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The Media Creates Confidence:
The Factors that Drive Confidence to State Opinions and How They Affect Democracy

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Political science has long been interested in whether voters are truly casting an informed vote. It seems that all too often the national narrative is casting the typical voter as an uninformed person who does not understand the greater scope and impact of policy and chooses policy opinions because "elites" tell voters to do so, or out of pure selfishness. Perhaps some voters are voting simply at random. The degree to what ability, or even willingness, voters are able to go and seek out the information on candidates needed to figure out which political candidate most matches their views, or even figure out what their views are, is something that has a great impact on politics. The end result of this insufficient information is citizens may vote for candidates who do not match their policy preferences on major issues, or vote for a candidate who they think has a stance that matches them when in reality the candidate does not have that stance. If true, this could have an end result that is highly detrimental to a representative democracy – the government branches could become populated by candidates who actually have opposite views of the majoritarian opinions on key issues affecting the United States. When the government was voted in by the majority but in actuality represents a minority, a problem arises for a government which aspires to be an accurate representation of the will of the people. A representative democracy such as ours is always supposed to be about rule of the people, with the majority opinion prevailing. But to what degree is that true? Could our public policy simply be determined by the political elites and controlled without popular input, or worse – determined roughly at random by voters who aren't able to form a true opinion or translate their opinion into a vote that accurately reflects their views? What happens to democracy if staunch conservatives

are voting for Kerry or staunch liberals are voting for Bush? Does the presidency accurately

reflect the popular will? This question of vote consistency is an issue that needs to be

investigated if we are to understand how representative our government is. Ultimately we want

to establish answers to two main questions – are citizens voting for the candidate who is closest

to their policy preferences? If not, what factors are preventing them from doing so?

In order to properly answer the question, we must first figure out what people's stances

on policy are, and how they voted. To do so, data was collected from the 2004 National Election

Survey, which measures public opinion on a variety of electoral and policy questions. The 2004

National Election Study entailed both a pre-election interview and a post-election re-interview. A

freshly drawn cross section of the electorate was taken to yield 1,212 cases. The 70-minute pre-

election survey went into the field September 7th, approximately eight weeks before

Election Day. No interviewing was conducted on Election Day, November 2nd. The 65-minute

post-election study went into the field the day after the election, November 3rd, and remained in

the field until December 20th. Data collection was conducted by the Survey Research Center

(SRC) of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. All interviewing

was conducted face-to-face using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing technology. All

interviews were conducted in English, as there were no translations of the questionnaire to a

language other than English. The pre-election study ran approximately 70 minutes per interview,

and the post-election study approximately 65 minutes per interview. Both studies made use

of respondent booklets, and the post-election study also made use of ballot cards.

Randomization was used extensively throughout both the pre-election and post-election

questionnaires, for purposes of randomizing order within batteries or question series, application

of half-sampling to some questions, and random ordering of question blocks.

From this data, it is possible to see what opinion people have reported themselves as having on key issues during the election and what the voters thought George W. Bush's and John Kerry's policy stances are on those same issues. With these two pieces of information we have the ability to indirectly measure voting consistency by seeing if the respondent voted for a candidate that matches the voter's policy preferences, which is done by comparing a value of how strongly the voter feels one way or another on the selected issue to their perception of the candidates' opinions, measured by asking them to place candidates on the same scale. For each chosen issue, if the voter did vote for the candidate who they were closest to in opinion, they would be considered *consistent* and if they did not vote for that candidate they would be considered *inconsistent*.

The first question of the study is what issues to measure consistency on. In order to figure this out, the importance scales in NES were referenced, where respondents were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 ("Extremely important" to "Not important at all") to rate the importance of selected issues to them, as reflected in Table 1. With the assumption that people are most likely to vote consistently on issues they care about to some degree, the top four issues to have the least "not at all important" responses were chosen for further analysis[1]. The top four issues in order were revealed to be **standard of living** (whether or not the US should work to guarantee jobs and a higher standard of living), **defense spending** (whether the government should add or cut spending to the defense budget), **environmental protection** (whether or not the government

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[1]: The reason most "extremely important" responses was not chosen is because we expect voters to vote inconsistently more on issues they don't care about at all and instead expect voters to vote consistently as long as the issue meets some degree of importance, not necessarily if it is the key issue. (Also, this is the only index that produces "defense" and "environmental protection" as defensible members of the Top 4)

should seek to protect the environment at the cost of jobs), and **gun control** (whether it should be easier or harder for people to purchase guns).

The second question with the data is a consequence of not everyone being sure on each issue. What is to be done with the numerous respondents who either do not have an opinion on the selected issue or were unable to place the candidate on the same scale, answering "I don't know" when asked for their opinion or perception? Tables 2, 3, and 4 show that the "I don't know" bloc makes up a noticeable proportion of the respondents on various issues – Table 2 shows that typically 12% to 14% of respondents were not able to give a personal opinion on the selected issue (with gun control being an outlier among the four issues with only 0.82% not responding), Table 3 shows that 12% to 27% of respondents were not able to place Kerry's opinions on the same scale, and Table 4 shows that 6% to 22% of respondents were not able to place Bush's opinions. One choice that is not a legitimate option is to count these values as consistent, since they lack the data on at least one part necessary to make the consistency calculation. Therefore, our two remaining choices is to count them as being inconsistent (because a voter cannot vote consistently with an opinion on the issue if they don't have an opinion) or simply drop them from the index altogether. Either choice will dramatically affect the data – as Table 5 shows, the first method of counting the unopinionated ends up declaring an average of 38.62% of respondents "inconsistent" voters whereas the second method declares an average of 21.52% "inconsistent".

Just because the method minimizes inconsistency doesn't mean it is the correct method to choose, however. Since an "I don't know" voter is still voting but yet doesn't feel confident enough about how informed he or she is indicates that they likely aren't informed enough to be

confident that they are voting consistently. If a voter doesn't know where they or the candidates they are voting for match on the selected issues, they are very likely to be voting randomly, and therefore should be declared inconsistent[2]. Therefore the definition of an inconsistent voter is arrived at as a voter who satisfies one of the following three predicates:

1. **Voting inconsistency error:** voted for a candidate who does not share the voter's policy opinions on the four selected issues

2. **Internal confidence error:** a voter who is either unwilling or unable to state his or her policy opinions on the four selected issues

3. **External confidence error:** a voter who is either unwilling or unable to state the policy opinions on the four selected issues of the candidate he or she voted for

The somewhat good news for democracy is that a majority of voters are indeed voting consistently with their policy beliefs. However, a very significant minority – around 40% – are committing at least one of the three errors and threatening democracy. Before discussing the reason these three errors[3] arise it is important to figure out to what prevalence are these three errors showing up. Table 6 shows that, with the notable exception of gun control, confidence errors make up a significant majority of the inconsistent voters compared to voting inconsistency errors. Furthermore, with the notable exception of defense spending, external confidence errors are the most prevalent out of the three errors. The amount of confidence errors that respondents make throughout voting is fairly wide-spread in width but not much in depth, as seen in Table 7. 48.35% of respondents commit at least one confidence error internal or external, 33.66% of

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[2]: Relative to the selected issues. It is entirely possible that the voter is voting perfectly consistent with some issue or reason outside the bounds of the four selected issues, however without gathering more data or changing the selected issues we wouldn't know.

