

# **Money or Loyalty? The Effect of Inconsistent Information Shortcuts on Voting Defection**

**by**

**Xiaoyu Jia**

Master of Management, Nankai University, 2013

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

in the

Department of Political Science  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

**© Xiaoyu Jia 2015**

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

**Summer 2015**

All rights reserved.

However, in accordance with the *Copyright Act of Canada*, this work may be reproduced, without authorization, under the conditions for "Fair Dealing." Therefore, limited reproduction of this work for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review and news reporting is likely to be in accordance with the law, particularly if cited appropriately.

# Approval

**Name:** Xiaoyu Jia  
**Degree:** Master of Arts (Political Science)  
**Title of Project:** *Money or Loyalty? The Effect of Inconsistent Information Shortcuts on Voting Defection*

**Examining Committee:**

**Chair:** Steven Weldon, Associate Professor

---

**Mark Pickup**  
Senior Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Eline de Rooij**  
Supervisor  
Assistant Professor

---

**Andrew Owen**  
External Examiner  
Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of British Columbia

**Date Defended/Approved:** August 7, 2015

## **Abstract**

Despite the vast research on the effects of information shortcuts on voters, little is known about how citizens make voting decisions when the information shortcuts they rely on prod them to favor different candidates or parties. This research focuses on partisanship and economic evaluations and asks whether and how the inconsistency between them affects voting defection—the act of voting contrary to party affiliation. By analyzing the 2010 British General Election and the 2012 American Presidential Election, this paper finds that the inconsistency only leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters. And this paper argues it is because partisanship is used to reduce the uncertainty of voting decisions. As politically sophisticated voters have lower level of uncertainty, they are less likely to resort to partisanship. There are two implications of this finding: 1) relationships between information shortcuts can affect voting decisions; 2) uninformed voters sometimes do not act like they are well-informed.

**Keywords:** Inconsistency; Economic Evaluations; Partisanship; Defection; Political Sophistication

## Dedication

*To my beloved parents, Meirong and Huaijie, and my  
sweet little sister Xiaoqi, without whom none of my  
achievement would be possible.*

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Dr. Mark Pickup. Over the past two years, I have learnt a lot from him about how to conduct political science research in a scientific way. I appreciate all his contributions of time and ideas to make my MA experience wonderful.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my project committee: Dr. Eline de Rooij and Dr. Andrew Owen, for their encouragement, insightful comments, and hard questions. I am also grateful for their enlightening seminars.

Life as a graduate student is sometimes stressful. Nevertheless, it is lucky for me to meet some friends who always cheer me up. Special thanks to Qingman Ai, Tiana Major, and Daisy Zhang.

Last but not the least important, I owe more than thanks to my parents and my little sister, for their unconditional love throughout my life. Without their support, it is impossible for me to come to Canada and finish my master program.

# Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Acronyms.....	ix
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2. Theory and Hypothesis .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Three Assumptions.....	5
2.2. Downs’s Voting Model and Two Alternative Hypotheses .....	7
<b>Chapter 3. Research Design .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1. Data and Design.....	11
3.2. Measurement .....	14
<b>Chapter 4. Analysis.....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1. The 2010 British General Election .....	19
4.2. The 2012 American Presidential Election .....	27
4.3. Further Analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election .....	33
<b>Chapter 5. Limitations .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Chapter 6. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Appendix A Wordings of Survey Questions.....	51
Appendix B Three Specifications of the Recoding Rules.....	59
Appendix C Descriptive Analysis Results of the BES 2010 .....	61
Appendix D Political Sophistication and the Inconsistency .....	63

## List of Tables

Table 4.1	Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the BES 2010 with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	23
Table 4.2	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the BES 2010 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	24
Table 4.3	Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the BES 2010 with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	25
Table 4.4	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the BES 2010 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	26
Table 4.5	Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the ANES 2012 with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	29
Table 4.6	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	30
Table 4.7	Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the ANES 2012 with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	31
Table 4.8	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	32
Table 4.9	Mediating Variable Analysis Results with Personal Financial Situation as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	36
Table 4.10	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with Personal Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	37
Table 4.11	Mediating Variable Analysis Results with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	38
Table 4.12	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	39
Table 4.13	Mediating Variable Analysis with Incumbent Approval based on Incumbent's Honesty, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	40

Table 4.14	Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency on Voting Defection with Incumbent Approval based on Incumbent's Honesty, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses) .....	41
------------	--	----



## List of Acronyms

ANES 2012	American National Election Study 2012
BES 2010	British Election Study 2010
PBS	Political Belief System

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

In *Voting: A study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*, Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee cite an interview with a plant worker about the 1948 United States Presidential Election.

'I thought Dewey was the best man. I thought maybe changing the government would help. I got for the man... I thought Truman wasn't qualified to do what he stood for, but now I wonder....Now I don't know....[But] I'm more for unions. I don't believe in the Taft-Hartley Law. The Democrats as a whole are more for the middle class and poor...' During his temporary intention to vote for Dewey he stresses the importance of personalities... (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954, pp. 293-294)

This interview offers two insights into how people use information shortcuts (heuristics)<sup>1</sup> to make voting decisions. First, individuals may employ more than one information shortcut. In the interview cited above, for example, the plant worker uses both candidates' traits and political endorsement as information shortcuts when considering how to vote. Second, those information shortcuts people employ may not be consistent with each other and impel them to favour different candidates or political parties. For the

<sup>1</sup> Information shortcuts are special information. Trying to find a balance point between costs and benefits, individuals make decisions based on data of limited validity. And the data of limited validity are information shortcuts. In *Judgement Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases*, Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky (1982, p. 3) offer an accessible example to explain the definition of information shortcuts. The clarity of an object is often used to decide the angular distance with the reasoning that usually closer objects can be seen more sharply, even though it is not a fully valid measurement. And the clarity of an object is an information shortcut. Economic evaluations can be used as an information shortcut as they are associated with the performance of the governing party. Partisanship is a group identity and it also represents stereotypes. For example, people can infer that a Republican candidate support strong defense and low taxes (Lau & Redlawsk, 2001). But compared with economic evaluations which can directly be connected with policy issues, partisanship is a concept that is formed based on a complex calculation of several issues and is more abstract.

plant worker, based on his judgement about candidates' personalities, he should vote for Dewey. But according to the union endorsement or the idea that Democrats help the middle class and the poor, he should choose Truman when casting his ballot.

In the book, the authors do not mention whether and how the plant worker voted in the election. And it is still unclear how citizens vote when the information shortcuts they rely on push them in opposite directions. This research takes up this question and aims at explaining whether and how inconsistent information shortcuts affect voting behaviour. Specifically, it focuses on voters' party affiliation and their evaluations of the economy and asks whether or not the inconsistency between party affiliation and economic evaluations leads to voting defection—the act of voting contrary to party affiliation, and if so, how does it work?

Answering this question is important. First, it could deepen the understanding of how people use information shortcuts to make voting decisions. Following Kahneman and Tversky's prospect theory that people use heuristics to evaluate losses and gains when making decisions (see e.g. Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Kahneman, 2003), many political scientists have found evidence that citizens also use information shortcuts to decide how to vote. These shortcuts can be, for example, party identification (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Lau & Redlawsk, 2001), candidates' and their supporters' traits (Popkin, 1991), trusted elites (Carmines & Kuklinski, 1990), endorsement (Lupia, 1994), likability (Brady & Sniderman, 1985; Sniderman, Brady, & Tetlock, 1991) and the election-year economy (e.g., Kramer, 1971; Bartels, 2008). Previous research on how information shortcuts affect voting decisions offers great insights. However, each of them only looks into one shortcut and probes how this single factor influences voting choices. And if the assumption that voters' voting decisions may be based on several information shortcuts is made, it is still unclear how people process several information shortcuts at the same time and whether and how the inconsistency among the shortcuts affects vote choices. By focusing on the inconsistency between partisanship and economic evaluations, this study attempts to offer thoughts for both questions and further understanding of the effects of information shortcuts. The reason to look into partisanship and economic evaluations in particular is that they are important information shortcuts and are thought to have significant influence on how citizens vote.

