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## Citizens' Constitutional Knowledge and American Representative Democracy

*Takeshi IIDA\**

### INTRODUCTION

Since publication of the seminal empirical work on citizens' political attitudes by Philip E. Converse (1964), scholars have found that US citizens are not as politically sophisticated as the theory of representative democracy assumes. Citizens generally lack a basic knowledge of political institutions and processes (e.g., Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), which can prevent them from ensuring that democratic control of government works through elections.

A comprehension of the US Constitution is considered one of the most fundamental bodies of civic knowledge in the United States, as it is tested on the naturalization exam. Nevertheless, there is little previous research that empirically examines how citizens' constitutional knowledge matters in the way they think and act within American democracy. To fill the gap, in this article I use a quantitative approach to explore what category of people are more knowledgeable about the Constitution; how citizens' constitutional knowledge shapes their views about the government's role regarding controversial issues; and what are the implications of these findings for American representative democracy.

The US Constitution is known to be classical liberal in the sense that it protects the liberty and rights of individuals by strictly limiting

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\*Professor, Doshisha University

government's role in the lives of individual citizens. If we literally interpret the Constitution, it is hard to derive modern liberal or progressive ideas, such as welfare provision, wealth redistribution through taxation, and market regulation from the text, because these can be considered as the trespassing on individual liberty and property rights guaranteed in the Constitution. Therefore, knowledge of the actual Constitution can provide citizens with a rigorous theoretical basis for opposing government intervention in various areas, such as health insurance, wealth redistribution, and immigration.

To test this hypothesis, I analyze the original survey data of eligible US voters collected from the internet in 2017. The key findings are that, all other things being equal, respondents who are knowledgeable about the Constitution tend to be against not only national health insurance and wealth redistribution through taxation but also a stricter immigration policy. This suggests that constitutional knowledge exerts a unique influence on citizens' attitudes, independent of party identification and ideology, by making them cautious about the abuse of government power.

## I. POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENTATION

The theory of representative democracy assumes that citizens are well informed about political affairs. They are "supposed to know what the issues are, what their history is, what the relevant facts are, what alternatives are proposed, what the party stands for, what the likely consequences are" (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954, p.308). Otherwise, it is impossible for citizens to fulfill their civic duty to elect representatives based on rationally considered policy preferences and to control them through electoral processes.

First, without knowledge about politics, citizens are not able to form policy preferences that reflect their self-interest or the common good. Understanding what policy options serve them or the society better involves a cognitively demanding process; this is because citizens must collect and interpret information about how each policy option would work in the given political environment and institutions. Political knowledge helps them know or, at least, have some idea about whether a policy option is feasible and maximizes their own well-being or that of the public at large. Citizens will rely on nothing but their whims or emotions while casting a ballot in elections if they do not know which policy they would like to pursue. This would result in a failure of representation because electoral candidates

would have no idea what opinions they should adopt to win votes.

Second, even if citizens have rationally considered policy preferences, they are not able to relate them to their vote choice in elections when they do not know enough about political parties and candidates. Political parties and candidates are supposed to compete for votes in elections by appealing to citizens with their policy platforms. Citizens compare these policy platforms and vote for the candidate whose policy positions best match their own. A lack of political knowledge about the policy positions of parties and candidates will prevent them from doing so, which, in turn, will lead to failure in representation, as they may elect candidates who go against their interests.

Finally, and most important, the lack of political knowledge can reduce the accountability of elected officials to their constituents; this is because citizens without enough knowledge are not able to punish them for poor performance or betrayal of electoral promises. Elected officials are supposed to work for their constituents by implementing promised policies during their tenure in office and possibly to seek reelection after it ends. Citizens will vote for their representatives again only if they think that their representatives performed well in their initial term by sticking to their election promises. This assumed mechanism gives elected officials an incentive to listen to citizens' voices to avoid future electoral loss, and thus it keeps them accountable to the public. Without knowledge about what elected officials really did or did not do, however, citizens are not able to punish incumbents by voting for nonincumbents in subsequent elections; this ignorance allows representatives to ignore public opinion and to do whatever they want.

Although political knowledge has great theoretical relevance to representative democracy, scholars have maintained a pessimistic view of the average American's level of political knowledge ever since Converse (1964) held, based on his empirical analysis, that "large portions of an electorate do not have meaningful beliefs, even on issues that have formed the basis for intense political controversy among elites for substantial periods of time" (p. 254). The accumulated evidence strongly suggests that the average citizen is poorly informed about political institutions, processes, and substantive policies (e.g., Luskin, 1987; Bennett, 1988, 1995; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), which has even led to the following conclusion: "The political ignorance of the American voter is one of the best-documented features of contemporary politics" (Bartels, 1996, p. 194).