[3]: Here, error is being used as a normative term used to indicate that the voter failed to vote in a manner that is definition of consistent voting. It is not a "value judgment" on the respondent.

respondents specifically commit at least one external confidence error, and 26.73% of respondents specifically commit at least one internal confidence error.

What causes these errors, however? Perhaps inconsistent voters are just falling into one of the three errors because they simply don't care enough about the issue to form a personal opinion, an opinion about the candidate, and go to the effort of voting for a candidate who matches their policy opinions. This was controlled for to some degree by choosing the four issues where people reported the least amount of respondents reporting the issue to be "not at all important", but there still appears to be a great degree of inconsistency stemming from not caring about the issue. This can be seen clearly in Figure 1, we can tell that the more important an issue is stated to be, the more likely a voter is to vote consistently on that issue, with the notable exception of gun control[4].

In light of this bias, inconsistency needs to be revised to be controlled for importance, as those who vote inconsistent or fail to form opinions and perceptions on issues they don't care about should not be considered to actually be in error. We should actually expect voters to not form opinions on issues they don't care about; therefore counting such inconsistencies would represent a bias. For this reason, voters are instead scored on a new, weighted consistency index that is controlled for importance where a higher score means a voter is voting more consistently with his or her policy views over the four selected issues[5]. On this index seen in Table 8, we

[4]: Performing a cross tabulation between consistency on the issue and the importance of the issue resulted in a p-value of less than 0.001 on environment protection, jobs (standard of living), and defense spending. However, a cross tabulation involving gun control resulted in a p-value of 0.743, showing that there is no statistically significant correlation between being consistent on gun control and thinking gun control is an important issue. This may be because gun control involves primarily voter inconsistency error rather than internal or external confidence errors, unlike the other three issues.

[5]: The exact construction of this index can be seen in the Codebook for Table 8. The creation of this index involves mixing the data from inconsistency within Kerry votes and inconsistency within Bush votes, however. This is justified because a t-test between the Kerry voters and the Bush voters on each issue shows no statistically significant difference between the mean

see that, once weighted for importance, the amount of truly inconsistent voters drops to 25.37% of the voting population. However, this quarter of the population is still a very large minority that is potentially threatening the idea of a representative democracy if they are unable to articulate what ideas they want represented.

When the weighted consistency index is looked at again in Table 9, we can see new patterns emerging for each of the three errors. Confidence errors strongly correlate with increased inconsistency – every single respondent in the most inconsistent octile committed at least one external confidence error and the percentage of respondents committing an external confidence error decreases as consistency increases, with these trends appearing in Figure 2. The same trend appears in internal confidence errors, but not as strong. However, voting consistency errors do not trend the same – instead they increase as consistency goes from -20 to 0 and then decrease as consistency goes from 0 to 20. Because a score near 0 only occurs when the voter declares every issue to be unimportant, it appears that this trend indicates that voting consistency errors are closely correlated with not caring about issues. However, an actual cross-tabulation of the sum of voter importance statements compared to an amount of voter inconsistency errors shows that this is not the case, and there is no statistically significant relation between the two.

Since confidence errors seem to strongly correlate with directing the weighted consistency index toward most inconsistent and since confidence errors make up a majority of the reason why respondents are considered inconsistent, the key to understanding the cause of voter inconsistency seems to be understanding the cause of confidence errors. What could be causing the confidence errors among the voters? Perhaps voters feel unable or unwilling to state

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amount of inconsistent votes cast. For further justification, a t-test showed no statistically significant difference between the weighted consistency index scores of Bush voters and Kerry voters.

opinions about themselves and candidates because they simply lack access because they feel like they were not given enough information to make key decisions. To test this hypothesis it can be seen if those who have had more contact with various forms of news, and therefore would know more information about the campaign, commit less confidence errors. Several power correlations between news related variables does show that watching more news does correlate with a reduction in the amount of confidence errors made by respondents. Seen in Table 10, reporting a high general attention to presidential campaign news or reporting a high attention to presidential campaign news on the television both have moderate correlations[6] with a reduction in confidence errors. Furthermore, those respondents who report higher levels of newspaper reading and internet news reading per week also weakly correlate with a reduction in confidence errors. Television also correlates with decreasing confidence errors – stating that the respondent has watched about the campaigns on television has a moderate correlation with decreasing confidence errors and reporting an increased frequency of watching the campaign on television also has a moderate correlation with decreasing confidence errors. However, simply reporting a higher level of television watching per week does not have a significant correlation with reduction in confidence errors at all. What is more interesting for the news contact hypothesis, however, is that general attention to newspapers and a statement about attention to the news in general both show moderate correlations with increasing confidence errors. This may indicate that voters feel more confident about stating opinions when they specifically access news specifically about the presidential campaign, but simply get confused when accessing information in general.

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[6]: Different Levels of Significance for Correlation r Strength Values:
Strong Correlation: $|r| >= 0.3$
Moderate Correlation: $0.1 > |r| > 0.3$
Weak Correlation: $|r| <= 0.1$

However, once the amount of confidence errors committed is controlled for importance[7] on the issue all the variables change to be what we would expect, as seen in Table 11. All information variables either do not have a significant correlation or correlate such that more information has a correlation with reductions in confidence errors. Having more general contact with news and specifically with news about the presidential campaign does have a weak correlation with the reduction of confidence errors.

One piece of information that can be discerned from which correlations controlled for importance are statistically significant and which are not is the power of the four forms of campaign media – television, newspapers, radio, and the internet. Table 11 shows that hearing about the campaign from the television and the newspaper moderately correlates with decreasing confidence errors, however hearing about the campaign from the radio and the internet does not have any statistically significant correlation. It seems to be that the television and newspapers have emerged as a stronger measure of increasing voter confidence in stating opinions, but the radio and internet has not. Why could that be? From Table 12 we can see that television and newspapers are the most accessed method of getting campaign information with 86% and 70% of respondents using them respectively, which trails internet and the radio at 47% and 44% respectively. Since internet and radio drive a smaller portion of the electorate, they have less control over confidence errors of the electorate as a whole. Another hypothesis is that the content of newspapers and television are typically more directed and to the point, whereas radio and internet could be less directed.

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[7]: To control for importance, only the confidence errors on issues that were considered "Extremely Important", "Very Important", or "Somewhat Important" were counted. Confidence errors committed on issues that were "Not Very Important" or "Not at All Important" were dropped.

Another phenomena from Table 11 is that all indicies about how often the respondent is exposed to the television, radio, internet, and newspapers per week does not have a statistically significant correlation with confidence errors either. It seems that simple exposure to campaign information is enough to decrease confidence errors but then further contact with media does not have any affect. Perhaps this just indicates that access to a variety of media sources decreases consistency errors. Table 13 indicates that the respondents fall roughly evenly into the media categories – roughly a quarter have used one type of media, another quarter have used two types of media, a third quarter have used three types of media, and the last quarter are evenly split between either using no media at all, or all four types of media. Table 14 shows that using more types of media has a moderate correlation with decreasing confidence errors, but also has a moderate correlation with increasing voter inconsistency errors. This demonstrates that the media is indeed arming the electorate with the information needed to feel confident enough to form opinions, but not necessarily empowering the electorate to vote for candidates that represent their interests[8]. It seems that general exposure to media types decreases confidence errors, but depth within a single medium does not.

