

Political knowledge: assessing the stability of gender gaps

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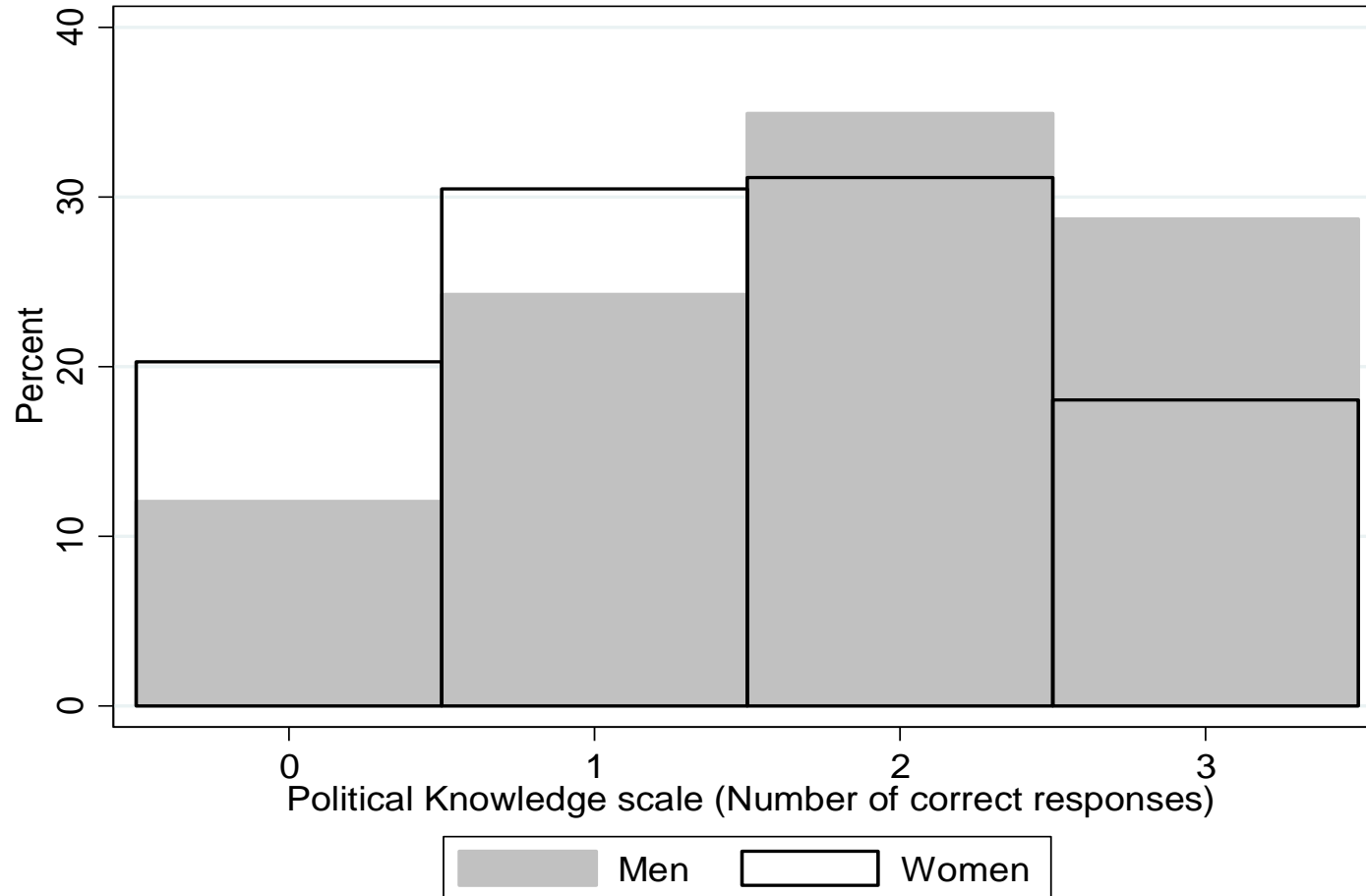
GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Well documented finding
- 2 types of explanations
 1. Methodology (questions)
 2. Resources (micro-level)
- Research mainly focused on US, Canada, UK
- Few comparative studies, macro implications never tested