The discrepancy between the theory of representative democracy and the

political reality has aroused scholars' interest in exploring the determinants and consequences of political knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Some previous authors have examined sociodemographic determinants of political knowledge and find that white, male, older, well-educated, financially secure citizens are substantially more knowledgeable about politics (Bennett, 1988, 1995; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Others attribute the acquisition of political knowledge to cognitive ability (Luskin, 1990), partisan motivation (Jerit & Barabas, 2012), and the supply of information (Nicholson, 2003; Jerit, Barabas, & Bolsen, 2006; Clark, 2017).

Scholars have also shown that political knowledge, described as a "cornerstone construct in research on political behavior" (Mondak, 2001, p. 238), has a substantial impact on citizens' attitudes and behaviors in the way it activates their political awareness and engagement. Citizens with a higher level of political knowledge are more likely to agree with democratic values, be politically tolerant, have consistent opinions on a broad range of political topics, and engage in various forms of political participation, including voting (e.g., Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Political knowledge also helps increase the probability of having a preferred party or candidate (Jacoby, 1995) and correctly apportioning blame for poor economic performance (Gomez & Wilson, 2001).

Although past research has revealed that citizens' political knowledge is the key to improving the overall quality of representative democracy, little attention has been paid to how different types of political knowledge exert different effects on citizens' attitudes and behavior. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1993) argue that there are theoretically multiple dimensions in political knowledge, such as "people," "party," and "civics," but empirically they conclude that "a one-dimensional model adequately represented the structure in the sample data" (p. 1184). This claim has been widely accepted among scholars, and it has required them use the five-item knowledge battery recommended by Delli Carpini and Keeter (1993) to construct a general measurement of political knowledge. Although Barabas, Jerit, Pollock, and Rainey (2014) showed the multidimensionality of political knowledge in a rigorous manner, the research still lacks a theoretical and empirical investigation of the causal relationship between types of political knowledge and corresponding political attitudes or behaviors.

To fill the gap, I focus here on one of the most important types of political knowledge—knowledge about the US Constitution. As stated, comprehension of the Constitution is a fundamental body of civic knowledge that is tested on the naturalization exam. Most naturalization

applicants are required to take a test assessing their knowledge of English and civics.<sup>2</sup> On the civics test, they are asked 10 out of the 100 questions available on the official list in a multiple-choice format;<sup>3</sup> the questions are mostly about the Constitution because the test is designed to meet the requirement set by law that all applicants demonstrate their understanding of the principles of the Constitution.<sup>4</sup> Although there has been a cloud of suspicion over the validity of a mere memory test as a measurement of civic competence (Schneider, 2010; Lupia, 2016), it is little known whether citizens' constitutional knowledge actually matters. Therefore, I have developed a hypothesis about the effects of constitutional knowledge on political attitudes and examine it by means of a survey data analysis.

## II. THE CLASSICAL LIBERAL CONSTITUTION

As stated earlier, the US Constitution is known to be classical liberal in the sense that it emphasizes strong protection of individual rights and limited government. According to Epstein (2014), the framers' conception of rights held dear "the liberty of action, the ownership of private property, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and prosecution" (p. 4). The protection of private property rights is an especially important antecedent to the use of government power in the Lockean tradition of political philosophy, in which the government is believed to be established by a social contract among individuals for the better protection of their property. Therefore, instigating a revolution against the government is considered legitimate if the government acts against the property rights of citizens. Such a political philosophy underlay the foundation of the United States, as seen in the well-known preamble of the Declaration of Independence, which includes these words: "Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government."<sup>5</sup>

Skepticism about governmental power is also found in the *Federalist Papers*, a collection of articles written by the Founding Fathers to promote ratification of the Constitution. For example, James Madison claimed in *Federalist*, no. 51 that checks and balances preserve individual liberty and rights against government power: "It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it followed as a natural consequence that the Constitution was designed to establish "a system of distinct powers to prevent an accumulation of power in one branch of government, and to ensure that each

branch can stop the others from growing too powerful,”<sup>7</sup> which in turn deters the government from trespassing on individual rights.

The framers’ strong belief in private rights and limited government makes it difficult for us to derive a modern liberal, progressive right to, for example, “housing, health care, or a decent income—or indeed any positive entitlement against government” (Epstein, 2014, p. 4) from the text of the Constitution, if we follow the plain meaning. Big government ideas, including welfare provision, wealth redistribution, and market regulation, are considered constitutional only under the peculiar theory of constitutional interpretation called the living-Constitution theory that “gives the political system extreme flexibility when adapting law to situations alien to the framers” (Fiorina, Peterson, Johnson, Voss & Mayer, 2008, p. 354).