One way to test the theory that confidence errors are decreased by contact with multiple sources of information rather than deep involvement is to test contact with the media versus issue activism. Activism measures the most in depth means of knowledge about the issues – seeing if the respondent states he or she has been active within the issues by attending meetings, contacted his or her congressperson about an issue, or participated in a protest on an issue. When a

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[8]: What is not accounted for is the fact that the coding for inconsistency matches the voter's personal opinion and the voter's perception of the candidate's opinion. It is entirely possible that the voter is voting perfectly consistently, but simply is misinformed about what the candidate's actual stance is on the issue – a consistent yet irrational vote. Therefore a factor that leads to the electorate voting more consistently does not imply leading the electorate to vote more rationally.

regression is run using confidence errors as the dependent variable and activism, average depth of exposure into individual media, and amount of types of media accessed, only amount of types of media ends up being statistically significant.

What happens when we bring in general political knowledge and political interest? Do these two factors correlate with less voting errors? If so, are they more important than access to a variety of media? To figure out general political knowledge, the respondents were quizzed on six different political questions and scored on how many they got correct. To figure out political interest, an index was made that combines an answer to how much they care about the presidential election and what they report about their general political interest level. A regression between depth of media exposure, variety of media exposure, activism, political knowledge as seen in Table 16, and political interest shows that depth, activism, and political interest are not statistically significant in reducing confidence errors, that an increase in variety of media exposure or political knowledge is correlated with reducing the quantity of confidence errors. From this correlation it becomes even more evident that it is simple contact with information – more political knowledge and more media exposure – that correlates with reducing confidence errors, and actually getting in depth with individual issues – such as being politically active, reading a lot of news, or having a lot of political interest – does not reduce confidence errors at all. This is the exact opposite of what is expected – one would expect deep involvement with the issue to make people more confident to state their opinions. Perhaps voters form opinions immediately on issues from simple contact with a variety of information, and then don't change their opinions as they go deeper with individual issues?

If this hypothesis was true, that would mean those who are very politically active, have high political interest, and absorb a lot of information from a single news medium are not making confidence errors. Those who have had simple contact with information would have already had what they need to avoid confidence errors, and going further within the information has no effect because there are no further confidence errors to avoid. Looking at the trend of political interest versus confidence error reduction in Figure 3 shows that higher political interest has no effect at lowering confidence errors any more than normal – those who have political interest are actually a majority of the most unconfident. Compare this to Figure 4 which shows the same for higher political knowledge instead of interest – in this graph, those who have high political knowledge commit the least confidence errors and those who have low political knowledge commit the most confidence errors.

What happens however when we take into account the general background of respondents? What if we considered the respondents' gender, age, race[9], income level, and education level? Table 17 shows a regression in which these characteristics have been added to what has previously been tested. Once controlled for, none of the factors change – variety of media exposure and political knowledge remain the main factors that are correlated with decreasing confidence errors. Lastly past voting history can be considered – how does voting in 2000 and 2004 affect confidence errors, most else being equal? However, some of the characteristics themselves emerge to show a statistically significant correlation between variance in that characteristic and confidence errors. Most else being equal, males commit less confidence errors than females and younger people commit less confidence errors than older people, as seen in Table 19. However, being white instead of being nonwhite, the income level

[9]: In order for the regression to function properly, race had to be broken into white versus non-white.

of the respondent, the education level of the respondent, and voting history do not correlate with quantity of confidence errors.

Once all of the statistically insignificant variables are dropped from the regression model, a simplistic model focusing on just four variables, ending up with Table 18. A measure of the variety of media exposure, political knowledge, gender, and age all correlates with quantity of confidence errors fairly strongly, explaining 16.9% of the variance in confidence error quantity. Furthermore, within this model voting history does matter – having voted in 2000 or in 2004, most else being equal, correlates with less confidence errors. This is confirmed with individual correlations as seen in Table 19 – voting in 2000 and voting in 2004 are both moderately correlated with decreased confidence errors.

What is the significance of this background information? First, to explain gender – perhaps females are more likely to commit confidence errors because they are more unconfident with approaching information, or approach less information, or care less about the issues in general. This does seem to be the case. Table 20 shows that females approach less of a variety of media than males and Table 21 shows that females have less political knowledge. This further demonstrates that voting inconsistency is most manifested in the form of less access to a variety of media and less general political knowledge, though there may be some gender characteristic that makes females less likely to want to approach the political campaign and less likely to consume media and gain political knowledge. Second, to explain voting history – voters also demonstrate that voting inconsistency is mainly manifested in the way we've stated; access a larger variety of media (see Table 22) and also have more political knowledge (see Table 23).

Furthermore, voters likely have these two traits compared to non-voters because they care enough to vote.

From the data in Table 5, a significant majority of voters are voting inconsistently – failing to vote for a candidate the respondent perceives to match his or her stated policy opinions. This does not bode well for an American democracy that claims to be representative of its people, since such a system can only be representative of those who are able to clearly vote for what they want their government to be. The data in Table 7 shows that confidence errors account for a large majority of voter inconsistencies on three out of the four issues, and this stays true in Table 9 even after confidence errors are controlled for importance. Table 11 shows that when controlled for importance on the issue, the quantity of total confidence errors is decreased by access to a wide variety of media sources but not decreased by going in depth within individual media sources. This is backed up within Table 15, where depth of media and activism within the issues failed to correlate with reducing confidence errors, but variety of media did and further backed up in Figure 5 which shows that among a regression with other key variables held constant, increased access to a variety of media correlates with less confidence errors. This means that access to a variety of different information sources is important for a voter to come to a confident opinion about an issue, and therefore have a chance at being a consistent voter and contribute to a healthy, representative democracy. Figure 6 also shows that having more knowledge about politics – having a high score on the political knowledge index – also accounts for a reduction of consistency errors even when a variety of other variables are held constant.

This data is important because it exonerates the media in relation to promoting a healthy democracy – those who think that media is entirely confusing to voters are not correct. Media

instead has a clear role in helping voters become opinionated and feel confident enough to state opinions and maybe even vote consistently on them. However, in depth access to media does not do anything to further establish opinions, indicating that the average voter opinion is essentially shallow and capricious – formed based on simple contact with campaign information rather than an in-depth study of the issues, absorbing lots of information from individual media sources, or being politically active. This gives our democracy some hope – as modernization rapidly increases access to more and more media sources, the voting population will become more and more opinionated, and our government will be more and more capable of being representative. While the government may not be representative of truly rational opinions, this is simply the cost of democracy over rule by the rational elite. Furthermore, the media gets a great role in steering the shallow opinions of voters – perhaps a lot more of the vote is controlled by the media than we realize. More data could reveal a greater picture of the media's role in changing and molding the opinions of voters, but for now they have a clear role in reducing confidence errors and moving our democracy at least one step forward to the perfect ideal of being a representation of carefully studied, well thought out, rational opinions on key issues.