DATA

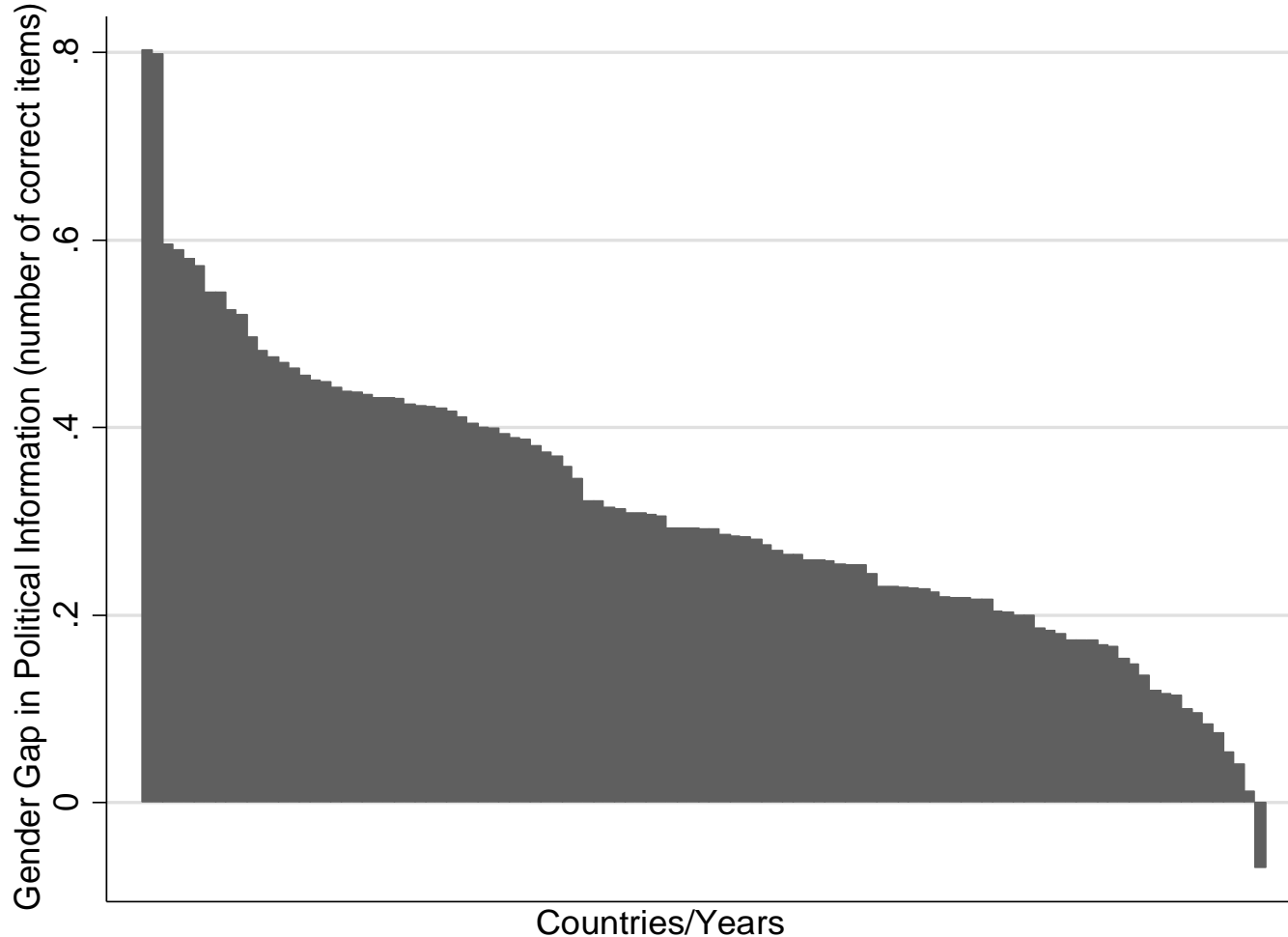
- Ideal data: The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Pooled modules 1-3 (1996-2011).
- 106 post-election surveys conducted in 47 countries, 30 countries have repeated surveys.
- Over 300 political knowledge items.
- Positive knowledge scale from 3 items (unstandardized).