Therefore, in terms of the effects of constitutional knowledge, the classical liberal nature of the Constitution implies that the acquisition of knowledge nurtures caution about the abuse of government power and strengthens the belief in limited government, because it provides citizens with a rigorous theoretical basis for opposing government intervention in individual rights and liberties. This leads to the hypothesis that citizens with a higher level of constitutional knowledge are less likely to support the expanded role of government on various issues, including national health insurance, wealth redistribution, and immigration.

One thing to note, however, is that self-identified conservatives or Republicans may tend to be more knowledgeable about the Constitution than others because of their affinity for classical liberalism.<sup>8</sup> For instance, the agenda of people known as constitutional conservatives, such as Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, and Rand Paul, has included limiting government, lowering taxes, balancing the federal budget, and abolishing wealth redistribution through government programs; further, their efforts to appeal to conservatives bore fruit in the surging of the Tea Party movement in the midterm election of 2010.<sup>9</sup> If this is the case, there is a possibility that constitutional knowledge is a mere surrogate for conservative ideology or Republican Party identification, which also necessitates the consideration of these variables and distinguishing them from each other in the following empirical analysis.

### III. CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES

To test the hypothesis that citizens with greater knowledge of the Constitution are less supportive of the expanded role of government in

various policy areas, we analyze original data from an internet survey conducted from August 16 to 18, 2017.<sup>10</sup> The quota sample of 631 respondents was drawn from a panel of people registered with an online survey company, Qualtrics, and stratified by age, gender, and region to represent the population of US citizens aged eighteen or above.

### The Measurement of Constitutional Knowledge

In the survey, respondents were asked to answer three quizzes on the US Constitution, with the purpose of assessing respondents' knowledge about congressional power to coin money, citizens' rights to bear arms, and congressional power to declare war. All these questions are based on a basic knowledge that would be covered in an introductory US college politics course and a mandatory high school civics course. The wording of the three questions and the answer choices are shown below, along with the percentages of respondents who picked each answer choice in parentheses.

The first quiz is about the congressional power to coin money:

According to the US Constitution, who can coin money?

- The President (5.2%)
- The Congress (16.5%)
- The Supreme Court (0.6%)
- The Federal Reserve Board (59.6%)
- Don't know (18.1%)

As specified in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, the correct answer is "The Congress," but the majority of the respondents (59.6%) were wrong in choosing "The Federal Reserve Board," which finds no mention in the Constitution and was not established until 1935.

The second quiz assesses literal knowledge about the Second Amendment:

Which right of the people does the Second Amendment to the US Constitution protect?

- The right to peaceably assemble (9.8%)
- The right to keep and bear arms (78.9%)
- The right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures (2.2%)
- The right to alter or abolish a government (0.5%)

- Don't know (8.6%)

Probably because the Second Amendment is often mentioned in the media in terms of gun control, most of the respondents (78.9%) were successful in picking the correct answer choice, "The right to keep and bear arms."

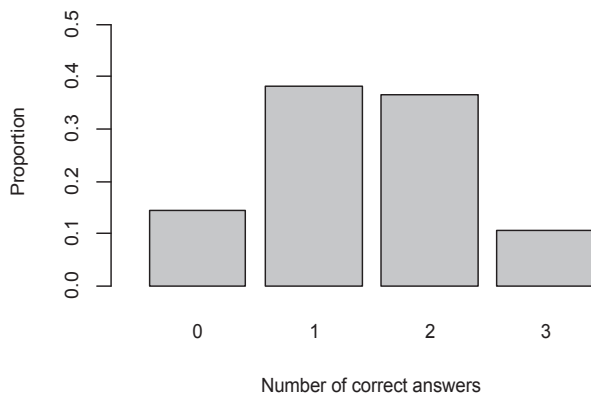
The third quiz concerns the military role of the Congress:

According to the US Constitution, who holds the power to declare war?

- The President (39.3%)
- The Congress (47.9%)
- The Supreme Court (1.4%)
- The Secretary of Defense (5.4%)
- Don't know (6.0%)

As also specified in Article I, Section 8, the correct answer choice is "The Congress," but a substantial proportion of the respondents (39.3%) were wrong in choosing "The President"; however, the plurality (47.9%) picked the correct answer choice. This is probably because the president has had de facto power to initiate military action as the commander-in-chief, especially since the Cold War era.