Besides increasing the understanding of how information shortcuts work, this research also has implications for democratic systems. Many democratic theories argue that to function well, democratic systems should have well-informed citizens who can make correct decisions in elections. In practice, the political ignorance of voters is well-documented (e.g., Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996) and there is a heated debate about whether poorly informed citizens can vote correctly. One possible answer to this question is that citizens do not have to be fully informed and can just rely on information shortcuts and make decisions like they know everything (e.g., Key, 1966; Popkin, 1991; Lupia, 1994). But this idea also has challenges. For example, Bartels (1996) has shown that non-informed citizens do not vote the same as fully informed ones, suggesting that many voters' decisions may not represent their interests and in reality the design of democratic systems may not be an effective tool to reach the goal of "for the people". One of the possible ways to solve the debate is to figure out how voters use information shortcuts to vote. Offering greater understanding of how information shortcuts work, this research can help to answer the question of whether the poorly informed majority can vote correctly by using information shortcuts, which may affect how people evaluate democratic systems.

This research is important also because voting defection itself is an important phenomenon which needs to be explained. A considerable percentage of the electorate do not vote for the party they identify with. For example, in the 2008 US Presidential Election, about 19% of Democrats and Republicans supported the opposing party's candidate (Clement, Cohen, & Craighill, 2012). And in the 1994 California primary vote, 13.7% ~ 16.6% of the voters voted across their party lines (Sider, Cohen, & Citrin, 1999). In addition, defection may have a great influence on election results. It can provide the winning edge in American elections and has the potential to shift the competitive balance between major party candidates and help third party or independent candidates to win (Beck, 2002).

To answer the questions of whether and how the inconsistency between party affiliation and economic evaluations affects voting defection, this research employs the voting decision model offered by Downs (1954) and generates two alternative hypotheses based on two contradictory assumptions about the role played by partisanship. By analyzing the 2010 British General Election and the 2012 American Presidential Election,

this study finds evidence for the hypothesis that the inconsistency between partisanship and economic evaluations only leads to voting defection among politically sophisticated voters. This paper argues this is because voters use partisanship to reduce the uncertainty of voting decisions. As politically sophisticated voters have lower level of uncertainty, they do not have to resort to partisanship. And even though their partisanship and economic evaluations are in conflict with each other, they vote based on policy issues and choose to defect.

The rest of the paper is divided into five parts. The first part elaborates the theoretical framework and derives two alternative hypotheses. The second part discusses the research design, data and measurement. After that, the third part presents the empirical evidence drawn from the 2010 British General Election and the 2012 American Presidential Election. Limitations are discussed in the fourth part. The last section concludes and provides the implications of the finding.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Theory and Hypothesis**

#### **2.1. Three Assumptions**

This research uses the voting decision model offered by Downs (1954) to answer the research questions of whether and how the inconsistency between partisanship and economic evaluations (the inconsistency for short) affects voting defection. Before elaborating the model and generating the hypothesis, three assumptions are outlined.

First, all voters rely on information shortcuts to make voting decisions. This is an inference drawn from Downs's model. Considering that the marginal benefit of voting is trivial, it is quite reasonable for voters to minimize the cognitive costs both in collecting and processing political information by using information shortcuts (Downs, 1954). In reality, however, not all voters use shortcuts in the same way to minimize their voting decision costs. Different voters have different cognitive abilities and different levels of political interest. Citizens who are politically sophisticated and/or more interested in politics are able to process more political information with less cognitive cost and/or are willing to put more efforts in deciding how to vote. However, this point is not compelling enough to rebut the idea that these people also have to rely on information shortcuts. Besides cognitive ability and interest in politics, another factor that determines whether information shortcuts will be used is the relationship between the cognitive ability and the degree of complexity of tasks. If the complexity of a task is far beyond people's cognitive ability, they still have to use information shortcuts even though subjectively they do not want to. Politics and voting decisions are both intricate and it is impossible for individuals to directly collect and process all information related to voting decisions. Therefore, although some voters are politically sophisticated and/or more interested in politics, all voters have to rely on information shortcuts to understand politics and make voting decisions. One point that has to be mentioned here is that even though this paper assumes that all voters have to use information shortcuts this does not mean that all of them use information shortcuts in the same way.

The second assumption guiding this research is that voters' economic evaluations are perceptions of economic conditions and attitudes of policy issues. In some retrospective studies, researchers use objective economic indicators, for instance cost of living indexes or unemployment rates (Kramer, 1971), as economic evaluations to explain or predict voting behaviour and find statistically significant results. The theory these studies are based on is that people's perceptions of economic conditions are thought to be a mediating variable between objective economic indicators and voting choices (Anderson & O'Connor 2000; Anderson, 2007). But it is difficult to argue that objective economic conditions can be accurately translated into voting choices (Lohmann, 1999) as voters' perceptions of economic conditions are influenced by factors like mass media (Hetherington, 1996) and partisanship (e.g. Evans & Andersen, 2006; Pattie & Johnston, 2001). As this research focuses on the effect of voters' perceptions of economic conditions on voting rather than the relationship between objective economic conditions and subjective economic evaluations, economic evaluations are regarded as attitudes in voters' minds.

The last assumption is that partisanship is a psychological factor, "a psychological identification, which can persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support" (Campbell et al., 1960, p. 121). Starting from this Michigan School definition of party identification, research has shown that partisanship affects people's political attitudes and behaviours (for a review, see Johnston, 2006). But partisanship is not always defined as an exogenous psychological variable. It can also be defined as "a running tally of retrospective evaluations of party promises and performance" (Fiorina, 1981, p. 84). And this idea is supported by Gerber and Green's (1999) finding that the perceptual screen function of partisanship claimed by the Michigan School (Campbell et al., 1960, p. 133) can also be explained as a Bayesian rational learning process. But the "running tally" definition is not used here because Bartels (2002) casts doubt on Gerber and Green's argument with the finding of strong effects of partisanship on political perceptions, which is not supposed to happen under the "running tally" assumption. Therefore, in this research, partisanship is regarded as a psychological explanatory variable that can affect voting decisions.

Following the definition of partisanship as a psychological factor, another question is whether this definition is compatible with Downs's model derived from rational choice theory. Admittedly, voters' issue positions are cardinal in Downs's model. But it never excludes the influences of partisanship, which is defined as a psychological factor, a point this paper will return to after introducing Downs's voting model.

## **2.2. Downs's Voting Model and Two Alternative Hypotheses**

Having elaborated three research assumptions, here the paper outlines Downs's voting model and develops two hypotheses. In *The Economic Theory of Democracy* (1954, p. 209), Downs established a model of how citizens use information to decide how to vote in an election. There are seven steps in this model. Step 1, voters collect information relevant to each policy issue. Step 2, voters have to select the useful part of the information from all the information they have collected. After that, in Step 3, for each policy issue, voters analyze the facts they have selected and reach some factual conclusions about possible alternative policies and their consequences. Step 4 is that voters assess the value of each policy according to the relevant goals. After that, in Step 5 they coordinate the appraisals of each issue into a net evaluation of each party running in the election. Step 6 is to make a voting decision by comparing the net evaluation of each party and weighting them for uncertainty. When choosing which party or candidate to vote, individuals are assumed to calculate the utility of each alternative and choose the one that maximizes his or her utility (1954, p. 36). This is the rule used to make decisions in Step 6. The last (Step 7) is to actually vote or abstain. As abstention is not discussed here, Step 7 is not necessary for this research.

This model says nothing about the effects of partisanship. But it is possible to incorporate those effects into it. Downs never described what kind of information people should collect, select and analyze. Nor did he say how people calculate utilities. The only thing that is clearly stated is that voters choose the party or candidate that brings them the greatest utility. So in the process from Step 1 to 5, partisanship is allowed to engender the effect of perceptual screen without changing anything in the model. Take retrospective voting as an example. A partisan can collect and analyze information that favors his party and reach the conclusion that the party he identifies with is better at managing the



economy (Evans & Andersen, 2006; Wlezien, Franklin, & Twiggs, 1997) and vote according to partisanship which he believes will bring about utility maximization. So Downs's voting decision model still works with the assumption that partisanship is a psychological factor.