Additive distribution of correct responses to three political information items by gender



Source: The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES.org) based on 161432 valid observations (pooled Modules 1, 2, and 3). Number of correct answers to three questions were simply added, don't knows are coded as incorrect.

Distribution of the size of the gender-gap on the positive knowledge scale, in 107 post-election surveys between 1996-2011.

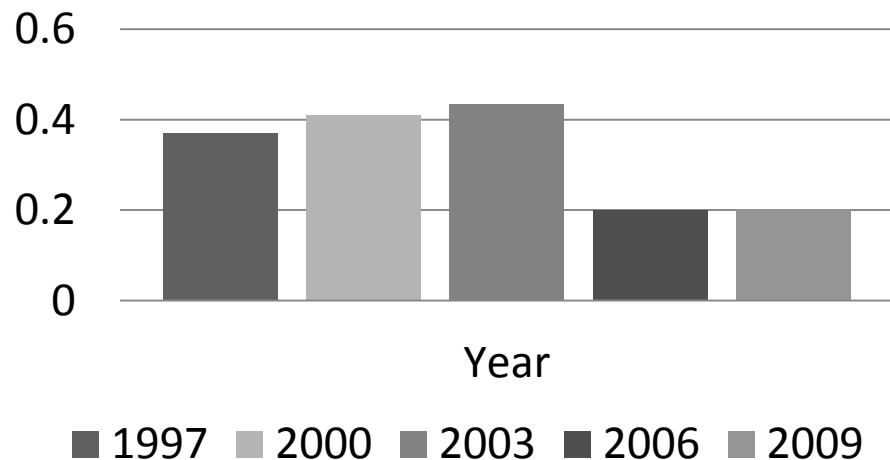


NOTE: Graph presents difference in mean score on political information between men and women in each 107 election study (CSES). Positive knowledge scale.

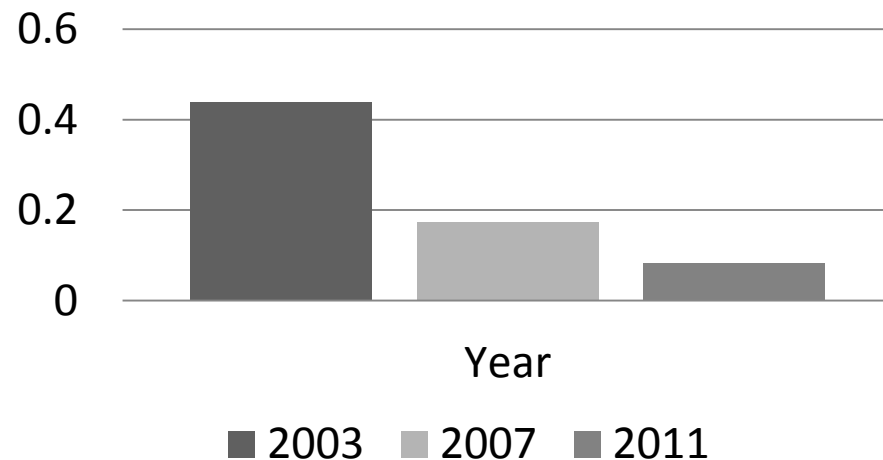
Gender gaps in political knowledge

COUNTRY	YEARS			
Spain	1996	2000	2004	2008
	.5441***	.2931***	.3932***	.2288***
Czech Republic	1996	2002	2006	2010
	.1145**	.1474***	.2830***	.1535***
Germany	1998	2002	2005	2009
	.4321***	.4552***	.2277***	.3213***
Hong Kong	1998	2000	2004	2008
	.3807***	.2917***	.2037***	.2442***
Netherlands	1998	2002	2006	2010
	.3871***	.2188***	.3087***	.4202***
Taiwan	1996	2001	2004	2008
	.7988***	.4041***	.4508***	.5208***
Poland	1997	2001	2005	2007
	.4245***	.4688***	.4220***	.3055***
Norway	1997	2001	2005	2009
	.2687***	.2914***	.3090***	.2575***
Sweden	1998	2002	2006	
	.3213***	.4630***	0.0959	
Switzerland	1999	2003	2007	
	.5953***	.5439***	.5797***	