The distribution of the number of correct answers looks quite normal (fig. 1), with a mean value of 1.43; this is because the level of difficulty varies much among the questions, as described above. Of interest is what explains the variation in constitutional knowledge in this measurement and how it is associated with public attitudes toward the government role in



**Figure 1.** The distribution of constitutional knowledge



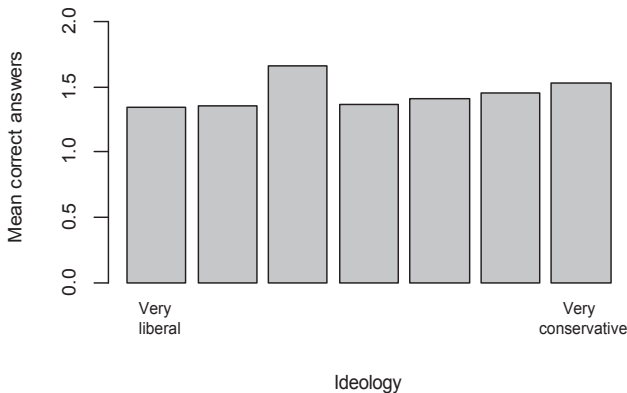
policy areas.

### The Determinants of Constitutional Knowledge

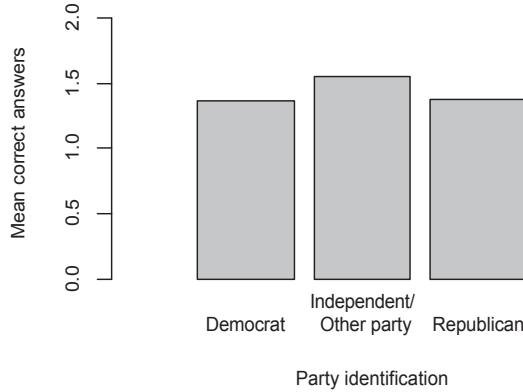
To discover the determinants of constitutional knowledge, I ran multivariate regression to isolate the impacts of various individual-level factors, including ideology, party identification, gender, race, education, age, and household income, on constitutional knowledge. The results and the coding of the variables are reported in the appendix.<sup>11</sup> The most notable thing is that neither conservative ideology nor Republican Party identification is positively associated with constitutional knowledge. This means that conservatives and Republicans, who are supposed to hold dear the Constitution, are not necessarily knowledgeable about it.

To illustrate the bivariate relationship between ideology and constitutional knowledge, we can observe how the mean values of the number of correct answers on the questions vary according to the range of ideologies from “Very liberal” to “Very conservative” (fig. 2). If conservatism is positively associated with constitutional knowledge, then the mean value will be higher among the more conservative respondents. What we see in figure 2, however, is that there is no such between-groups variation in the mean value of correct answers.

The bivariate relationship between party identification and constitutional knowledge is also illustrated in figure 3. If Republican Party identification is positively associated with constitutional knowledge, the mean value should be highest among Republicans; however, there is no such tendency. In fact,



**Figure 2.** Ideology and constitutional knowledge



**Figure 3.** Party identification and constitutional knowledge

Republicans are less knowledgeable about the Constitution than political independents who identify themselves with minor parties or no party.

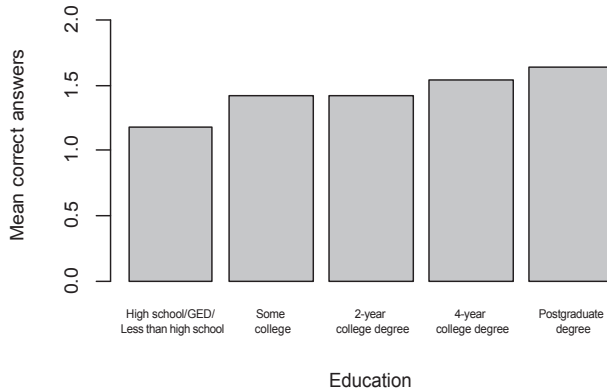
Although conservatives and Republicans are supposed to be familiar with classical liberalism as embedded in the Constitution, ideology and party identification do not make any difference in constitutional knowledge; this indicates that constitutional knowledge does not serve as a surrogate for conservative ideology or Republican Party identification.

What does explain the variation in constitutional knowledge is level of education, age, and gender, all of which are commonly found to be significant in the literature on political knowledge (e.g., Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). A higher level of education, older age, and being male are associated with a higher level of constitutional knowledge.