Appendix A: Tables

Table 1: Importance of Each Surveyed Issue to Respondents

Selected Issue	Importance to Respondent				
	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not at All
Standard of Living	27.39%	33.83%	31.19%	5.78%	1.07%
Gun Control	29.95%	31.44%	29.70%	7.26%	1.24%
Defense Spending	24.09%	35.15%	31.27%	7.34%	1.65%
Environmental Protection	20.46%	30.61%	37.46%	8.99%	1.65%
Government Spending	31.02%	30.69%	29.79%	6.11%	1.73%
Diplomacy	36.39%	33.25%	24.17%	3.55%	1.82%
Criminalizing Abortion	30.96%	30.02%	29.74%	7.04%	1.88%
Black Aid	19.72%	23.76%	35.07%	15.92%	3.80%

Source: NES 2004; N: 1203, 1207, 1206, 1202, 1204, 1202, 1062, 1191 respectively for each descending issue

Table 2: Percentage of Voters Who Respond "I Don't Know" When Asked for an Opinion on a Selected Issue

Selected Issue	"I Don't Know" (% of responses)
Standard of Living	8.99
Gun Control	0.83
Defense Spending	12.46
Environmental Protection	15.92

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Table 3: Percentage of Voters Who Respond "I Don't Know" When Asked if They Have a Perception of Kerry's Stance on the Selected Issue

Selected Issue	"I Don't Know" (% of responses)
Standard of Living	15.18
Gun Control	13.44
Defense Spending	9.82
Environmental Protection	17.66

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Table 4: Percentage of Voters Who Respond "I Don't Know" When Asked if They Have a Perception of Bush's Stance on the Selected Issue

Selected Issue	"I Don't Know" (% of responses)
Standard of Living	8.82
Gun Control	13.37
Defense Spending	4.13
Environmental Protection	18.48

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Table 5: How Methodology Choice Changes the Number of Voters Deemed "Inconsistent" on Each Issue

Selected Issue	"Inconsistent" voters if "I Don't Know" responses are counted (%)	"Inconsistent" voters if "I Don't Know" responses are dropped (%)
Standard of Living	28.65	10.06
Gun Control	40.52	27.91
Defense Spending	28.74	11.98
Environmental Protection	56.57	36.13
Average	38.62	21.52

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Table 6: Prevalence of the Three Different Errors Among the Four Issues

Selected Issue	Voting Consistency	Internal Confidence	External Confidence
Standard of Living	18.03	34.49	47.47
Gun Control	49.66	2.24	47.47
Defense Spending	22.71	47.63	29.65
Environmental Protection	14.82	40.29	44.88
Average	26.31	31.16	42.37

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Table 7: Amount of Confidence Errors Committed by Respondents

Amount of Confidence Errors (X)	% of Respondents Who Committed X Total Errors	% of Respondents Who Committed X Internal Errors	% of Respondents Who Committed X External Errors
0	51.65	73.27	66.34
1	15.92	17.66	10.07
2	11.47	6.85	10.56
3	7.59	2.06	5.78
4	4.37	0.17	2.89
5	2.81		2.06
6	2.31		0.83
7	1.49		1.49
8	0.99		0.00
9	0.83		
10	0.17		
11	0.25		
12	0.17		
Mean	1.39	1.39	1.39

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Note: There are 12 possible total errors that can be committed, four of which are internal and eight of which are external.

Table 8: Weighted Consistency Index Score of Respondents

Score Range	Respondents %
[-20, -16]	1.84
[-15, -11]	3.95
[-10, -6]	9.10
[-5, 0]	19.03
[1, 5]	17.19
[6, 10]	28.03
[11, 15]	10.94
[16, 20]	9.93
Mean Score:	4.153

Source: NES 2004, N: 1088

Table 9: Percentage of Respondents Who Committed Each Error per Score on the Weighted Consistency Index

Selected Issue	Voting Consistency	Internal Confidence	External Confidence
[-20, -16]	15.00	35.00	100.00
[-15, -11]	30.23	55.81	97.68
[-10, -6]	55.55	52.52	65.65
[-5, 0]	63.77	31.40	47.35
[1, 5]	64.17	36.36	34.22
[6, 10]	67.21	16.07	18.03
[11, 15]	11.76	5.04	4.20
[16, 20]	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: NES 2004, N: 1088, P:<0.001

Table 10: Correlation Between News Based Variables and Amount of Total Confidence Errors

Variable	Strength	Significance	Observations
General News Consumption Index	+0.148	<0.0001	1075
General Attention to Newspapers	+0.115	0.0030	636
General Attention to Presidential Campaign News	-0.222	<0.0001	1066
Did Respondent Read About the Campaign in the Newspaper?	-0.098	0.0030	912
Did Respondent Hear About the Campaign on the Television?	-0.164	<0.0001	1066
Did Respondent Read About the Campaign on the Internet?	-0.110	0.0024	764
Did Respondent Read About the Campaign on the Radio?	-0.1545	<0.0001	1192
Attention to Presidential Campaign News on the Television	-0.175	<0.0001	953
How Often Did Respondent Hear About Campaigns on the Television?	-0.114	0.0005	918
How Often Did Respondent Hear About Campaigns on the Radio?	-0.1105	0.0090	558
Amount of Days Per Week Spent Reading News on the Internet	-0.081	0.0050	1212
Amount of Days Per Week Spent Reading News in Newspapers	-0.087	0.0020	1212
Amount of Days Per Week Spent Watching News on Television	-0.043	0.1563	1066

Source: NES 2004

Table 11: Correlations Between News Based Variables and Amount of Total Confidence Errors After Controlled for Importance

Variable	Strength	Significance	Observations
General News Consumption Index	-0.090	0.0031	1075
General Attention to Newspapers	-0.115	0.0036	636
General Attention to Presidential Campaign News	-0.065	0.0508	912
Did Respondent Read About a Campaign in the Newspaper?	-0.098	0.0030	912
Did Respondent Hear About a Campaign on the Television?	-0.072	0.027	1066
Did Respondent Read About the Campaign on the Internet?	-0.0129	0.7208	764
Did Respondent Hear About the Campaign on the Radio?	+0.0333	0.2511	1192
Attention to Presidential Campaign News on the Television	-0.072	0.0265	953
How Often Did Respondent Hear About Campaigns on the Television?	+0.046	0.1623	918
How Often Did Respondent Hear About Campaigns on the Radio?	-0.111	0.1259	558
Amount of Days Per Week Spent Reading News on the Internet	-0.026	0.3642	1212
Amount of Days Per Week Spent Reading News in Newspapers	-0.011	0.6994	1212
Amount of Days Per Week Spent Watching News on Television	+0.029	0.3450	1066

Source: NES 2004

Table 12: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Used Each Media Type to Learn about the Presidential Campaign

Media Type	Respondents %
Television	86.11
Newspaper	69.73
Internet	46.81
Radio	44.18

Source: NES 2004, N: 1066, 912, 1066, 1066

(Internet was netcampgn*netaccess)

Table 13: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Used Each Media Type to Learn about the Presidential Campaign

Number of Media Types Accessed	Respondents %
0/4	11.22
1/4	23.02
2/4	26.07
3/4	25.66
4/4	14.03

Source: NES 2004, N: 1212

Table 14: Correlation Between Amount of Media Types Accessed Versus Voter Errors

Error Type	Strength	Significance	Observations
Voting Inconsistency Error	+0.136	>0.0001	1212
Internal Confidence Error	-0.227	>0.0001	1212
External Confidence Error	-0.222	>0.0001	1212
Total Confidence Error Aggregate	-0.267	>0.0001	1212

Source: NES 2004

Table 15: Regression Predicting Whether Depth of Involvement or Simple Contact Best Correlates with Decreasing Confidence Errors

Variable	Coefficient	Standard of Error
Depth of Media Exposure	-0.220	0.172
Variety of Media Exposure	-0.375***	0.107
Activism within Issues	-0.126	0.108
Observations: 449, R^2: 0.048, Significance – *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$; ***: $p < .005$		

Source: NES 2004

Table 16: Regression Predicting Whether Depth of Involvement or Variety of Exposure Best Correlates with Decreasing Confidence Errors, Controlling for Political Knowledge and Political Interest