Mexico: Size of Gender Gaps



Finland: Size of Gender Gaps



Mexico:

- Same items over time (content)
- Same question format

Finland:

- Different items (content)
- Different format

IMPLICATIONS

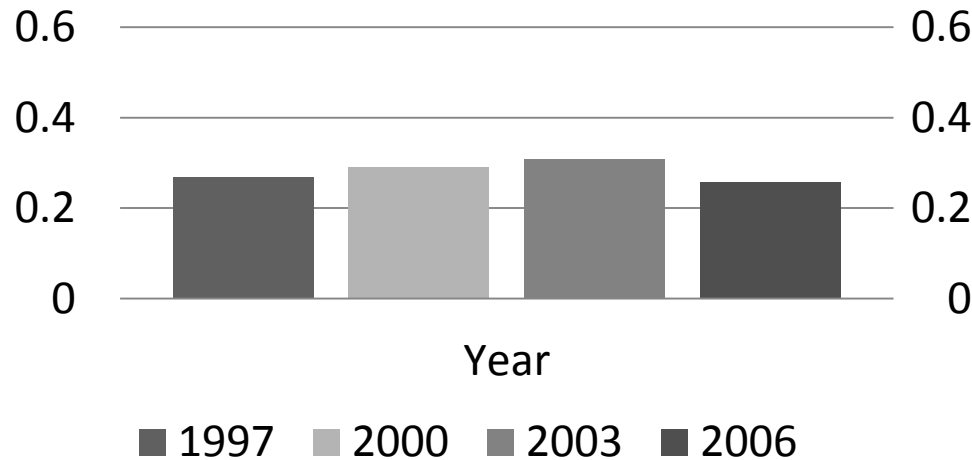
- Question format matters.
- Question content/difficulty matters.
- Questions display some amount of randomness, regardless of format, content, difficulty.
- Scales might be too short (3 items) to allow reliability tests.
- Enough questions now to look at items that present a large departure from average patterns.

CONCLUSIONS

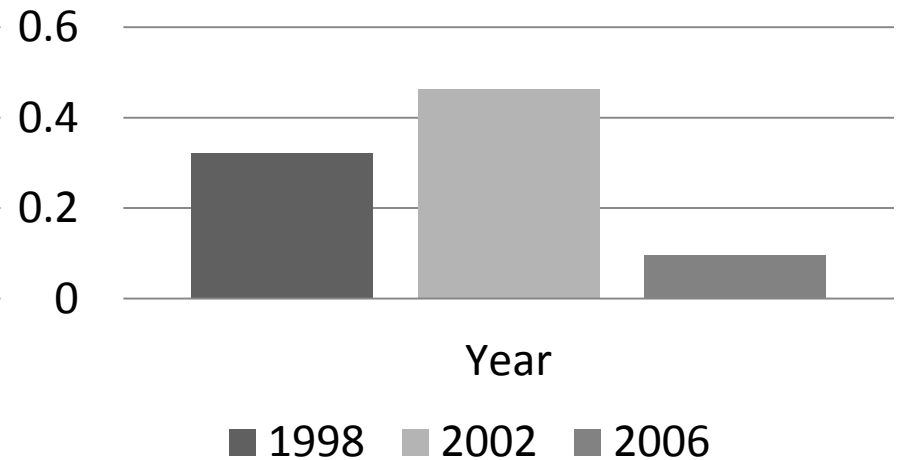
- How much is due to question format/content, how much to randomness?
- Despite fragile measurements, tests confirm existing substantive work on gender gaps.
- Room for further tests:
 - Using other operationalization of knowledge scale (expressive scales, political accuracy scales)
 - Criterion validity tests: using party placements
 - New items from Module 4

THANK YOU!!

Norway: Size of Gender Gaps



Sweden: Size of Gender Gaps



Norway:

- Similar, but not the same items over time (content)
- Same question format (open)

Sweden:

- Different items in 2002 (content)
- Similar format (True/false)