The model described above depicts a complex process. Instead of focusing on all aspects, this research concentrates just on Step 6 and asks how partisans make their decisions after finding that parties other than their own are more capable at managing the economy based on past experience. To answer this question, two hypotheses can be generated under two contradicting assumptions. The first assumption is that partisanship has no effect in Step 6 while the second assumption is that partisanship plays an important role in Step 6.

Under the assumption that party identification has no effect when voters attempt to make voting decisions by comparing the utility of each party and weighting them for future uncertainty, based on Downs's theory that voters choose to vote for whatever maximizes their utility, voters should always vote based on their economic evaluations and defect if their economic evaluations contradict their partisanship. To support this idea, the evidence I expect to find from analyzing empirical data is that for all voters the inconsistency between partisanship and economic evaluations is associated with voting defection.

Instead of thinking that partisanship plays no role, it is also plausible to assume that it has an effect on the decision making process. Economic evaluations are based on past experience and voters face uncertainty by using past experience to make decisions about the future. So in Step 6 of Downs's model, even though partisanship is not a judgement of policy issues, it can be used by voters to address uncertainty. Different voters face different levels of uncertainty.<sup>2</sup> And compared with politically unsophisticated voters, sophisticated voters have less uncertainty when making voting decisions.<sup>3</sup> And as

<sup>2</sup> Uncertainty here is also assumed to be an attitude of voters.

<sup>3</sup> The relationship between political sophistication and uncertainty can be explained in this way: for politically sophisticated voters, their economic evaluations are often based on evidence as cognitions in their political belief system are more constrained (Luskin, 1987) and conclusions that have evidence to support are often thought to be more reliable.

sophisticated voters are confident with their judgments, when their party identification is in conflict with their economic evaluations, they follow their economic evaluations and choose to defect. For politically unsophisticated voters who think they have great uncertainty in their judgements, they resort to party identification. And if their party identification and their economic evaluations are not consistent with each other, they follow their party affiliation and vote to support the parties they identify with. To support this idea, this research should find that the inconsistency only leads to voting defection among politically sophisticated voters.

The hypothesis that the inconsistency between partisanship and economic evaluations only leads to voting defection among politically sophisticated voters is consistent with Converse's (1964) argument that politically sophisticated people are more likely to defect. Kam's (2005) research findings also support this hypothesis. She finds that sophisticated voters are more likely to vote based on issues while unsophisticated voters are more likely to vote following their party identification. If policy issues are narrowed down to the economy, in the situation that economic evaluations and partisanship are not consistent, the implication of Kam's research is that politically sophisticated voters are more likely to defect.

In sum, derived from Downs's voting model and based on two assumptions of the roles played by partisanship, this research has to test two alternative hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the inconsistency always leads to voting defection and the second is that the inconsistency causes voting defection only among politically sophisticated voters.

To test these hypotheses, this research builds this model <sup>4</sup>

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_1 * X_2 + \beta_4 * Z + \varepsilon$$

<sup>4</sup> This research does not create another model to test the hypothesis that the inconsistency leads to defection by anyone. It is because the hypothesis can also be tested by the model described in the main text. If the magical effects of the inconsistency of the model are statistically significant at all levels of political sophistication, I find evidence that supports the hypothesis that the inconsistency can always bring about defection. Otherwise, I cannot reject the null hypothesis.

In the model,  $Y$  is the dependent variable, voting defection.  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  are the inconsistency and political sophistication. As in the second hypothesis, the effect of the inconsistency is contingent on political sophistication; an interaction term of  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  is also included in the model. Matrix  $\mathbf{Z}$  includes all the control variables and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Research Design**

#### **3.1. Data and Design**

To test the two hypotheses elaborated in Chapter 2, this research uses multivariate logistic regressions to analyze secondary survey data. Two cases, the 2010 British General Election and the 2012 American Presidential Election, are selected to be examined. The reason to choose these cases is that most of theories discussed in theory section are derived from this two countries. Compared with other countries, the United Kingdom and the United States have “relatively well-defined incumbents and oppositions, (approximate) two-party systems, and single-actor (executive) incumbents” (Anderson, 2007) and using the data of these countries to test hypotheses can avoid the situation that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected because of the effects of the political system, like unclear-defined incumbents or oppositions. The reason to choose both cases as opposed to only one is to find out whether testing results can be held under both the United Kingdom’s parliamentary system and the United States’ presidential system.

The 2010 British General Election was held on May 6th, 2010. There were 650 seats in House of Commons and to achieve an overall majority one party should have at least 326 seats. In this election, the Conservatives got 306 seats, the Labour Party got 258 seats and the Liberal Democrats won 57 seats. A Conservative / Liberal Democrat coalition government was later formed with David Cameron as the Prime Minister and Nick Clegg as the Deputy Prime Minister. Before the election, the leader of the Labour Party, Gordon Brown, was the Prime Minister and had a majority government.

The dataset BES 2010 (British Election Study 2010, Whiteley & Sanders, 2014) used in this study contains face to face survey data for this election. The overall design of the face to face survey includes pre-election survey, post-election survey, self-completion mail-back questionnaire, and vote validation exercise. This project only analyzes the pre-election and post-election survey data. The pre-election survey was conducted from January 23rd, 2010 to April 18th, 2010 in home using Computer Assisted Personal

Interviewing. The survey population is all private households residents aged 18 years or older in Great Britain except Northern Ireland. A multi-stage sampling method is used to form a sample from the eligible voting population. The number of total eligible voters sampled is 3,484 and 1,935 respondents of the sample were fully interviewed. The post-election survey was carried out in home from May 7th, 2010 and continued until the September 5th, 2010 also using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. It is a combination of respondents who had fully finished pre-election survey interviews and fresh 'top-up' respondents. The first part has 1,935 respondents and 1,498 of them finished their post-election survey. The sample size of the 'top-up' respondents is 3,660 and 1,577 of them finished the post-election survey.

The U.S. 2012 presidential election was held on November 6th, 2012. Incumbent President Barack Obama was elected to his second term by defeating the Republican nominee Mitt Romney. The dataset ANES 2012 (American National Election Survey 2012, The American National Election Studies, n.d.) is a panel study of the American electorate around the 2012 presidential election. There are pre-election and post-election interviews. For each of them, data collection was conducted in two separate modes, the face to face mode and the Internet mode. The population of the research is U.S. citizens age 18 or older. For the face to face mode the sample is an address-based sample and is geographically cluttered. For the internet mode, the sample was drawn via addresses and telephone numbers and is not geographically clustered. The sample size of the pre-election survey is 5,914, among which 2,054 were interviewed face to face while 3,860 were interviewed online. The pre-election face to face interviews were conducted from September 8th, 2012 to November 5th, 2012. The pre-election online interviews were in the field from October 11th, 2012 to November 6th 2012. The sample size of the post-election survey is 5,510, among which 1,929 were interviewed face to face while 3,581 were interviewed online. The post-election face to face interviews were conducted from November 7th, 2012 to January 13th, 2013. The post-election online survey was conducted from November 29th, 2012 to January 24th, 2013.

This research argues that the inconsistency is a cause of voting defection. A necessary condition of claiming the causal relationship is that the independent variable, the inconsistency, has to temporally happen before voting defection. To satisfy this

condition, as both the ANES 2012 and the BES 2010 contain the pre- and post-election survey data, all the independent variables and control variables in this research are from the pre-election session and voting choice, a component of the dependent variable, is from the post-election wave.<sup>5</sup>

There are two important control variables needed to be included in the analytical model. First is the strength of partisanship. The reason to consider it is that Converse (1964) maintained that the strength of partisanship is negatively associated with voting defection. Also, weak partisans are more likely to reach the economic evaluations that indicate their own parties are not better at managing the economy. As the strength of partisanship can be a confounding variable that causes the association between the inconsistency and voting defection, it is included in the model to control its effects.

