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 and McGill.

We're here to share some work we've done with some survey data LISPOP commissioned during the 2018 provincial election campaign specifically on what seems like the topic of the era, namely 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 I think one of the virtues of what we have to offer here is less shedding light on the topic, there's just such really impressive work that's going on in the field that this is really a very modest contribution. But I do want to higlight the data file, because we've made it public for others to use here and it has a rich set of questions on social media use, legacy media consumption and digital media consumption.

So, in 2018, Jay Roy, was the director at the time, fielded the survey to a consumer sample from SSI, weighted to Ontario's age, gender and education, it was fielded from the middle of the campaign to just before voting day.

These questions include those that ask what sources respondents received election news from, a political knowledge test, political interest, trust in news, specific news outlets .

SLIDE 3 VALIDATION OF THE SAMPLE

Briefly, if you recall the 2018 election, this was the one where Doug Ford won and subsequently formed a majority government. Doug Ford obviously had a background that might elicit strong feelings, being affiliated with his. 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 lots of reasons to expect a degree of polarizationin that campaign.

For the analysis, we did go through and clean out about 500 straightliners. At the end, 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 to 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

In terms of our research here, we wanted to dive into whether or not digital media use - 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

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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 coefficent on interest. Those who are more interested are more polarization, this is directly contrary to what Dubois and Blank find, 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 measurs of polarization.

Here we can see that those who use online media sources have the highest bimodality coefficents. 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