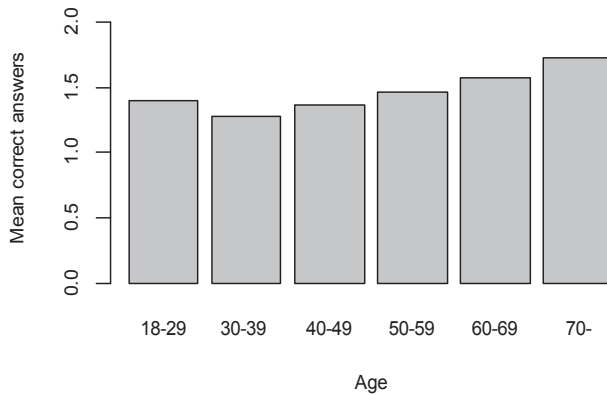
The bivariate relationship between education and constitutional knowledge can be visualized in figure 4. The mean value of correct answers on the Constitution quiz tends to be higher among respondents with a higher level of education; for example, the value is 1.18 for the group that is “High school/GED/Less than high school” and 1.64 for the “Postgraduate degree” group. This suggests that formal education helps citizens acquire knowledge about the Constitution.

Older respondents are also more likely to be knowledgeable about the Constitution (fig. 5). The lowest and highest mean values of correct answers are found among respondents aged 30–39 (1.28) and those aged 70 or over (1.73), respectively. This implies that not only formal education but also political socialization matters in the acquisition of constitutional knowledge.

Finally, we see that male respondents tend to have a higher level of



**Figure 4.** Education and constitutional knowledge

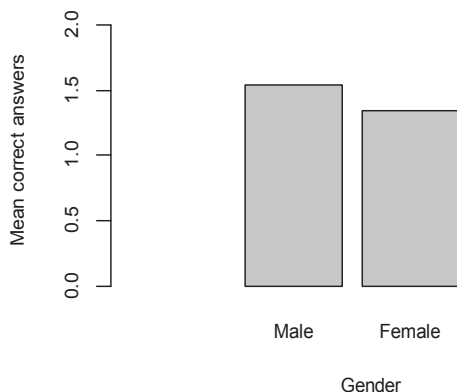


**Figure 5.** Age and constitutional knowledge

knowledge about the Constitution than female respondents (fig. 6). Although the difference of 0.19 in the mean values of correct answers given by the two gender groups is substantially smaller than that among the education or age groups, it is statistically significant even when all other covariates are taken into consideration. Of course, this cannot be accounted for by genetic factors, but gender role expectations in the socialization process may explain the difference in constitutional knowledge between the two groups.

### The Impact of Constitutional Knowledge

For the question on how constitutional knowledge shapes citizens' views



**Figure 6.** Gender and constitutional knowledge

of the government's role, I ran a multivariate regression to assess the impact of constitutional knowledge on public support for government intervention in various areas, controlling for ideology, party identification, gender, race, education, age, and household income.

Policy areas in which the federal government may play a role include national health insurance, redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor, and immigration policies. The respondents were asked the following question:

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements?

The Federal Government should guarantee health insurance to every American.

The Federal Government should tax the rich to help the poor.

The Federal Government should enact a stricter immigration policy.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

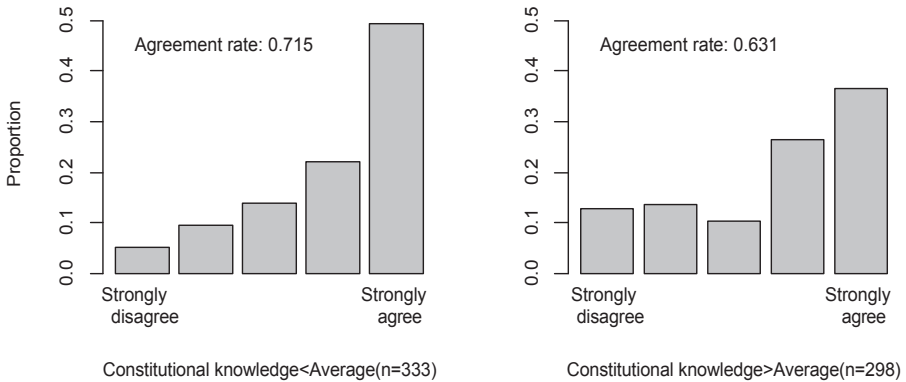
All the statements begin with the subject “The Federal Government” and are followed by verbs corresponding to a governmental action about which the respondents provide their opinion on a 5-point scale ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.” (The results for the multivariate regression

model that explains the respondents' attitudes toward each issue are provided in the appendix.)

The first statement concerns the federal government's role in providing universal coverage of health care services to all US citizens. Universal health care has been a divisive issue among the public in terms of constitutionality. In particular, the introduction of President Obama's Affordable Care Act, which had the purpose of making health insurance more accessible to people with a lower income, was challenged by conservatives who questioned its constitutionality. For example, Republican congressman Todd Akin held, "I don't find in the Constitution that it is the job of the government to provide health care."<sup>12</sup> Although the Supreme Court ruled in *NFIB v. Sebelius* in 2012 that Congress had the authority to enact most provisions of the ACA, it is still true that the Constitution in its classical liberal text makes no mention of a right to health care. Therefore, constitutional knowledge should be expected to make people less supportive of health insurance provision by the federal government.