Another important control variable is voters' attitudes towards the incumbent or the party in power. Previous research has suggested that presidential approval (Evans & Pickup, 2010) and incumbent party popularity (Evans & Andersen, 2006) can affect people's perceptions of macro-economic conditions. At the same time, these factors can also cast effects on voting choices. Therefore, the relationship between defection and inconsistent information shortcuts may be spurious because voters' attitude towards candidates causes the co-variation. To control the effect of voters' attitude towards the incumbent or the party in power, it should also be included in the model.

Apart from the strength of partisanship and voters' attitudes towards the incumbent or the party in power, when explaining voting defection, researchers often use gender, race, education, age, income, religiosity and union membership as control variables (Hillygus & Shields, 2009; Scacco & Peacock, 2014; Vandebroek, 2011; Siders, 1998). Even though previous studies find no statistically significant relationships between these factors and defection, for the sake of controlling unknown confounding variables and with the consideration that it is quite unlikely to cause post treatment bias, they are also included in the model as control variables.

<sup>5</sup> One exception is political sophistication in the BES 2010. This variable is only measured in the post-election wave.

Besides the variables mentioned above, to check robustness, level of political interest, social class and region are also included as control variables. <sup>6</sup>

## 3.2. Measurement

This part discusses how to measure variables used in logistic regressions. These variables include defection, the inconsistency between partisanship and economic evaluations, political sophistication, the strength of partisanship and voters' attitudes towards the incumbent or the party in power. <sup>7</sup>

The dependent variable, defection, measures whether people vote contrary to their party affiliation. This is a dummy variable with 1 = defection and 0 = loyalty. This variable is constructed based on vote choice and party identification. Vote choice is recoded into a dummy variable with 1 = a vote for the incumbent or the party in power and 0 = all other responses.<sup>8</sup> All abstentions are excluded and are recoded as missing.

Another component of defection is partisanship. In the theory section, partisanship has already been defined as self-identification. And one possible way to measure it, as has been used in the ANES 2012, is to ask "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?". One problem which must be considered when measuring partisanship is that even though some respondents self-identify as independents they actually lean to a party and behave like partisans (Hawkins & Nosek, 2012). Therefore, instead of recoding the independent into non-partisans, this research regards voters who think they are independent but show predilection for a party as partisans. The difference between these voters and self-claimed partisans lies in the strength of partisanship, which will be discussed later.

<sup>6</sup> In the dataset ANES 2012, there is no data measuring region. So this variable is not excluded when analyzing the ANES 2012 dataset. In the dataset BES 2010, there is no measurement of ideology. And this variable is excluded when analyzing the BES 2010 dataset.

<sup>7</sup> Wording of survey questions and the measurement of other control variables are in the Appendix

<sup>8</sup> In the BES 2010, 1 means a vote for the Labour Party. And in the ANES 2012, 1 means a vote for Barack Obama.

Another point that has to be discussed is the validity of the measurement of partisanship. The ANES surveys have not been challenged by this problem while the BES surveys have. Usually in the BES surveys, respondents are asked “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, (Scottish National/Plaid Cymru) or what.” And this measurement is criticized as blurring “enduring party identification and contemporary political preference” by Bartle (2007). Based on this critique, Bartle recommends another way of measuring by asking “Some people think of themselves as usually being a supporter of one political party rather than another. Do you usually think of yourself as being a supporter of one particular party or not?” (2007). In the BES 2010, both of the measurement methods are used. But this research decides to use the first way of measurement based on two reasons. First, if Bartle’s method is used, the sample size of the regression with all control variables included is quite small. A problem associated with this sample size is that it is hard to reject the null hypothesis at a 0.05 significance level and more likely to produce a Type 2 error. The second reason is that it is quite likely that those two measurement methods actually measure the same thing. In the pre-election survey of the BES 2010 the pairwise correlation coefficient of data generated by both methods is 0.95 ( $p < 0.001$ ) and in the post-election survey the coefficient is also 0.95 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the two measurements of partisanship by the two methods are highly correlated with each other and the first measurement is a valid measurement method.

For the 2010 British General Election, partisanship is recoded as a binary variable (1= Labour and 0 = other partisanship). Independents without leaning to one party are recoded as missing. For the 2012 American Presidential Election, partisanship is also recoded as a binary variable (1 = Democrat and 0 = other partisanship) and independents without leaning to one party are recoded as missing.

In this research, there are two important independent variables. The first is political sophistication. The concept of political sophistication originated from Campbell et al. (1960) and Converse (1964). And according to their idea, sophistication is a matter of cognition. And a person’s political cognitions, together with those with which they are constrained, are what is commonly known as his or her political belief system (PBS) (Luskin, 1987). Political sophistication can be divided into three dimensions, the size, the range and the



constraint. The size of a political belief system is the number of cognitions it contains. The range is its coverage of the political universe. And the constraint is interconnections of PBS's cognitions. Usually those three aspects are related. A politically sophisticated person usually has a large, wide-ranging and highly constrained political belief system. And it is plausible to use the measurement of political knowledge to measure political sophistication (Luskin, 1987). So this research uses answers to the political knowledge questions in the BES 2010 and the ANES 2012 and constructs a composite political sophistication variable for each case. In the BES 2010, political sophistication is measured by a nine-point scale ranging from 0. The lowest level of political sophistication to 8. The highest level of political sophistication. In the ANES 2012, political sophistication is an eight-point scale ranging from 0. The lowest level of political sophistication to 7. The highest level of political sophistication.

Besides political sophistication, another important independent variable is the inconsistency. It is constructed based on partisanship and economic evaluations with 1 = partisanship and economic evaluations impelling voters to favor different parties or candidates and 0 = partisanship and economic evaluations indicating the same choice.

The measurement of partisanship has been discussed above and the measurement of economic evaluations is elaborated in the paragraph. Besides the discussion about whether to use objective economic indicators or not, a point which has been discussed in Section 2, there is also a debate about what kind of economic evaluations people use to make their vote choices. Kinder and Kiewiet (1979; 1981), together with Felman (1982) and Weatherford (1983) argue that people use national economic evaluations when making voting decisions. They explain that in the long term people will benefit from good national economic conditions. Similarly, Kramer (1983) criticizes the use of personal economic evaluations to explain voting behavior because he thinks if scholars use personal economic evaluations it may contain irrelevant factors for making voting decisions. Considering this, maybe it is better to use national economic evaluations as the measurement of economic evaluations. However, Marcus (1988) argues that Kramers's assumption that only governmentally induced personal economic changes can affect voting is plausible in theory but inaccurately depicts the reality as it is hard to decide which part of the personal economic conditions should be credited to

politicians and the government. Besides Marcus's criticism of using national economic evaluations, another advantage of using personal economic evaluations is that it has the potential to be an exogenous explanatory variable. Usually, people can get direct evidence from their daily life to judge whether they are better off than a year before and the interpretation of this evidence is straightforward. As the debate between national and personal economic evaluations is not cardinal in this research, different models are run using either national or personal economic evaluations.

In this study, both personal and national economic evaluations are recoded as binary variables with 1 = positive evaluations of the incumbent's economic performance and indicating a vote for the incumbent and 0 = negative evaluations of the incumbent's economic performance and indicating a vote for the incumbent's opponent. Respondents who think the economy condition stays the same are recoded as missing.

The strength of partisanship is usually measured by asking respondents how they call themselves. In the BES 2010, respondents were asked "Would you call yourself very strong (party), fairly strong or not very strong" and data generated from this question are coded as the strength of partisanship with 3 = very strong and 1 = not very strong. In the ANES 2012, only self-identified partisans were asked their strength of partisanship. This research creates a new strength of partisanship variable in which independent leaners are assigned to have the weakest partisanship and self-identified partisans either have not very strong or strong partisanship.

