# Looking for Answers

## A Naive Approach for Measuring Political Sophistication

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San Francisco, 1 September 2017

Stony Brook University

# Who scores higher on political knowledge?

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| Obama (+) | | |
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Both respondents scored equally on the conventional political knowledge measure in the 2012 ANES!

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# Measuring text-based sophistication

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| $p_{jk}$ | Proportion of words in the response of individual $i$ to question $j$ relative to the overall size of the individual's response |

# Data

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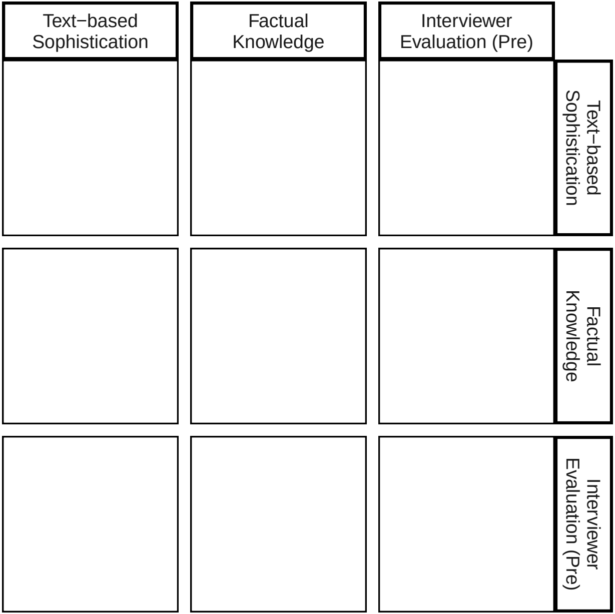
    - 2008–2012 Swiss Referendum Survey (Colombo, 2016):
      N = 26,621 (phone) - 4,917 (non-response)

# Comparison with conventional measures (ANES 2012)



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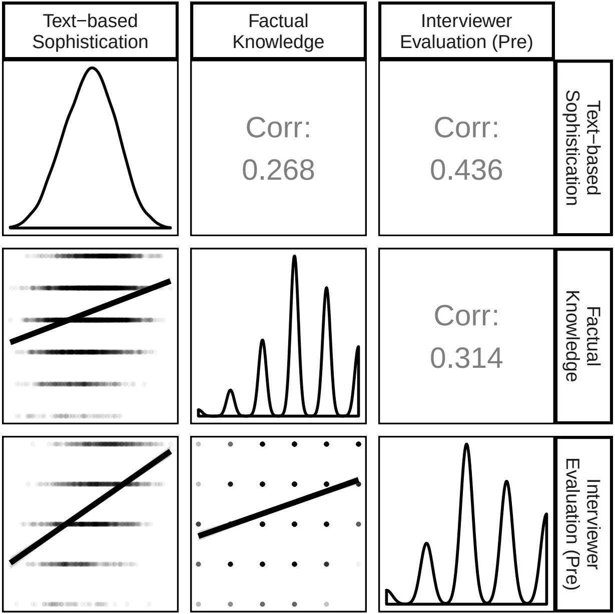
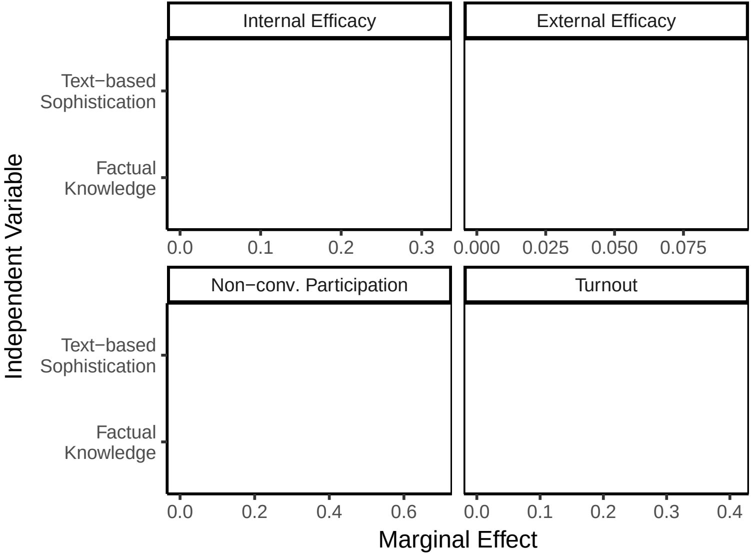