The multivariate regression results show that constitutional knowledge is negatively associated with support for national health insurance, all other things being equal. To be more specific, the distribution of the answers for two groups of respondents can be distinguished by the level of constitutional knowledge (fig. 7). Among the respondents with below-average constitutional knowledge, 71.5 percent strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the federal government should guarantee health insurance to every

"The Federal Government should guarantee health insurance to every American."



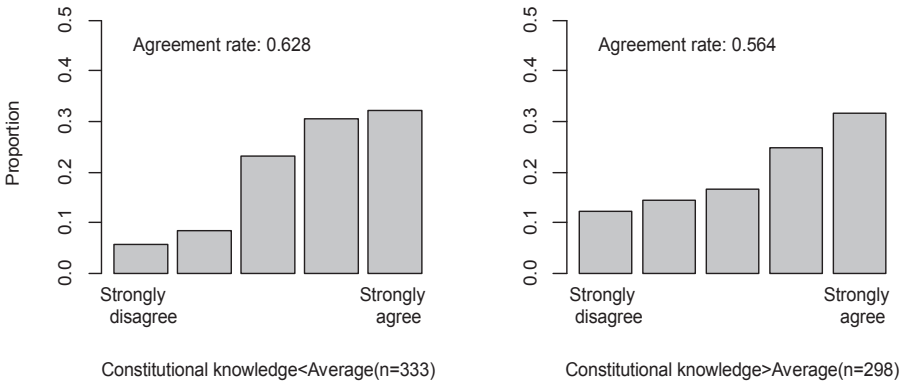
**Figure 7.** Constitutional knowledge and attitudes toward national health insurance

American, while 63.1 percent of those with the above-average constitutional knowledge had a similar opinion. This suggests that citizens with a higher level of constitutional knowledge are less likely to support the idea of the federal government providing health care services to Americans, although more than half of the more knowledgeable ones supported it. The regression results also show the tendencies of conservatives, Republicans, whites, the better educated, and the higher-household income earners to be less supportive of universal health care provision by the federal government.

The second statement is about the federal government’s role in redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor through taxation. Wealth redistribution is another issue that has been hotly debated by liberals and conservatives in terms of constitutionality, at least at a philosophical level. Liberals’ calls for raising taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations are always criticized by conservatives, who consider redistribution of wealth as violating the property rights of individuals (Huemer, 2017). Although this type of abstract argument against redistribution through taxation rarely attracts public attention in daily life, it may sound persuasive to those who study the Constitution. Therefore, it is predicted that constitutional knowledge will make people less likely to support redistribution by the federal government.

The multivariate regression results show that constitutional knowledge is negatively associated with support for redistribution of wealth through taxation, all other things being equal. The illustration (fig. 8) of the bivariate

“The Federal Government should tax the rich to help the poor.”



**Figure 8.** Constitutional knowledge and attitudes toward redistribution

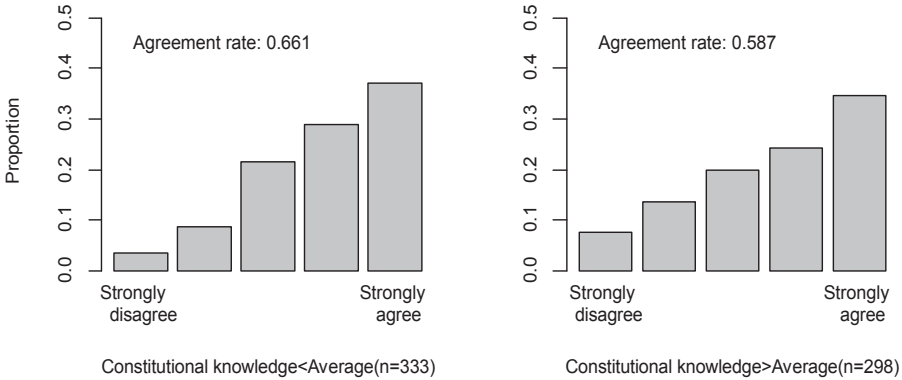
relationship between constitutional knowledge and the respondents' attitudes, demonstrates how the distribution of answers differs between the two groups of respondents distinguished by level of constitutional knowledge. Among the respondents with below-average constitutional knowledge, 62.8 percent strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the federal government should tax the rich to help the poor, while 56.4 percent of those with above-average constitutional knowledge thought similarly. This indicates that citizens with a higher level of constitutional knowledge are less likely to support the active role of the federal government in redistribution through taxation. Moreover, according to the multivariate regression analysis results, conservatives, Republicans, and the higher-household income earners are less likely to be supportive of redistribution.