Another control variable is voters' attitude towards the incumbent or the party in power (for short, approval). As the dependent variable is constructed based on party identification and vote choice, approval has to be based on voters' attitudes and partisanship as well. Therefore, approval is recoded as a binary variable with 1 = voter's attitude towards the incumbent or the party in power indicating a vote contrary to partisanship and 0 = voter's attitude urging the partisans to vote for their parties. Following previous research (Evans and Andersen 2006) in retrospective voting, for the BES 2010, this research measures approval with the question "On a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means strongly dislike and 10 means strong like, how do you feel about the Labour Party?" Answers to this question are recoded under the rule that 0-4 are recoded

as 0 (dislike the Labour Party), 6-10 as 1 (Support the Labour Party) and 5 as missing. In the ANES 2012, approval is measured by the question “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?” and 1 in this variable indicates approval and 0 means disapproval.

## **Chapter 4.**

### **Analysis**

This section presents the analysis results of two datasets, the BES 2010 and the ANES 2012. There are three parts in this section. First reports the results from the analysis of the 2010 British General Election. This analysis finds evidence for the hypothesis that the inconsistency only leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters. The second section reports the results from the analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election. Different from the British case, this analysis finds that when using personal economic evaluations as economic evaluations there is no evidence for the hypothesis that the inconsistency leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters. However, when using national economic evaluations as economic evaluations, the analysis result supports the idea that the inconsistency causes defection only among politically sophisticated voters. The last part explains why the research results from the analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election are inconsistent.

#### **4.1. The 2010 British General Election**

As there are two ways to measure economic evaluations, the results from the analysis the 2010 British General Election are formed into groups of two. The first group uses the personal economic evaluations as economic evaluations and the second group uses the national economic evaluations. For each group, there are three regressions. The first regression includes defection, the inconsistency, political sophistication, the strength of partisanship and approval. In addition to variables used in the first regression, the second regression also includes gender, ethnicity, education, age, income, religiosity and union membership. In the third regression, for the sake of robustness check, interest in politics, social class and region are also included.

Table 4.1 displays the estimated coefficients for the first group of analysis. From the table, we can find that at a 0.05 significance level approval is the only variable that is statistically significant in all three regressions. As all the estimated coefficients are positive,

this suggests that if voters' attitudes toward the Labour Party are in conflict with their partisanship they are more likely to defect.

As there is an interaction term in the regression, the effect of the inconsistency on defection contingent on political sophistication cannot be directly seen in Table 4.1. The estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency are displayed in Table 4.2. For the first regression, the effects of the inconsistency on defection are always statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level when political sophistication is greater than 4. It means that, at a 0.05 significance level, when political sophistication is equal to or greater than 5, the null hypothesis that the inconsistency has no effect on defection can be rejected. This null hypothesis cannot be rejected at a 0.05 significant level if political sophistication is less than 5. Based on this regression result, evidence in support of the hypothesis that the inconsistency only leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters is found.

Similar to the first regression, in the second and third regression, the marginal effects of the inconsistency are only statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level when political sophistication is 6 or 7. But one difference must be noticed. In the last two regressions, the marginal effects of the inconsistency are not statistically significant when political sophistication is 5 or 8. There are two possible causes for this difference. First, after controlling for more variables, the effect of the inconsistency disappears. If this is true, what we should observe in Table 4.2 is that compared with the numbers in the first column, the absolute values of the numbers in the second and third column are smaller, indicating that the effect of the inconsistency has been reduced or diminished because of the control variables. But this is not what we actually observe in Table 4.2. The estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency in column 2 and 3 differ little from those in column 1. For example, when political sophistication is 5, the marginal effects of the inconsistency in three regressions are 0.09, 0.10 and 0.09. And when political sophistication is 8, the marginal effects of the inconsistency are 0.15, 0.16 and 0.14. So the first explanation is excluded.

Another explanation is that: for the second and third regressions, the null hypothesis that the inconsistency has no effect on defection cannot be rejected at a 0.05 significance level is because the sample size is smaller after adding more control variables

into analysis. When the sample size becomes smaller, the standard errors becomes greater, which makes it harder to reject the null hypothesis. From Table 4.1, we can find that in the first regression the sample size is 594 but it becomes 216 and 214 respectively in the second and third regression. Also, we can find in Table 4.2 that standard errors in Column 2 and 3 are almost twice as much as what in Column 1. Therefore, to the problem that in the second and third regression, the marginal effects of the inconsistency on defection are not statistically significant at a 0.05 significant level when political sophistication is 5 or 8, the explanation is, for both regressions, the sample sizes are too small to reject the null.

The magnitude of the effect of the inconsistency varies with different levels of political sophistication. And this research only offers one example of how much the inconsistency can affect voting defection. In the third regression, when political sophistication is 7, if an individual's economic evaluation is consistent with his or her partisanship, on average, the probability of defection is 1.97% (se=0.01). However, if an individual's economic evaluation is in conflict with his or her partisanship, the probability of defection is 14.59% (se=0.07). The difference between two probabilities is 12.62%.<sup>9</sup>

The logistic regression results using national economic evaluations as economic evaluations are displayed in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4. Table 4.3 presents the results of three regressions with different control variables and we can find that the strength of partisanship is the only variable that is statistically significant at the 5 percent significance level in all the regressions. As the estimated coefficients are always negative, it suggests that people who self-identify as strong partisans are less likely to defect in the election. Table 4.4 presents the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency on voting defection at different levels of political sophistication. In the first column, we can find that when political sophistication is greater than 4, at a 0.05 significance level, the effects of the inconsistency on defection are statistically significant. Also, we can find that the effects of the inconsistency are not significant at a 0.05 significance level when political sophistication is less than 5. These also offer evidence to support the second hypothesis

<sup>9</sup> In this calculation, the strength of partisanship is set to be 2 and approval is set to be 0. Other variables are at their means.

of this research. Similar results, suggesting that the inconsistency only leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters, can also be found in the second and third column of Table 4.4.<sup>10</sup>

As the magnitude of the effect of the inconsistency varies with political sophistication, this paper only presents an example for the interpretation of the magnitude of the effect. In Model 3 of Table 4.4, when political sophistication is 7, if an individual's economic evaluation is consistent with his or her partisanship, on average, the probability of defection is 3.24% (se=0.01). However, if an individual's economic evaluations is in conflict with his or her partisanship, the probability of defection is 18.82% (se=0.06). The difference between two probabilities is 15.58%.

In sum, through analyzing the survey data from the 2010 British General Election, this paper finds evidence supporting the second research hypothesis that the inconsistency only causes voting defection among politically sophisticated voters.

<sup>10</sup> In last two columns of table 4.4, the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency are not statistically significant at 5 percent significance level when political sophistication is 8. This research argues that it is because the sample sizes are too small in the two regressions.

**Table 4.1 Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the BES 2010 with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
The Inconsistency	-0.40 (1.01)	-1.76 (1.80)	-1.59 (1.95)
Political Sophistication	-0.23 (0.13)	<b>-0.54 (0.20)**</b>	<b>-0.51 (0.20)**</b>
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.31 (0.17)	<b>0.58 (0.29)*</b>	0.54 (0.31)
The Strength of Partisanship	<b>-0.91 (0.25)***</b>	-0.73(0.38)	-0.74 (0.39)
Approval	<b>1.16 (0.30) ***</b>	<b>1.33 (0.57)*</b>	<b>1.38 (0.60)**</b>
Gender		0.11 (0.54)	0.06 (0.58)
Ethnicity		0.52 (0.96)	0.39 (0.89)
Education		0.10 (0.51)	0.08 (0.50)
Age		0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Income		-0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)
Religiosity			
Presbyterian		-1.03 (1.08)	-0.25 (1.87)
Roman Catholic		0.05 (0.64)	0.06 (0.60)
Other		-0.73 (0.69)	-0.68 (0.68)
Union Membership		0.55 (0.54)	0.44 (0.54)
Interest in Politics			-0.07 (0.11)
Social Class			
Middle Class			0.75 (0.61)
Working Class			0.73 (0.65)
Region			
Scotland			-0.91 (1.49)
Wales			0.57 (0.85)
Constant	0.04 (0.83)	0.71 (1.74)	0.87 (1.84)
N	594	216	214