# Validation: Engagement and participation (ANES 2012)



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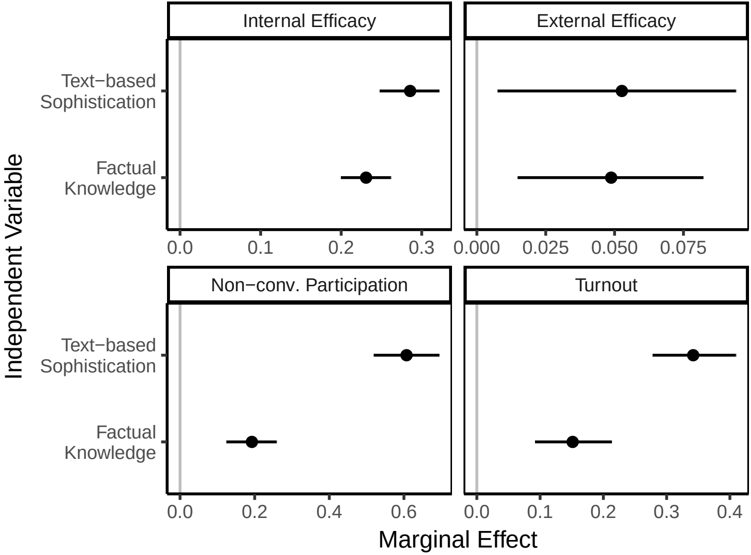

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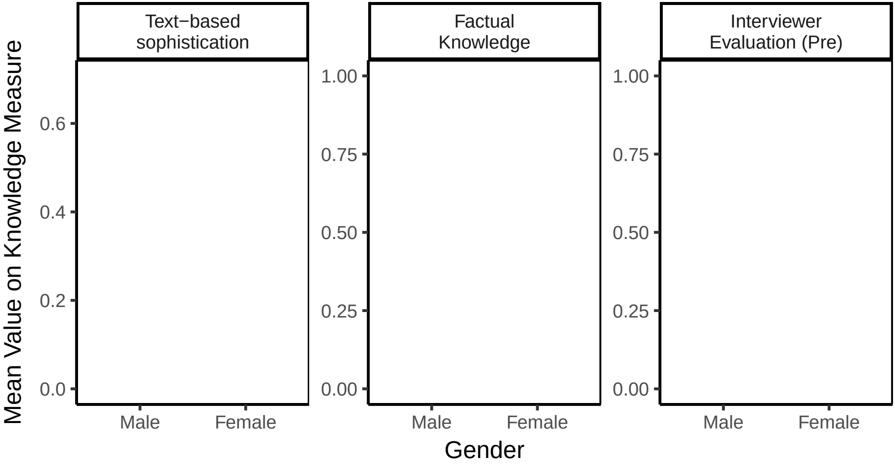
  - ... more accurate information retrieval from news articles.
  - ... manual coding of individual levels of justification (Colombo, 2016).
- But: conventional measures of factual knowledge are, too...