Variable	Coefficient	Standard of Error
Depth of Media Exposure	+0.059	0.183
Variety of Media Exposure	-0.376***	0.105
Activism Within Issues	-0.116	0.106
Political Knowledge	-0.260***	0.061
Political Interest	-0.005	0.057
Observations: 448, R^2: 0.097, Significance – *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$; ***: $p < .005$		

Source: NES 2004

Table 17: Regression Predicting the Variables that Correlate with Decreasing Confidence Errors

Variable	Coefficient	Standard of Error
Depth of Media Exposure	+0.037	0.180
Variety of Media Exposure	-0.196	0.111
Activism Within Issues	-0.051	0.107
Political Knowledge	-0.236***	0.067
Political Interest	-0.036	0.057
Gender	+0.601***	0.155
Age	+0.010*	0.005
White vs. Non-White	+0.295	0.181
Income Level	+0.004	0.003
Education Level	-0.064	0.035
Voted in 2000	+0.026	0.094
Voted in 2004	-0.017	0.039
Observations: 443, R^2: 0.157, Significance – *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$; ***: $p < .005$		

Source: NES 2004

Table 18: Regression With the Most Significant Values that Correlate with Decreasing Confidence Errors (the Simplest Model)

Variable	Coefficient	Standard of Error
Variety of Media Exposure	-0.300***	0.055
Political Knowledge	-0.332***	0.044
Gender	+0.467***	0.114
Age	+0.020***	0.019
Voted in 2000	-0.326*	0.152
Voted in 2004	-0.517*	0.212
Observations: 1044, R^2: 0.185, Significance – *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$; ***: $p < .005$		

Source: NES 2004

Table 19: Correlation Between Background Information of Respondent and Quantity of Confidence Errors

Error Type	Strength	Significance	Observations
Voted in 2000	-0.125	>0.0001	1200
Voted in 2004	-0.169	>0.0001	1198
Being Male	+0.188	>0.0001	1212

Source: NES 2004

Table 20: The Variety of Media Exposure Used By Each Gender to Gain Knowledge About the Campaign

Amount of Media Types	Males (%)	Females (%)
0/4	42.65	57.35
1/4	39.78	60.22
2/4	44.30	55.70
3/4	48.55	51.45
4/4	62.35	37.65

Source: NES 2004, N=1212, P<0.001

Table 21: Political Knowledge Versus Gender

Political Knowledge Questions Answered Correctly	Males (%)	Females (%)
0/6	31.78	68.22
1/6	38.10	61.90
2/6	42.98	57.02
3/6	46.10	53.90
4/6	56.50	43.50
5/6	74.74	25.26
6/6	83.33	16.67

Source: NES 2004, N=1212, P<0.001

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1:
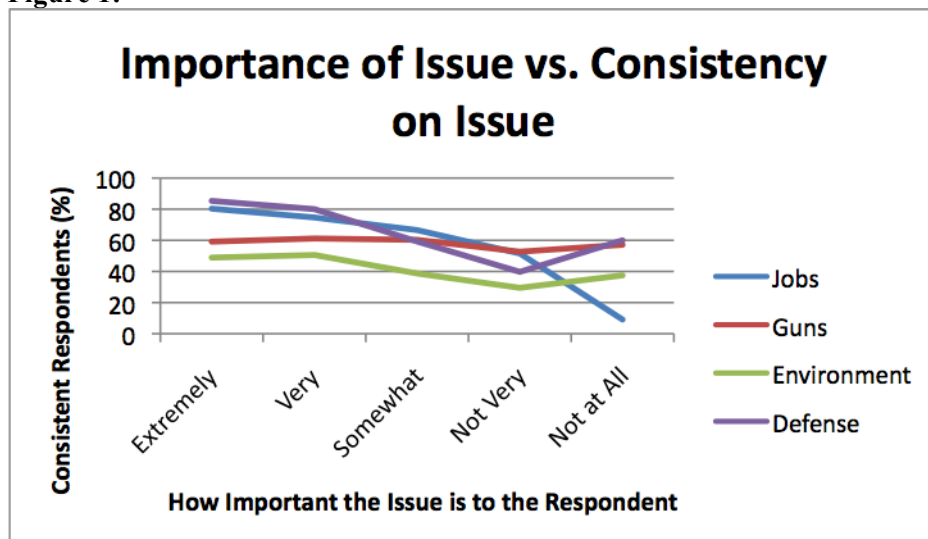
Source: NES 2004; N: 1096 for Jobs, 1099 for Guns, 1097 for Environment, and 1101 for Defense
Note: the correlation between importance and consistency on the gun control issue is not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).
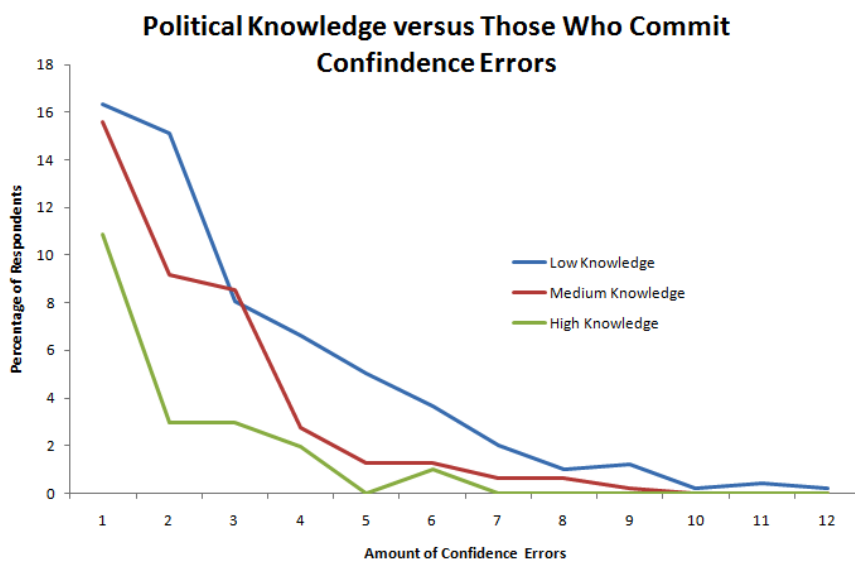
Figure 2:
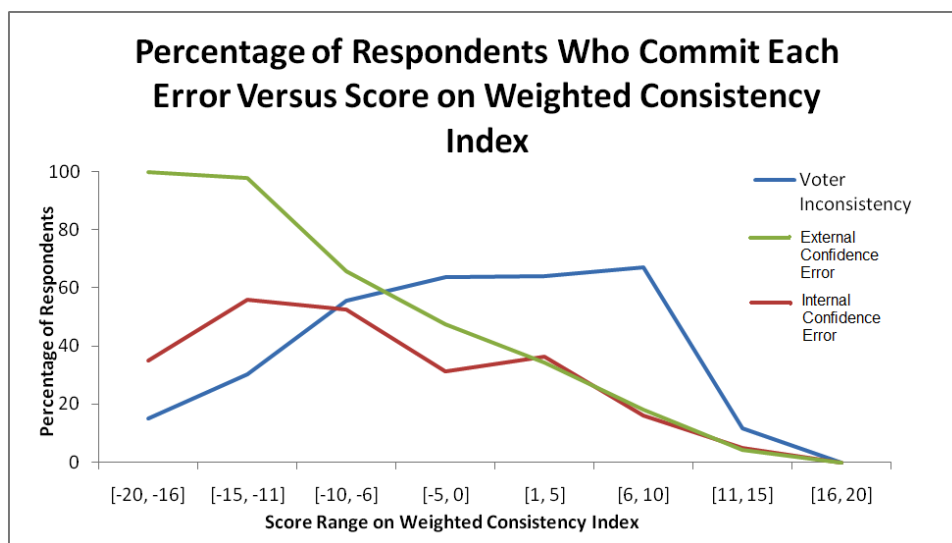
Source: NES 2004, N: 1088, p: <0.001