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001



**Table 4.2 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the BES 2010 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>0</b> (Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)	-0.04 (0.11)	-0.33 (0.32)	-0.29 (0.32)
<b>1</b>	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.20 (0.25)	-0.17 (0.25)
<b>2</b>	0.02 (0.07)	-0.09 (0.18)	-0.07 (0.18)
<b>3</b>	0.05 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.12)	0.00 (0.12)
<b>4</b>	0.07 (0.04)	0.06 (0.08)	0.06 (0.09)
<b>5</b>	<b>0.09 (0.03)**</b>	0.10 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)
<b>6</b>	<b>0.11 (0.03)***</b>	<b>0.13 (0.05)*</b>	<b>0.12 (0.05)*</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>0.13 (0.04)***</b>	<b>0.14 (0.07)*</b>	<b>0.13 (0.07)*</b>
<b>8</b> (Highest Level of Political Sophistication)	<b>0.15 (0.05)**</b>	0.16 (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)
<b>N</b>	594	216	214

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.3 Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the BES 2010 with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
The Inconsistency	0.26 (0.89)	-0.20 (2.01)	-0.04 (2.12)
Political Sophistication	-0.10 (0.11)	-0.25 (0.28)	-0.22 (0.28)
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.22 (0.15)	0.32 (0.34)	0.29 (0.34)
<b>The Strength of Partisanship</b>	<b>-0.76 (0.20)***</b>	<b>-0.75 (0.32)*</b>	<b>-0.81 (0.31)*</b>
Approval	<b>0.71 (0.27)*</b>	0.85 (0.50)	0.90 (0.53)
Gender		0.21 (0.48)	0.19 (0.50)
Ethnicity		0.80 (0.84)	0.65 (0.81)
Education		0.29 (0.41)	0.29 (0.42)
Age		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)
Income		-0.07 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)
Religiosity			
Presbyterian		-0.89 (0.91)	-0.35 (1.27)
Roman Catholic		0.48 (0.55)	0.56 (0.58)
Other		0.12 (0.57)	0.14 (0.57)
Union Membership		0.11 (0.44)	0.02 (0.45)
Interest in Politics			-0.01 (0.11)
Social Class			
Middle Class			0.86 (0.52)
Working Class			0.75 (0.57)
Region			
Scotland			-0.75 (0.96)
Wales			0.24 (0.73)
Constant	-0.86 (0.77)	-0.46 (1.95)	-0.61 (2.01)
N	809	290	288

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.4 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the BES 2010 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>0</b> <b>(Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)</b>	0.02 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.24)	-0.00 (0.21)
<b>1</b>	0.04 (0.07)	0.01 (0.18)	0.02 (0.17)
<b>2</b>	0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.13)	0.05 (0.13)
<b>3</b>	0.08 (0.04)	0.07 (0.09)	0.07 (0.10)
<b>4</b>	0.10 (0.04)	0.09 (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)
<b>5</b>	<b>0.13 (0.03)**</b>	<b>0.12 (0.05)*</b>	<b>0.11 (0.05)*</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>0.15 (0.03)***</b>	<b>0.13 (0.05)*</b>	<b>0.13 (0.05)**</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>0.17 (0.04)***</b>	<b>0.15 (0.06)**</b>	<b>0.15 (0.06)*</b>
<b>8</b> <b>(Highest Level of Political Sophistication)</b>	<b>0.20 (0.05)***</b>	0.17 (0.09)	0.16 (0.08)
<b>N</b>	809	290	288

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

## 4.2. The 2012 American Presidential Election

The results from the analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election are also grouped into two. The first group uses personal economic evaluations to construct the inconsistency while the second group uses national economic evaluations. In each of the groups, there are three regressions. The first regression includes defection, the inconsistency, political sophistication, the strength of partisanship and approval. In addition to the variables contained in the first regression, the second regression adds gender, black, education, age, income, religiosity, union membership and ideology. In the last regression, besides all the variables listed in the second regression, interest in politics and social class are also included.<sup>11</sup>

Table 4.5 presents the regression results of the first group and we can find that except for the two important control variables, the strength of partisanship and approval, all the other variables are not statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level. Table 4.6 displays the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency on defection. It shows that all the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency are not statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level. And it means that the null hypothesis that the inconsistency has no effect on defection cannot be rejected at a 0.05 significance level.

Table 4.7 presents the regression results for the group using national economic evaluations. The estimated coefficients of the strength of partisanship and approval are always statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level. In addition, union membership, as a control variable, is also statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level in the second and third regression. These suggest that all the three variables have effects on defection.

Table 4.8 displays the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency on defection. Different from the conclusion drawn from Table 4.6, in this table, when political sophistication is at its highest levels, for example 6 and 7, the effect of the inconsistency on defection is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level. This means that for these

<sup>11</sup> In the dataset ANES 2012 downloaded from the website of American National Election Studies, ethnicity is not included. Also, there is no measurement of region.

estimates the null hypothesis that the inconsistency has no effect on defection can be rejected at a 0.05 significance level. And this result offers evidence in support of the hypothesis that the inconsistency only leads to defection among political sophisticated people.

Two points must be pointed out here. First, the results of two groups in this section are not consistent with each other. When using personal economic evaluations to construct the inconsistency, this research finds little impact of the inconsistency on defection. But when using national economic evaluations, the results support the idea that the inconsistency is a cause of voting defection among politically sophisticated voters. The second point is that in both groups the magnitudes of the marginal effects of the inconsistency are quite small compared with the results getting from the 2010 British General Election. Both points will be addressed in the next section.

**Table 4.5 Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the ANES 2012 with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
The Inconsistency	-1.11 (0.67)	-1.56 (0.73)	<b>-1.59 (0.72)*</b>
Political Sophistication	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.18 (0.11)	<b>-0.17 (0.11)</b>
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.25 (0.15)	0.35 (0.15)	<b>0.36 (0.15)*</b>
The Strength of Partisanship	<b>-0.30 (0.15)*</b>	<b>-0.38 (0.16)</b>	<b>-0.38 (0.16)*</b>
Approval	<b>4.27 (0.25)***</b>	<b>4.29 (0.25)***</b>	<b>4.25 (0.26)***</b>
Gender		-0.39 (0.25)	-0.40 (0.25)
Black		-0.02 (0.57)	-0.01 (0.57)
Education		-0.15 (0.14)	-0.15 (0.14)
Age		0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Income		0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Religiosity			
Protestant		0.01 (0.38)	0.01 (0.36)
Catholic		0.30 (0.35)	0.31 (0.35)
Jewish		0.77 (0.44)	0.57 (0.41)
Other		-0.19 (0.44)	-0.21 (0.44)
Union Membership		0.37 (0.16)	<b>0.36 (0.16)*</b>
Ideology		-0.10 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)
Interest in Politics			0.04 (0.09)
Social Class			<b>-1.23 (0.58)*</b>
Constant	-2.65 (0.61)***	-1.95 (0.93)	-0.97 (1.29)
N	3130	2848	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.6 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with Personal Financial Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
<b>0</b> <b>(Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)</b>	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)
<b>1</b>	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
<b>2</b>	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
<b>3</b>	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
<b>4</b>	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
<b>5</b>	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
<b>6</b>	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<b>7</b> <b>(Highest Level of Political Sophistication)</b>	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
<b>N</b>	3130	2848	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.7 Estimated Logistic Regression Coefficients for the ANES 2012 with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
The Inconsistency	-0.74 (0.79)	-1.08 (0.86)	-1.06 (0.86)
Political Sophistication	-0.22 (0.15)	-0.24 (0.15)	-0.23 (0.16)
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.28 (0.17)	0.34 (0.18)	0.33 (0.18)
The Strength of Partisanship	<b>-0.31 (0.14)*</b>	<b>-0.37 (0.16)*</b>	<b>-0.37 (0.16)*</b>
Approval	<b>4.07 (0.26)***</b>	<b>4.08 (0.27)***</b>	<b>4.06 (0.28)***</b>
Gender		-0.34 (0.25)	-0.34 (0.25)
Black		-0.00 (0.56)	0.00 (0.57)
Education		-0.15 (0.14)	-0.14 (0.14)
Age		0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Income		0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Religiosity			
Protestant		-0.01 (0.38)	-0.01 (0.37)
Catholic		0.28 (0.36)	0.29 (0.36)
Jewish		0.74 (0.43)	0.61 (0.42)
Other		-0.23 (0.45)	-0.24 (0.45)
Union Membership		<b>0.36 (0.16)*</b>	<b>0.35 (0.16)*</b>
Ideology		-0.11 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)
Interest in Politics			0.03 (0.09)
Social Class			-1.00 (0.66)
Constant	-2.50 (0.77)	-1.77 (1.12)	-1.01 (1.49)
N	3130	2848	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001



**Table 4.8 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>0</b> (Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.04)
<b>1</b>	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.22)	-0.02 (0.02)
<b>2</b>	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
<b>3</b>	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
<b>4</b>	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<b>5</b>	<b>0.01 (0.01)*</b>	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<b>6</b>	<b>0.02 (0.01)*</b>	<b>0.02 (0.01)*</b>	<b>0.02 (0.01)*</b>
<b>7</b> (Highest Level of Political Sophistication)	<b>0.02 (0.01)*</b>	<b>0.03 (0.01)*</b>	<b>0.03 (0.01)*</b>
<b>N</b>	3130	2848	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

### **4.3. Further Analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election**

In Section 4.2, this research finds that in the 2012 American Presidential Election the inconsistency does not always have effect on defection among politically sophisticated voters and when it has effect the magnitude is trivial. In this part, explanations are offered.

One possible explanation is that the inconsistency has no or a little effect on defection because some mediating variables are also included in the regressions. Voters' approval of the incumbent can be one of these variables as the approval can be made based on evaluations of the incumbent's performance in the economy. To test this theory, this research employs the four procedures of identifying mediating variables offered by Baron and Kenny (1996). And the analysis results indicate that approval of the incumbent is a mediating variable between the inconsistency and defection and when it is removed from models regression results support the hypothesis that the inconsistency only causes defection among politically sophisticated voters.

Baron and Kenny (1996) argue that to identify a mediating variable there needs four steps. First, the independent variable has to be correlated with the dependent variable. Second, the independent variable is correlated with the mediating variable. Third, the mediating variable is correlated with the dependent variable. Fourth, the effect of the independent variable controlling for the mediating variable is zero or less than the effect in the first step. Following their ideas, this research runs another two groups of regressions with either personal economic evaluations or national economic evaluations in each group. There are four regressions in each group. The first regression uses defection as the dependent variable and includes all the variables in the Model 3 of Table 4.5 except approval. The second regression uses the incumbent approval as the dependent variable and also includes all the variables in the Model 3 of Table 4.5 except defection. Defection is the dependent variable of the third regression and the explanatory variables of this regression do not include the inconsistency and its interaction term with political sophistication. In the last regression, defection is the dependent variable and all independent variables are included.

Table 4.9 displays the estimated coefficients of the first group of regressions. In Model 2, the estimated coefficient of the inconsistency is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level, which indicates that the null hypothesis that the inconsistency is not correlated with incumbent approval can be rejected at a 0.05 significance level. In Model 3, we can also find a statistically significant correlation between approval and defection. Table 4.10 presents the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency on defection of Model 1 and 4. For Model 1, when political sophistication is relatively high, the inconsistency is statistically significantly correlated with defection at a 0.05 significance level. This association disappears in Model 4 when incumbent approval is added in the regression. In summary, the results of regression analysis in the first group suggest that the incumbent approval of the 2012 American Presidential Election case is a mediating variable between the inconsistency and voting defection.

Similar results can be found in the second group of analysis, in which national economic evaluations are used to as a component of the inconsistency. Table 4.11 displays the estimated coefficients of the second group of regressions. And Table 4.12 presents the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency of Model 1 and Model 4. From these two tables, we can find evidence in support of the argument that the inconsistency is correlated with defection when approval is excluded, approval is correlated with both the inconsistency and defection, and when approval is a part of regressions the effect of the inconsistency is diminished. The only difference between the first and second group results is that in Model 4 of the second group the effect of the inconsistency on defection still exists but only reduced in a fair amount compared with the effect in Model 1. Therefore, no matter what kind of economic evaluations are used in the analysis, this research can always reach the conclusion that the incumbent approval is a mediating variable between the inconsistency and defection in the 2012 American Presidential Election.

Besides using the method offered by Baron and Kenny, there is another way to test the theory that the incumbent approval is a mediating variable. The incumbent approval can be decomposed into two parts. The first part is a judgment of the incumbent's performance, a part which is based on voters' economic evaluations. The second part is about the emotional attachment towards the incumbent and this part is not correlated with voters' economic evaluations in theory. To show that the incumbent approval is a

mediating variable, instead of putting it into regressions, this research uses the emotional part of the incumbent approval, constructs a new variable based on partisanship and the emotional part and puts it into regressions as a control variable. What this research expects to see is that even though this control variable is included in regressions, the effect of the inconsistency on defection among politically sophisticated voters is a positive value and is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level.

The variable used to construct the new incumbent approval is honesty, which is measured by asking “In your opinion, does the phrase ‘he is honest’ describe Obama extremely well, very well, moderately well, slightly well, or not well at all?” This variable is highly correlated with the incumbent approval (correlation coefficient = 0.58,  $p < 0.0001$ ) and in theory has little effect on attitudes towards the incumbent’s performance.

Table 4.13 presents the results of two regressions that use the new incumbent approval as a control variable. The first regression uses the personal economic evaluations to construct the inconsistency while the second regression uses the national economic evaluations. Table 4.14 displays the estimated marginal effects of the inconsistency on defection contingent on political sophistication. From the table we can find that when political sophistication is relatively high the marginal effects of the inconsistency are always statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level, indicating that the null hypothesis that the inconsistency has no effect on defection among politically sophisticated voters can be rejected. This offers evidence in support of the hypothesis that the inconsistency leads to defection only among politically sophisticated voters. Also this suggests that the original incumbent approval variable is a mediating variable between the inconsistency and defection.

In sum, the results from the analysis of the 2012 American Presidential Election also supports the second hypothesis of this research.

