Affective polarization

* traditional methods of measuring affective polarization only work in two party systems (e.g. USA) or do not take into account that individuals have similar feelings towards related parties.
* New measures needed for multiparty systems.

Policy polarization

­­Single measure, additive index based on 11 policy items.

SLIDE 7 AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION AND PRIMARY MEDIA SOURCE

- Small significant negative coefficient for consuming online media and affective polarization.

- MORE INTERESTING\* Positive coefficient on interest. Those who are more interested are more polarized, this is directly contrary to what Dubois and Blank find in a 2018 paper, we'll be coming back to this again.

SLIDE 8 Affective Polarization and Social Media Usage

- Opposite finding, curvilinear relationship between self-reports of frequency of social media use and affective polarization; the heaviest users are more polarized than those who say they never use social media.

SLIDE 9 Interaction

We do find an interaction between social media use and affective polarization; you can see the main effect of interest for all respondents, but the effect is weaker for respondents who use social media the most. In effect, social media moderates the relationship between political interest and affective polarization

SLIDE 10

If we turn to policy polarization, we used different measures of polarization.

Here we can see that those who use online media sources have the highest bimodality coefficients. However, differences are small and don't get to the level of bimodality.

SLIDE 11

However, when we break this pattern out by level of interest, we see some role for online media contributing to polarization. At low levels of interest \*only online news users have a bimodal distribution. Legacy and online have bimodal distributions at high levels of interest. Sample size problems no high interest social media only users.

SLIDE 12

Showing the bimodality coefficients by social media usage, we can observe the \*slight curvilinear relationship again\*, although mostly there’s no real effect.

SLIDE 13 OVERLAP COEFFICIENT, POLICY POLARIZATION MEDIA USAGE

Here we also observe that the same pattern as using the BC, that those who use only use online media sources are the most polarized and those who only use social media are less polarized.

SLIDE 14 OVERLAP COEFFICIENT POLICY POLARIZATION, SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Similarly, those who use social media often have more polarized policy positions than those who use social media usage

SLIDE 15 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION