The Effect of Online Socialization on Political Reasoning
By Rob Granoth

Introduction
- Political polarization increasing in recent years
- Internet/social media use dramatically increasing in the past decade
- Plethora of research on polarization's effect on political reasoning, but not on the internet's effect on political thought

Hypotheses
- **Hypothesis #1**: Respondents socialized online will find weaker arguments more effective than non-online socialized individuals.
- **Hypothesis #2**: Online socialized individuals' support for a policy will increase in the direction of their identified party's position more so than the non-online socialized.

Methods
- **Design**: Online survey with participants from M-Turk
- **4x3 experimental design plus control (13 conditions)**
- **4 Combinations of weak/strong arguments**
- **Create a pro-pro, pro-con, con-pro, and con-con profile**
- **Experimental design issues – issues selection**
- **Choosing arguments differently**
- **Administer survey differently**

Results & Findings
- **Figure 1 - DREAM Act Pro Argument Strength Among Democrats**
- **Figure 2 - DREAM Act Support Among Democrats**
- **Hypothesis #1 not supported**
- **Hypothesis #2 not supported**

Implications/Takeaways
- Non-online socialized people more in line with our expectations than their online counterparts.
- Online socialization/internet or social media usage may have little to no effect on political reasoning.
- Topic deserves more attention and research, this study is inconclusive.
- Experimental design issues – issues selection.
- Making changes to experiment could drastically affect results.
- Choosing arguments differently.
- Administer survey differently.

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Challenges
- Operationalizing online socialization was challenging due to its complexity/abstractness.
- Learning SPSS & statistical analysis from scratch.
- Online design drew a sample limited by insufficient numbers of Republicans, minorities, conservatives, people who don’t use social media/internet.