# Application: Assessing the gender gap I



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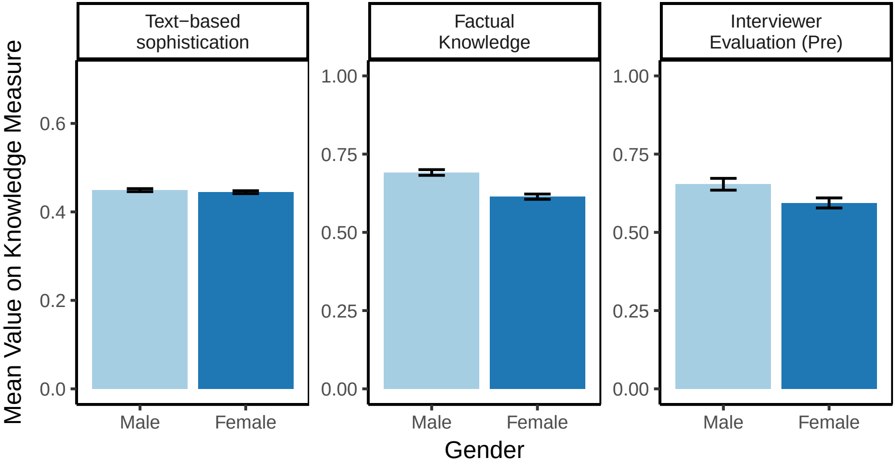
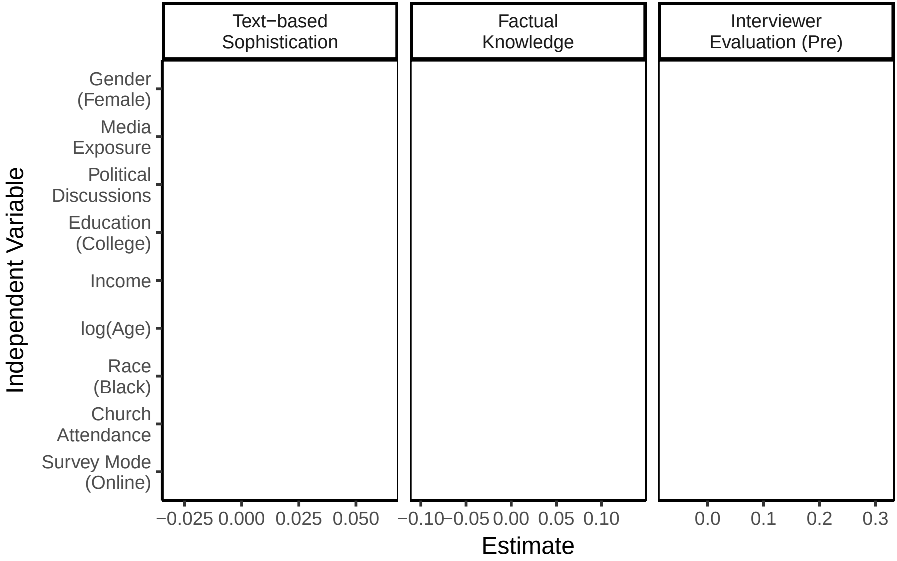


# Application: Assessing the gender gap II



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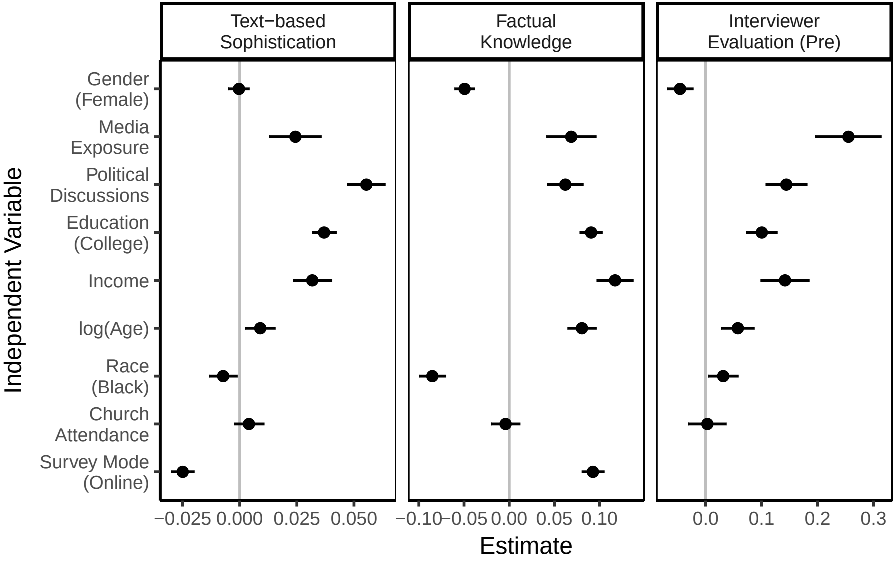

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`#WomenAlsoKnowStuff`

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Thank you very much for your attention!

Manuscript and code available at:
https://github.com/pwkraft/knowledge

Comments, questions?
patrick.kraft@stonybrook.edu

# References

Colombo, Céline. 2016. "Justifications and Citizen Competence in Direct Democracy: A Multilevel Analysis." *British Journal of Political Science*: 1–20.

Luskin, Robert C. 1987. "Measuring political sophistication." *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (4): 856–899.

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