

Women Also Know Stuff

Challenging the Gender Gap in Political Sophistication

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Stony Brook University

Who scores higher on political knowledge?

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Obama (+)		
Obama (-)		
Romney (+)		
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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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$$\frac{\log \left(\sum_{j=1}^J n_{ij} \right)}{\max \left[\log \left(\sum_{j=1}^J n_{ij} \right) \right]}$$

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i	Individual respondent
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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

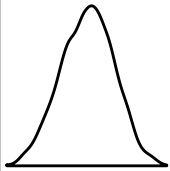

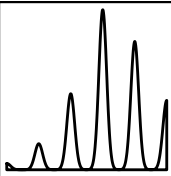
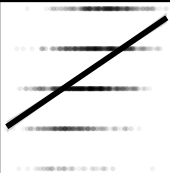
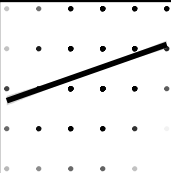
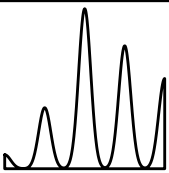
Data

- ▶ **Main analysis:** 2012 American National Election Study (ANES)
 - ▶ $N = 5914$ (2054 f2f + 3860 online)
 - ▶ Non-response: 417, Spanish: 228
- ▶ **Replication:** 2015 YouGov Survey
 - ▶ $N = 1000$ (online)
 - ▶ Non-response: 48

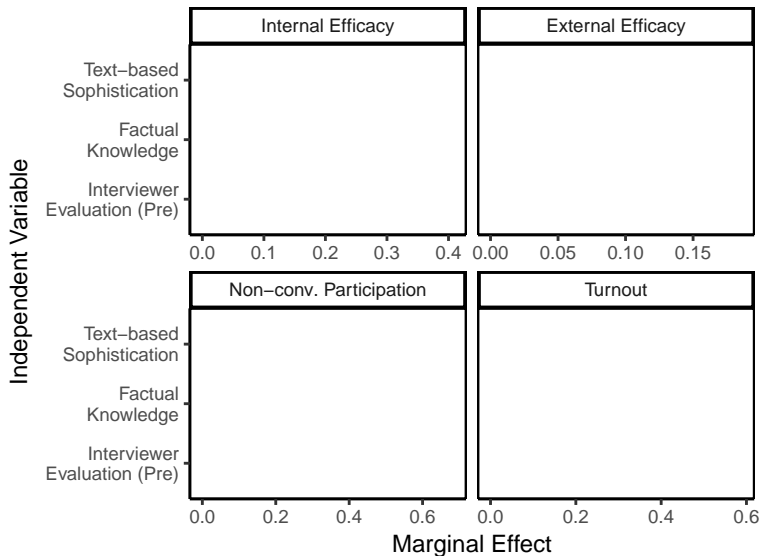
Validating the Measure I

Text-based Sophistication	Factual Knowledge	Interviewer Evaluation (Pre)	
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			Factual Knowledge
			Interviewer Evaluation (Pre)

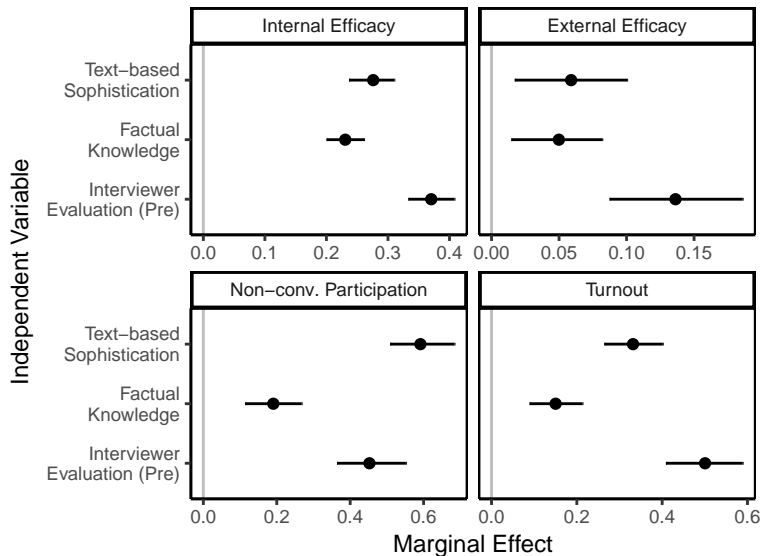
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Text-based Sophistication	Factual Knowledge	Interviewer Evaluation (Pre)	Text-based Sophistication Factual Knowledge Interviewer Evaluation (Pre)
	Corr: 0.271	Corr: 0.437	
		Corr: 0.314	
			