Finally, the third statement concerns the role that the federal government plays in controlling immigration. Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress is entrusted with the power to "establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization." Therefore, there is no doubt that the federal government, especially the legislative branch, is responsible for enacting laws about immigration. The extent to which the federal government should wield control over immigration is still a matter of discussion, however, particularly at a time when President Trump, the head of the executive branch, is remarkably active in issuing executive orders that circumvent the legislative branch. This might have made constitutionally knowledgeable people, who embrace individual rights and limited government, concerned about the federal government's power over immigration, which, in turn, leads to the prediction that constitutional knowledge makes people less likely to support stricter immigration policies.

The multivariate regression results indicate that constitutional knowledge is negatively associated with support for stricter immigration policies, all other things being equal. The distribution of answers for the immigration policy question differ significantly for the two groups of respondents distinguished by level of constitutional knowledge (fig. 9). Among the respondents with below-average constitutional knowledge, 66.1 percent strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the federal government should tax the rich to help the poor, while 58.7 percent of those with above-average constitutional knowledge thought along similar lines. This makes us infer that citizens with a higher level of constitutional knowledge are more likely to oppose stricter immigration policies by the federal government.

One notable thing is that constitutional knowledge affects attitudes toward immigration policies that is opposed to that of conservative ideology and

“The Federal Government should enact a stricter immigration policy.”



**Figure 9.** Constitutional knowledge and attitudes toward immigration

Republican party identification. The multivariate regression analysis results suggest that conservatives and Republicans are more likely to support stricter immigration policies, while the Democrats and the better educated are more likely to oppose them. Constitutional knowledge, thus, has effects like those by the latter group of respondents; people with a high level of constitutional knowledge tend to go with the Democrats and liberals, rather than the Republicans and conservatives in immigration policy. This provides further evidence that constitutional knowledge exerts a unique influence on public attitudes and is not a mere surrogate for conservative ideology and Republican Party identification.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article I have examined the effects of constitutional knowledge on public attitudes, showing that knowledge about the classical liberal US Constitution leads to the development of a cautious attitude concerning the abuse of government power and strengthens belief in limited government. Consistent with this theory, empirical analysis found that respondents with a higher level of constitutional knowledge were less likely to support the expanded role of government in the provision of health insurance, the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor through taxation, and the control of immigration. This implies that citizens’ constitutional knowledge influences the way Americans think and act about democracy.

First, constitutional knowledge can help in making the government more



accountable to the public. The theory of representative democracy requires citizens to watch government action closely so that they can mete out adequate punishment or reward to incumbent representatives during elections. Skepticism of the federal government's use of power, fostered by knowledge of the Constitution, gives US citizens a strong incentive to examine the policies, performances, and even morality of government actors, which, in turn, will promote representatives listening to public opinion in order to avoid losing elections.

Second, constitutional knowledge can moderate ideological and partisan opposition. As the empirical analysis shows, constitutional knowledge exerts a unique influence, independent of party identification and ideology. It shapes public attitudes toward the provision of health insurance and redistribution through taxation in the same way as conservative ideology and Republican Party identification do, while it has an effect like to that of liberal ideology and Democratic Party identification in influencing attitudes on immigration policies. This suggests that constitutional knowledge offers a reasoned basis to consider politics and may help overcome the party and ideological polarization that has prevailed since the early 2000s.

Finally, the argument presented in this article can be elaborated by some additional analyses. Because this article deals only with US data, it is not clear whether the findings are unique to the citizens of the United States. Although I have constructed the theory from the US context, the core values of constitutionalism developed in the Western world and spread to other countries consist of the protection of individual rights and limited government, featured by a system of checks and balances among three branches of government. Indeed, the hypothesis regarding the effect of constitutional knowledge on public attitudes toward government has a scope that extends well beyond the American context. If this is the case, constitutional knowledge may work in other countries in the same way as it does in the United States. Therefore, it is important to examine the hypotheses using data for other countries to test the uniqueness of the United States.