Figure 3:

Political Interest of Those Who Commit Confidence Errors
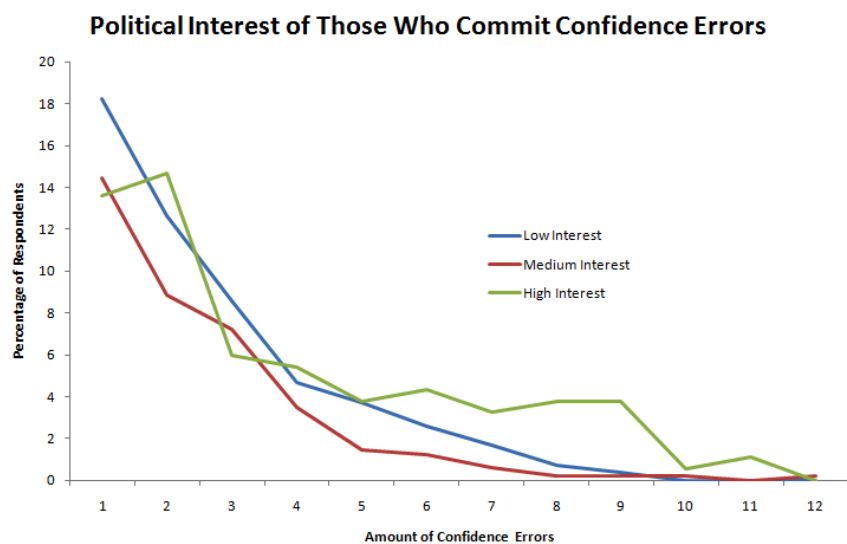
Source: NES 2004, N: 1207, p: <0.001
Note: A lower line location means people of that interest are committing less confidence errors

Figure 4:

Political Knowledge versus Those Who Commit Confindence Errors

Source: NES 2004, N: 1207, p: <0.001
Note: A lower line location means people of that knowledge are committing less confidence errors

Figure 5:
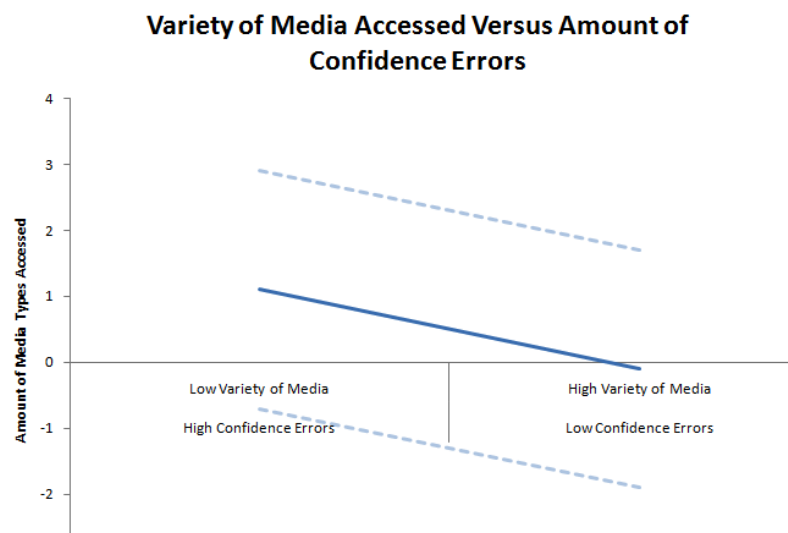
Variety of Media Accessed Versus Amount of Confidence Errors

Source: NES 2004, N: 1066, R^2: 0.1685, RMSE: 1.8062
Note: Dashed lines represent the standard of error

Figure 6:
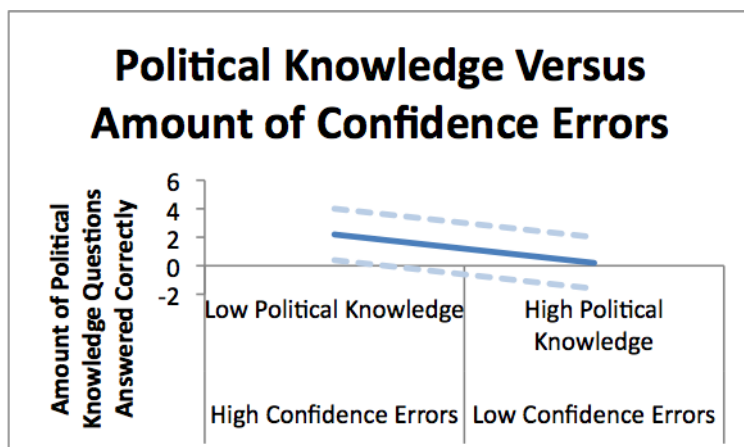
Political Knowledge Versus Amount of Confidence Errors

Source: NES 2004, N: 1066, R^2: 0.1685, RMSE: 1.8062
Note: Dashed lines represent the standard of error

Appendix C: Codebook

Table 1

- Opinion on **standard of living** is a self-placement ratio from 1 to 7 where 1 represents "Government should see to jobs and standard of living" and 7 represents "Government should let each person go ahead on his or her own"

- Opinion on **gun control** is a self-placement choice from three opinions coded as 1, 3, and 5 where 1 represents "Government should make it easier to get a gun", 3 represents "Government should make it harder to get a gun", and 5 represents "Government should keep gun laws about the same"

- Opinion on **defense spending** is a self-placement ratio from 1 to 7 where 1 represents "Government should decrease defense spending" and 7 represents "Government should increase defense spending"

- Opinion on **environmental protection** is a self-placement ratio from 1 to 7 where 1 represents "Government should protect the environment even if it costs jobs" and 7 represents "Jobs and standard of living are more important than protecting the environment"

- Opinion on **government spending** is a self-placement ratio from 1 to 7 where 1 represents "Government should provide many fewer services" and 7 represents "Government should provide many more services"

- Opinion on **diplomacy** is a self-placement ratio from 1 to 7 where 1 represents "Government should use diplomacy to solve problems rather than military intervention" and 7 represents "Government should use military intervention rather than diplomacy"

- Opinion on **criminalizing abortion** is a self-placement choice between four opinions where 1 represents "By law, abortion should never be permitted", 2 represents "Abortion should only be legal in the case of rape or incest", 3 represents "The law should permit abortion for other reasons than rape or incest", and 4 represents "By law, a women should always be able to get an abortion"

- Opinion on **black aid** is a self-placement ratio from 1 to 7 where 1 represents "Government should help blacks" and 7 represents "Blacks should help themselves"

- **Importance** on each of eight issues is a choice between five opinions where 1 represents that the issue is "extremely important", 2 represents the issue is "very important", 3 represents the issue is "somewhat important", 4 represents the issue is "not very important", and 5 represents the issue is "not at all important"

- Table 1 is calculated as a tabulation of the importance values stated for each issue.