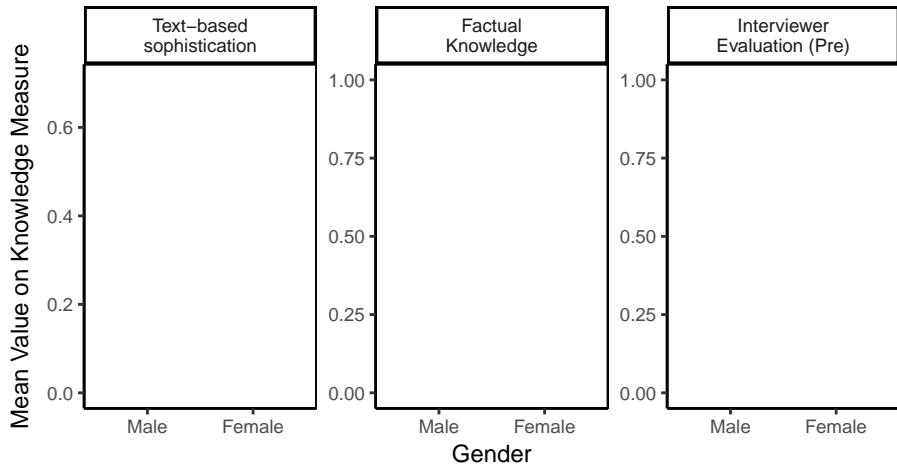
Validating the Measure II



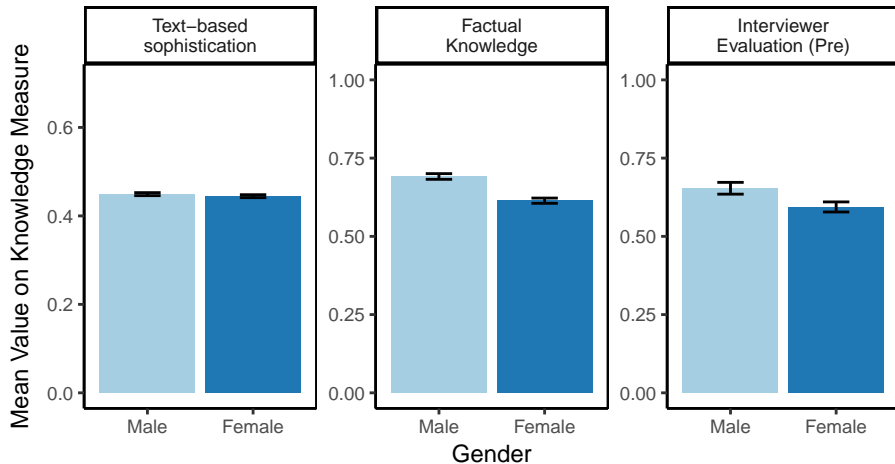
Validating the Measure II



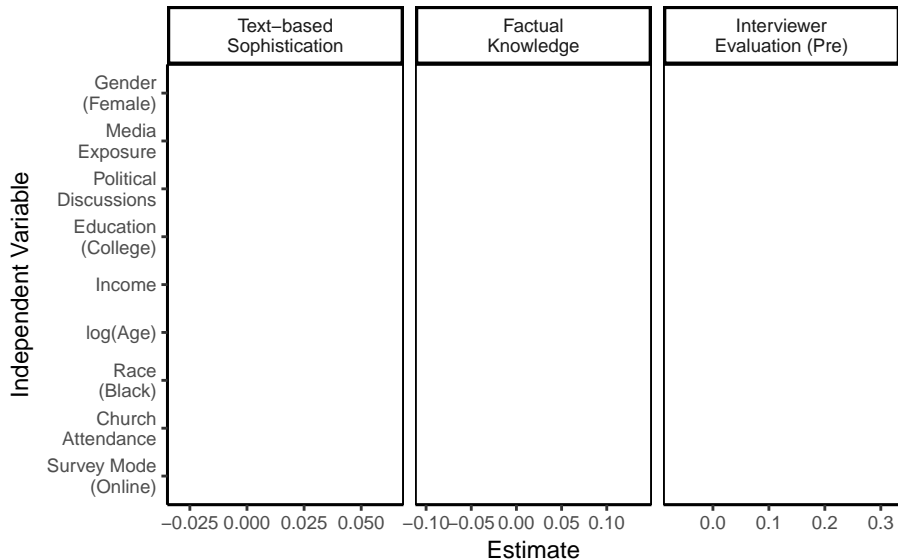
Assessing the Gender Gap I



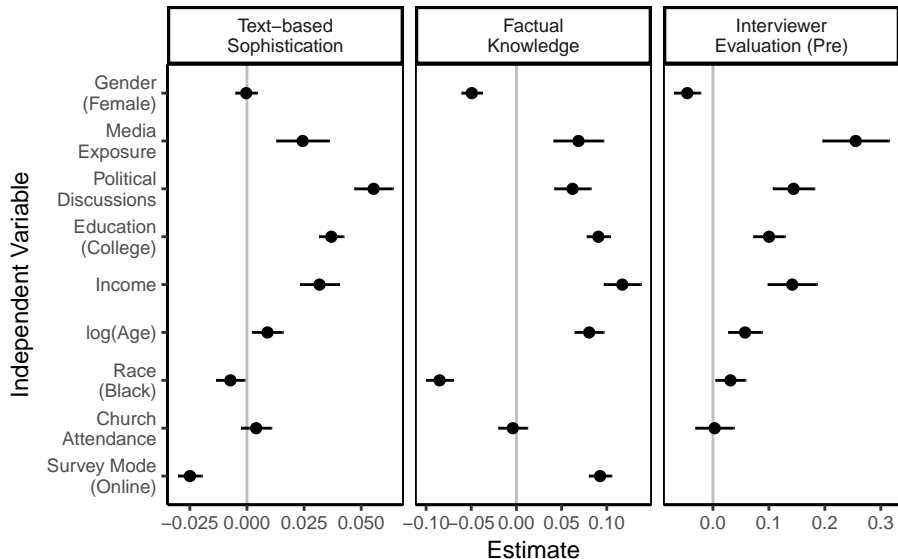
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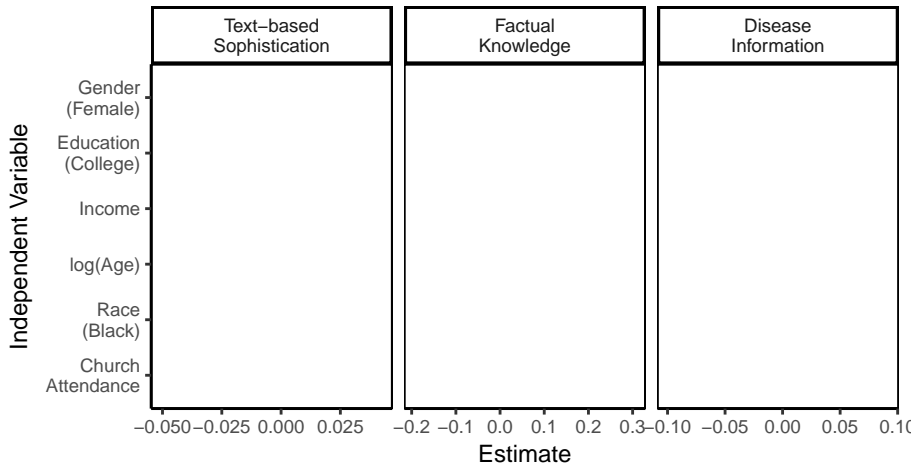
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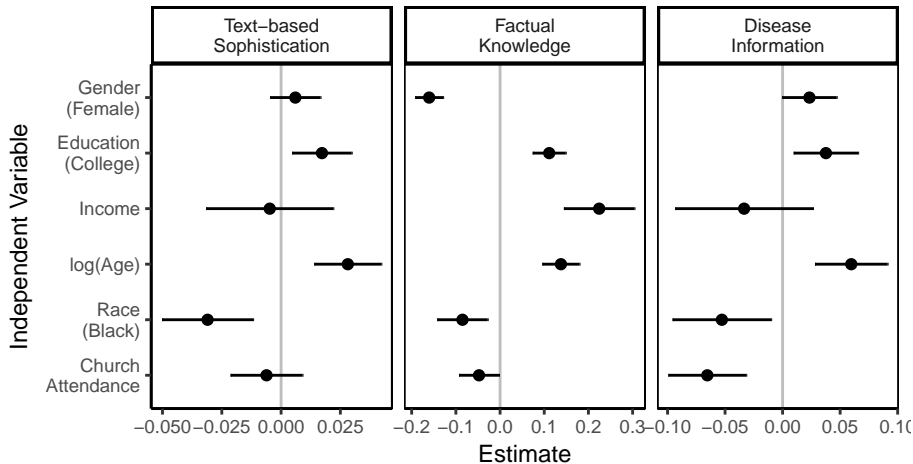
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Replication – YouGov 2015



Replication – YouGov 2015



Conclusion

- ▶ Women might score lower than men on **factual knowledge** about political institutions, but there are no differences in the **sophistication** of expressed political attitudes.
- ▶ We observe **theoretically meaningful** variation in the **complexity** of verbatim open-ended responses.
- ▶ Text-based sophistication is conceptually closer to the **structure of belief systems** than conventional measures (e.g., Tetlock, 1983; Luskin, 1987).

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Thank you very much for your attention!

Manuscript and code available at:

<https://github.com/pwkraft/knowledge>

Comments, questions?

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References

- Luskin, Robert C. 1987. "Measuring political sophistication." *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (4): 856–899.
- Roberts, Margaret E., Brandon M. Stewart, Dustin Tingley, Christopher Lucas, Jetson Leder-Luis, Shana Kushner Gadarian, Bethany Albertson, and David G. Rand. 2014. "Structural Topic Models for Open-Ended Survey Responses." *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (4): 1064–1082.
- Tetlock, Philip E. 1983. "Cognitive style and political ideology." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 45 (1): 118.