## Appendix

**Table A1.** Multivariate linear regression results

Dependent variable	Constitutional knowledge	National health insurance	Wealth redistribution	Stricter immigration policy
Constant	0.783** (0.174)	5.860** (0.238)	4.861** (0.236)	3.257** (0.226)
Constitutional knowledge		-0.193** (0.054)	-0.150** (0.054)	-0.128* (0.052)
Ideology	0.034 (0.022)	-0.225** (0.030)	-0.225** (0.029)	0.154** (0.028)
Democrat	-0.137 (0.088)	0.191 (0.119)	0.274** (0.117)	-0.230* (0.113)
Republican	-0.219* (0.089)	-0.399** (0.121)	-0.247** (0.120)	0.452** (0.115)
Male	0.174* (0.067)	-0.050 (0.092)	0.076 (0.091)	0.096 (0.087)
White	-0.042 (0.086)	-0.336** (0.116)	-0.069 (0.115)	0.060 (0.110)
Age	0.063** (0.022)	-0.040 (0.030)	0.007 (0.030)	0.024 (0.029)
Education	0.102** (0.027)	-0.083* (0.037)	-0.012 (0.036)	-0.082* (0.035)
Household income	0.068 (0.087)	-0.232* (0.117)	-0.253* (0.116)	0.053 (0.111)
n	628	628	628	628
Adj-R <sup>2</sup>	0.055	0.272	0.227	0.204

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

The variables are coded as follows: Constitutional knowledge (0–3); Ideology (1: Very liberal–7: Very conservative), Democrat (1 if Democrat, 0 if otherwise), Republican (1 if Republican, 0 if otherwise); Male (1 if Male, 0 if Female); White (1 if White, 0 if otherwise); Age (1: 18–29–6: 70 or over); Education (1: High school/GED/Less than high school–5: Postgraduate degree); Household income (1 if \$80,000 or more, 0 if otherwise); National health insurance (1: “Strongly disagree”–5: “Strongly agree”); Wealth redistribution (1: “Strongly disagree”–5: “Strongly agree”); and Stricter immigration policy (1: “Strongly disagree”–5: “Strongly agree”).

**Table A2.** Descriptive statistics

	n	Min.	Max	Mean	Std. dev.
Constitutional knowledge	631	0	3	1.43	0.87
Ideology	631	1	7	4.25	1.96
Democrat	631	0	1	0.34	0.47
Republican	631	0	1	0.32	0.47
Male	631	0	1	0.48	0.50
White	631	0	1	0.79	0.41
Age	631	1	6	4.16	1.55
Education	628	1	5	2.87	1.35
Household income	631	1	9	0.22	0.41
National health insurance	631	1	5	3.82	1.33
Wealth redistribution	631	1	5	3.63	1.28
Stricter immigration policy	631	1	5	3.76	1.21

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> According to Lau and Redlawsk (1997, p. 585), the wide divergence between the theory and reality has led to two widely divergent responses. On the one hand, there are “those who accept both the normative theory and the empirical data and who conclude as a consequence that governments calling themselves ‘democracies’ are not truly democratic.” On the other hand, there are “those who accept the empirical evidence but revise downward the requirements of normative theory so that modern governments can still be considered mostly ‘democratic.’”

<sup>2</sup> US Citizenship. (n.d.). US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Retrieved September 5, 2018 from <https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship>.

<sup>3</sup> Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test. (n.d.). US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Retrieved September 5, 2018 from <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/study-test/study-materials-civics-test>.

<sup>4</sup> For the purpose and background of the naturalization examination, see Policy Manual, vol. 12, part B, chap. 1. (n.d.). US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Retrieved September 6, 2018 from <https://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual-Volume12-PartB-Chapter1.html>.

<sup>5</sup> *The Declaration of Independence*. National Archives. Retrieved September 7, 2018 from <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>.

<sup>6</sup> *Federalist No. 51*. CONGRESS.GOV. Retrieved September 7, 2018 from <https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers#TheFederalistPapers-51>.

<sup>7</sup> Founding Principles. (n.d.). The Bill of Rights Institute. Retrieved September 7, 2018 from <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/founding-principles/>.

<sup>8</sup> According to the Gallup Poll, 35% of US adults identified as conservative and 26% percent as liberal in 2017. Retrieved January 18, 2019 from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/225074/conservative-lead-ideology-down-single-digits.aspx>.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that the constitutional conservatives in the Tea Party movement do not necessarily preserve the core value of constitutional conservatism that focuses on political

moderation rather than extremism, as found in the *Federalist Papers* and the Constitution (Berkowitz, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> This survey was funded by the International Institute of American Studies at Doshisha University. The dataset is publicly available for download at <https://tiida.doshisha.ac.jp/datadl.html>.

<sup>11</sup> All the empirical arguments of this article are based on the multivariate regression results that are found, for the convenience of readers, in the appendix, even if it is not explicitly stated.

<sup>12</sup> GOP Congressman Questions Medicare's Constitutionality. (n.d.). Nancy Pelosi. Retrieved September 7, 2018 from <https://www.democraticleader.gov/newsroom/gop-congressman-questions-medicares-constitutionality/>.

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