Table 2

- The confidence error (stating "I Don't Know" in response to a question) proportions of each issue were calculated by subtracting the total number of survey respondents (1212) from the total number values in the personal opinion of each of the four issues (see the coding index for Table 1 for how personal opinion on a chosen issue is calculated). The result will equal the percentage of missing values in that opinion table, all of which were "I Don't Know" statements or refusal to answer the question.

Table 3

- The confidence error proportions within the respondents' perception of John Kerry on the issues were calculated the candidate issues were calculated from placing each issue were calculated by subtracting the total number of survey respondents (1212) from the total number values in the personal opinion of each of the four issues (see the coding index for Table 1 for how personal opinion on a chosen issue is calculated). The result will equal the percentage of missing values in that opinion table, all of which were "I Don't Know" statements or refusal to answer the question.

Table 4

- The confidence error proportions within the respondents' perception of George W. Bush on the issues were calculated the candidate issues were calculated from placing each issue were calculated by subtracting the total number of survey respondents (1212) from the total number values in the personal opinion of each of the four issues (see the coding index for Table 1). The result will equal the percentage of missing values in that opinion table, all of which were "I Don't Know" statements or refusal to answer the question.

Table 5

- Respondents are counted as consistent voters on a specific issue if they voted for Bush or Kerry, gave an opinion on the specific issue (on a scale from 1-7; see the coding index for Table 1), gave a perception on the issue of the candidate they voted for (see the coding index for Tables 3 and 4), and voted for a candidate who's perceived value on the scale is "closest" to the personal opinion on the same scale. This is calculated by the following formula:

  $A = |(\text{Personal opinion on scale}) - (\text{Perception of Kerry on scale})|$[10]
  $B = |(\text{Personal opinion on scale}) - (\text{Perception of Bush on scale})|$
  $C = A - B$

  1. If C is defined and less than 0, and the respondent voted for Kerry, the voter is defined to be consistent.
  2. If C is defined and greater than 0, and the respondent voted for Bush, the voter is also defined to be consistent.

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[10]: |x| is the absolute value of x.

3. Respondents who did not vote are dropped and not considered consistent or inconsistent.
4. If neither statement 1 nor statement 2 are true, the voter is defined to be inconsistent under the first method which counts confidence errors as inconsistent.
5. If C is undefined, those responses are dropped from the index according to the second method which does not count confidence errors. If the voter was not dropped and the neither statement 1 nor statement 2 are true, the respondent is considered inconsistent under the second method.

- For each issue, the percentage of inconsistent voters given that confidence errors are counted as inconsistent was calculated by taking the percentage of people who had a defined value for C divided by the percentage of people who voted for either Bush or Kerry.

- For each issue, the percentage of inconsistent voters given that confidence errors are dropped and not counted as inconsistent was calculated by taking the percentage of people where statement 1 and statement 2 are not true divided by the percentage of people who voted for either Bush or Kerry and had a defined value for C.

Table 6
- For each issue, the percentage of voting inconsistencies was calculated by taking the total number of Kerry/Bush voting respondents who had a defined C value that did not pass statement 1 or 2 (see the coding index for Table 5 as to what this means) divided by the total number of respondents who voted for Bush or Kerry.

- For each issue, the percentage of internal confidence errors was calculated by taking the total number of Kerry/Bush voting respondents and subtracting out the percentage of respondents who gave an opinion on the selected issue (see the coding index for Table 1). This quantity was then divided by the total number of respondents who voted for Bush or Kerry.

- For each issue, the percentage of external confidence errors was calculated by taking the total number of Kerry/Bush voting respondents and subtracting out the percentage of respondents who stated a perception about both Kerry and Bush (done by looking at a cross-tabulation of Kerry perceptions and Bush Perceptions; see the coding index for Table 1 as to how these perceptions were recorded). This quantity was then divided by the total number of respondents who voted for Bush or Kerry.

Table 7

- The total number of consistency errors was calculated by adding the number of times the Bush/Kerry voter failed to state a personal opinion on each issue or a perception of each candidate on each issue, for a total of 12 possible total consistency errors.

- The total number of internal confidence errors was calculated by adding the number of times the Bush/Kerry voter failed to state a personal opinion on each issue, for a total of 4 possible total internal confidence errors.

- The total number of external confidence errors was calculated by adding the number of times the Bush/Kerry voter failed to state a perception of each candidate on each issue, for a total of 8 possible total external confidence errors.

Table 8
- The weighted voting consistency index, which gives respondents a score on their consistency controlling for how important they think the issue is, was created by doing the following:
    - Only those who voted for Bush or Kerry have a value in the voting consistency index.
    - For each voter, give them a value X that starts at 0.
    - For each issue, determine how important the voter thought the issue was from 1 to 5 (see the coding index for Table 1). Call this value A.
    - If the voter voted consistently on this issue (see the coding index for Table 5), calculate X + A and make that the new value of X.
    - If the voter voted inconsistently on the issue, calculate X – A and make that the new value of X.
    - The final value of X is the score for that voter on the weighted voting consistency index. X will range from -20 to 20.
    - For example, if a respondent voted inconsistently on gun control but thought the issue was not very important, voted consistently on defense spending and thought the issue was extremely important, voted consistently on environmental spending but thought the issue was not at all important, and voted inconsistently on standard of living and thought the issue was somewhat important, X = (-2)+(5)+(1)+(-3) = **1**

- Table 8 was created by recoding the weighted consistency index into octiles (each containing one eighth of the data) and performing a tabulation, seeing how many respondents fit into each octile.

Table 9
- The total number of voter consistency errors was calculated by adding the number of times the Bush/Kerry voter had a defined value of C but failed to pass either Statement 1 or Statement 2 (see the coding index for Table 1) for each issue, for a total of 4 possible total internal confidence errors.

- The percentage of voting consistency errors per octile of the weighted consistency index (see the coding index for Table 8) was created by running a cross-tabulation of the octiles of the index against the amount of voter consistency errors.

Table 10

- Table 10 was constructed by performing a correlation between the total amount of confidence errors (see the coding index for Table 7) and each variable listed as an independent variable, for a total of 13 separate correlations.

- The general news consumption index was constructed by taking the response from 1 to 5 on amount of local news and the response from 1 to 5 on the amount of national news and averaging the results.
  - The amount of local news was determined by asking the respondent how much attention he or she pays to local news by selecting from five options where 5 is "A great deal", 4 is "Quite a bit", 3 is "Some", 2 is "Very Little", and 1 is "None".
  - The amount of national news was determined by asking the respondent how much attention he or she pays to national news by selecting from five options where 5 is "A great deal", 4 is "Quite a bit", 3 is "Some", 2 is "Very Little", and 1 is "None".

- The amount of general attention to newspapers was determined by asking the respondent how much attention he or she pays to newspapers by selecting from five options where 5 is "A great deal", 4 is "Quite a bit", 3 is "Some", 2 is "Very Little", and 1 is "None".

- The amount of general attention to presidential campaign news was determined by asking the respondent how much attention he or she pays to presidential campaign news by selecting from five options where 5 is "A great deal", 4 is "Quite a bit", 3 is "Some", 2 is "Very Little", and 1 is "None".

