

# 'Do Not Call It Knowledge'

## Political Knowledge Scales Controversies and Search for the Improvement

### **PROBLEM:**

Political Knowledge is considered to be one of the key variables in political behaviour and communication research performing both DV and IV roles in different studies. However, we still have no idea how to measure it properly.

### **STATE OF ART:**

There are two main vectors of research in this area:

( i ) Researches are trying to derive more meaningful estimates from existing scales via disaggregation of scales or assuming different conditional independence (e.g. Barabas 2014; Lupia 2016 ).

( ii ) Researchers are trying to propose improvements of the scales that are likely to reduce some particular biases (e.g. Prior 2014; Martinez and Craig 2010).

### **WHAT AM I INTERESTED IN:**

- **Making sense of existing scales: defining political knowledge dimensions.**  
Preliminary: 4 dimensional framework: surveillance VS substantial knowledge, general facts VS politics facts.
- **Defining links between different types of knowledge and *explanatory* variables (political knowledge as DV).**  
Preliminary: gender gap, media VS civics education influence, education.
- **Defining links between different types of knowledge and *participatory* variables (political knowledge as IV).**  
Preliminary: link between general knowledge and non-voting forms of participation, link between policy facts knowledge and voting.
- **Proposing political knowledge scales design solutions.**  
Theoretical justification based on survey data available and experimental studies.

### **WHERE SPECIFICALLY RESEARCH MIGHT GO (STILL OPEN QUESTION)**

- **Methodological thesis:** analysis based on the U.S. data (available and being gathered through on-line experiments), methodological implications.
- **More comparative approach:** analysis includes European countries, especially new democracies to additionally access relevance of the existing measures in the context of new democracies.
- **More specific focus on particular political implications:** link between knowledge about party and voting choice, link between knowledge about parties and party system institutionalisation (comparative prospective of established democracies and new democracies).

### **DATA AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Longitudinal electoral surveys.
- Designers of the biggest longitudinal studies like ANES, NAES, GLESS, etc. themselves acknowledge problems of political knowledge scales. Even though they locked in the path-dependence of item-comparability-over-years requirement, they usually open to experiments withing this studies. E.g. NAES has an open call for improvements proposals.
- Access to design of Voting Advise Application for the country of interest.
- Online experiments.