- Whether or not the respondent read about the campaign in a newspaper was determined by asking the respondent that question where 0 was "No" and 1 was "Yes"

- Whether or not the respondent heard about the campaign on the television was determined by asking the respondent that question where 0 was "No" and 1 was "Yes"

- Whether or not the respondent read about the campaign on the internet was determined by asking the respondent that question where 0 was "No" and 1 was "Yes"

- Whether or not the respondent heard about the campaign on the radio was determined by asking the respondent that question where 0 was "No" and 1 was "Yes"

- The amount of attention to presidential campaign news on the television was determined by asking the respondent how much attention he or she pays to presidential campaign news on the television by selecting from five options where 5 is "A great deal", 4 is "Quite a bit", 3 is "Some", 2 is "Very Little", and 1 is "None"

- How often the respondent heard about the campaign on the television was determined by asking the respondent how many programs about the campaign the respondent has watched where 0 is "one or two", 1 is "several", and 2 is "a good many"

- How often the respondent heard about the campaign on the radio was determined by asking the respondent how many programs about the campaign the respondent has heard where 0 is "one or two", 1 is "several", and 2 is "a good many"

- The amount of days per week spent reading news on the internet was determined by asking the respondent that question and recording the days per week stated

- The amount of days per week spent reading news in newspapers was determined by asking the respondent that question and recording the days per week stated

- The amount of days per week spent watching news on the television was determined by asking the respondent that question and recording the days per week stated

Table 11
- Table 11 was constructed by creating a new index of consistency error quantity where the total number of consistency errors is summed only if the consistency error was committed on an issue that is "Extremely Important", "Very Important", or "Somewhat Important" (see the coding index for Table 1).

Table 12
- Table 12 was preformed by calculating tabulations of whether or not the respondent received data about the campaign via the television, radio, internet, or newspaper (see the coding index for Table 10). In order to get more data for the internet, this percentage was calculated by multiplying those who accessed the campaign on the internet (see the coding index for Table 10) by the percentage of respondents who have internet access.

- The percentage of respondents who have internet access was determined by asking the respondent whether or not they have internet access, where 0 is "No" and 1 is "Yes"

Table 13

- Table 13 was constructed by taking the total number of media that respondents have reported they used to gather campaign information (see the coding index for Table 10).

Table 14
- Table 14 was constructed by running a correlation with each error as the dependent variable (see the coding index for Table 7) and the variety of media accessed (see the coding index for Table 13) as the independent variable.

Table 15
- Table 15 was constructed by running a regression with total amount of consistency errors (see the coding index for Table 7) as the dependent variable and average depth within media, variety of media accessed (see the coding index for Table 13), and an activism index as the three independent variables.

- The average depth within media was constructed by taking the value that indicated how often a chosen medium is used to gain knowledge about the campaign for each of the four media (internet, radio, television, and newspapers; see the coding index for Table 10) and averaging the result for a number between 1 and 5, where 5 represents a high amount of average depth within media.

- The activism index was created by asking the respondent whether or not they have attended a meeting about an issue important to them, whether or not they have written their congressperson about an issue important to them, and whether or not they have attended a protest about an issue important to them, and adding all of the "Yes" results for a scale from 0 to 3. This is recoded to match the average depth with media by adding 1 to the scale, and then multiplying the scale by 5/3.

Table 16
- Table 16 was constructed by performing a regression where the amount of confidence errors was the dependent variable and tested depth of media exposure (see the coding index for Table 15), variety of media exposure (see the coding index for Table 10), activism (see the coding index for Table 15), political knowledge, and political interest.

- Political knowledge was determined by asking the respondent six questions about politics and scoring the respondent out of six. This score became the respondent's political knowledge score. The questions were open answer, not multiple choice. The six questions asked were:
  - Who is Tony Blair?
  - Who is Dick Cheney?
  - Who is Dennis Hastert?
  - Who is William Rehnquist?

- o Which political party currently controls the House of Representatives?
  - o Which political party currently controls the Senate?

- Political interest was determined by first asking the respondent how interested in politics they felt they were, where they choose between "Not much interested" (coded as 0), "Somewhat interested" (coded as 2), and "Very much interested" (coded as 5). Then the respondent was asked if they care about who wins the presidential election – a response of "I don't care that much" is coded as 0 and "I care a great deal" is coded as 5. These two values are then averaged together for a political interest index.

Table 17

- Table 17 is a regression with the amount of confidence errors as the dependent variable and all the variables of Table 16 as independent variables with the addition of background characteristics of the respondents such as the gender of the respondent, the age of the respondent, whether or not the respondent is white or nonwhite, the income level of the respondent, the education level of the respondent, whether or not the respondent voted in the 2000 presidential election, and whether or not the respondent voted in the 2004 election.

- The income level of the respondent was determined by asking the respondent to place himself or herself into one of the following 23 income brackets on amount of income earned per year: "$2,999 or less", "$3,000 -$4,999", "$5,000 -$6,999", "$7,000 - $8,999", "$9,000 -$10,999", "$11,000-$12,999", "$13,000-$14,999", "$15,000-$16,999", "$17,000-$19,999", "$20,000-$21,999", "$22,000-$24,999", "$25,000-$29,999", "$30,000-$34,999", "$35,000-$39,999", "$40,000-$44,999", "$45,000-$49,999", "$50,000-$59,999", "$60,000-$69,999", "$70,000-$79,999", "$80,000-$89,999", "$90,000-$104,999", "$105,000-$119,000", and "$120,000 and over". Each is coded with an increasing number, starting at 0 for the first value.

- The education level of the respondent was determined by asking how many years of schooling the respondent has completed, from 0 to 17. Completing 12 years of schooling involves receiving a high school diploma and completing 17 years of schooling involves completing an undergraduate degree.

- All other background characteristics of the respondents were determined simply by asking for the information where "No" is 0 and "Yes" is 1. In the case of gender, "Male" is coded as 1 and "Female" is coded as 2.

Table 18

- Table 18 is a regression with amount of consistency errors as the dependent variable and variety of media exposure (see the coding index for Table 10), political knowledge (see the coding index for Table 16), gender, age, whether or not the respondent voted in the 2000 presidential election, and whether or not the respondent voted in the 2004 presidential election.

Table 19
- Table 19 is a correlation with amount of consistency errors as the dependent variable and various background measures of gender and voting history (see the coding index for Table 17) as the independent variables to test the effect of each independent variable individually.

Table 20
- Table 20 is a cross-tabulation of variety of media exposure (see the coding index for Table 10) and gender of the respondent

Table 21
- Table 21 is a cross-tabulation of political knowledge (see the coding index for Table 16) and gender of the respondent

Figure 1
- Figure 1 was calculated with a cross-tabulation between importance of the selected issue and the consistency on the issue (see the coding index for Table 1).

Figure 2
- Figure 2 was calculated with a cross-tabulation between the amount of each type of voter error committed (see the coding index for Table 7) and the score of the respondent on the weighted consistency index (see the coding index for Table 8).

Figure 3
- Figure 3 was calculated with a cross-tabulation between the political interest of the voter (see the coding index for Table 16) recoded into only three parts (high, medium, and low) and the amount of confidence errors committed by the respondent (see the coding index for Table 7).

Figure 4

- Figure 4 was calculated with a cross-tabulation between the political knowledge of the voter (see the coding index for Table 16) recoded into only three parts (high, medium, and low) and the amount of confidence errors committed by the respondent (see the coding index for Table 7).

Figure 5
- Figure 5 is a graphical representation of the regression from Table 18 where all variables are held constant except for the variety of media accessed by the respondent (see coding index on Table 18 and Table 10, respectively).

Figure 6
- Figure 6 is a graphical representation of the regression from Table 18 where all variables are held constant except for the political knowledge of the respondent (see coding index on Table 18 and Table 16, respectively).