**Table 4.9 Mediating Variable Analysis Results with Personal Financial Situation as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
The Inconsistency	0.14 (0.64)	<b>1.20 (0.44)**</b>		<b>-1.59 (0.72)*</b>
Political Sophistication	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.15 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.17 (0.11)
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.20 (0.14)	0.05 (0.10)		<b>0.36 (0.15)*</b>
The Strength of Partisanship Approval	<b>-0.62 (0.10)***</b>	<b>-0.71 (0.08)***</b>	<b>-0.32 (0.15)*</b>	<b>-0.38 (0.16)*</b>
			<b>4.15(0.25)***</b>	<b>4.25 (0.26)***</b>
Gender	-0.08 (0.19)	0.02 (0.14)	-0.35 (0.24)	-0.40 (0.25)
Black	-0.43 (0.41)	-0.63 (0.24)	-0.08 (0.55)	-0.01 (0.57)
Education	-0.13 (0.10)	-0.11 (0.07)	-0.18 (0.13)	-0.15 (0.14)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Income	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Religiosity				
Protestant	0.28 (0.29)	0.32 (0.21)	0.21 (0.34)	0.01 (0.36)
Catholic	0.50 (0.28)	0.23 (0.21)	0.36 (0.34)	0.31 (0.35)
Jewish	<b>1.02 (0.51)*</b>	<b>1.10 (0.44)*</b>	0.57 (0.41)	0.57 (0.41)
Other	0.09 (0.33)	0.20 (0.22)	-0.08 (0.42)	-0.21 (0.44)
Union Membership	<b>0.28 (0.12)*</b>	0.05 (0.10)	0.24 (0.16)	<b>0.36 (0.16)*</b>
Ideology	-0.10 (0.06)	<b>-0.13 (0.05)***</b>	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)
Interest in Politics	<b>0.14 (0.06)*</b>	0.15 (0.04)	0.01 (0.09)	0.04 (0.09)
Social Class	-1.48 (0.97)	-1.50 (0.77)	-1.00 (0.53)	<b>-1.23 (0.58)*</b>
Constant	-0.06 (1.15)	0.44 (0.88)	-1.57 (1.11)	-0.97 (1.29)
N	2835	3937	3011	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.10 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with Personal Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	Model 1	Model 4
<b>0</b> (Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.02)
<b>1</b>	0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.02)
<b>2</b>	0.05 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.01)
<b>3</b>	<b>0.06 (0.03)*</b>	-0.01 (0.01)
<b>4</b>	<b>0.08 (0.02)***</b>	-0.00 (0.01)
<b>5</b>	<b>0.09 (0.02)***</b>	0.00 (0.01)
<b>6</b>	<b>0.11(0.03) ***</b>	0.01 (0.01)
<b>7</b> (Highest Level of Political Sophistication)	<b>0.12 (0.04)**</b>	0.02 (0.01)
<b>N</b>	2835	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.11 Mediating Variable Analysis Results with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
The Inconsistency	0.59 (0.77)	1.25 (0.64)		-1.06 (0.86)
Political Sophistication	-0.20 (0.15)	-0.25 (0.14)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.23 (0.16)
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.25 (0.17)	0.21 (0.14)		0.33 (0.18)
<b>The Strength of Partisanship Approval</b>	<b>-0.60 (0.10)***</b>	<b>-0.70 (0.08)***</b>	<b>-0.32 (0.15)*</b>	<b>-0.37 (0.16)*</b>
			<b>4.15(0.25)***</b>	<b>4.06 (0.28)***</b>
Gender	-0.07 (0.19)	0.06 (0.14)	-0.35 (0.24)	-0.34 (0.25)
Black	-0.50 (0.42)	<b>-0.73 (0.24)**</b>	-0.08 (0.55)	0.00 (0.57)
Education	-0.12 (0.10)	-0.11 (0.07)	-0.18 (0.13)	-0.14 (0.14)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Income	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Religiosity				
Protestant	0.20 (0.30)	0.22 (0.20)	0.20 (0.34)	-0.01 (0.37)
Catholic	0.32 (0.29)	-0.00 (0.22)	0.36 (0.33)	0.29 (0.36)
Jewish	<b>1.20 (0.49)*</b>	<b>1.16 (0.43)**</b>	0.57 (0.41)	0.61 (0.42)
Other	0.05 (0.33)	0.05 (0.22)	-0.08 (0.42)	-0.24 (0.45)
Union Membership	<b>0.27 (0.13)*</b>	0.01 (0.11)	0.24 (0.16)	<b>0.35 (0.16)*</b>
Ideology	-0.13 (0.07)	-0.12 (0.05)	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)
Interest in Politics	<b>0.12 (0.06)*</b>	<b>0.13 (0.04)**</b>	0.01 (0.09)	0.03 (0.09)
Social Class	-0.79 (0.68)	-1.00 (0.59)	-1.00 (0.53)	-1.00 (0.66)
Constant	-0.90 (1.20)	-0.15 (0.92)	-1.57 (1.12)	-1.01 (1.49)
N	2835	3937	3011	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.12 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	Model 1	Model 4
<b>0</b> (Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)	0.05 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.03)
<b>1</b>	0.07 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.02)
<b>2</b>	<b>0.09 (0.03)*</b>	-0.01 (0.02)
<b>3</b>	<b>0.10 (0.03)***</b>	-0.00 (0.01)
<b>4</b>	<b>0.11 (0.02)***</b>	0.01 (0.01)
<b>5</b>	<b>0.13 (0.02)***</b>	0.01 (0.01)
<b>6</b>	<b>0.14 (0.02)***</b>	<b>0.02 (0.01)*</b>
<b>7</b> (Highest Level of Political Sophistication)	<b>0.15 (0.03)***</b>	<b>0.03 (0.01)*</b>
<b>N</b>	2835	2818

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001



**Table 4.13 Mediating Variable Analysis with Incumbent Approval based on Incumbent's Honesty, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

Variable	Model 1 (personal)	Model 2 (national)
The Inconsistency	0.21 (0.69)	0.58 (0.80)
Political Sophistication	-0.13 (0.11)	-0.19 (0.16)
Interaction between the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication	0.16 (0.15)	0.23 (0.17)
<b>The Strength of Partisanship</b>	<b>-0.53 (0.10)***</b>	<b>-0.52 (0.11)***</b>
<b>Approval (Honesty)</b>	<b>1.43 (0.21)***</b>	<b>1.32 (0.22)***</b>
Gender	-0.05 (0.20)	-0.04 (0.20)
Black	-0.31 (0.41)	-0.39 (0.42)
Education	-0.17 (0.10)	-0.16 (0.10)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Income	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)
Religiosity		
Protestant	0.17 (0.31)	0.11 (0.30)
Catholic	0.40 (0.29)	0.25 (0.29)
Jewish	1.06 (0.59)	<b>1.23 (0.53)*</b>
Other	-0.01 (0.33)	-0.05 (0.34)
Union Membership	<b>0.26 (0.13)*</b>	<b>0.26 (0.13)*</b>
Ideology	<b>-0.24 (0.07)***</b>	<b>-0.26 (0.08)**</b>
Interest in Politics	0.11 (0.06)	0.11 (0.06)
Social Class	-1.51 (1.13)	-1.00 (0.76)
Constant	0.22 (1.27)	-0.43 (1.26)
<b>N</b>	<b>2829</b>	<b>2829</b>

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.14 Estimated Marginal Effects of the Inconsistency on Voting Defection with Incumbent Approval based on Incumbent's Honesty, the ANES 2012 (standard errors in the parentheses)**

	<b>Model 1 (personal)</b>	<b>Model 2 (national)</b>
<b>0</b> (Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)	0.02 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)
<b>1</b>	0.03 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
<b>2</b>	0.04 (0.04)	<b>0.08 (0.03)*</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>0.06 (0.03)*</b>	<b>0.09 (0.02)***</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>0.07 (0.02)***</b>	<b>0.10 (0.02)***</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>0.08 (0.02)***</b>	<b>0.11 (0.01)***</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>0.09 (0.02)***</b>	<b>0.12 (0.02)***</b>
<b>7</b> (Highest Level of Political Sophistication)	<b>0.10 (0.03)**</b>	<b>0.13 (0.03)***</b>
<b>N</b>	2829	2829

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

## Chapter 5.

### Limitations

As a survey research design that analyzes two waves of panel data, this study mainly have three limitations. The biggest challenge this study faces is lacking internal validity. Even though in regressions many variables have been included to control for their effects, it is still possible to argue that the association between the inconsistency and defection among politically sophisticated voters found in this research is not causal. This critique can develop in two possible ways. First, some scholars may argue that the inconsistency is correlated with defection by accident. To satisfy the necessary condition of causal relationships, the variable the inconsistency is constructed based on data measured in the pre-elections surveys while the dependent variable defection is based on data measured in the post-election surveys. People's attitudes change within short time period (Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1992) and may be heavily influenced by campaign (e.g. Gerber, Gimpel, Green, & Shaw, 2011; Hillygus & Shields, 2009; Gelman & King, 1993 for the opposite). Therefore, some factors happening between two waves of survey might cause defection and at the same time accidentally correlated with the inconsistency. The second way to build the critique is to argue that there exists an unknown third variable that causes the inconsistency and defection covariate at the same time. And even though the inconsistency and defection are always correlated, the relationship is not causal and will disappear if the third variable is added into regression. As the third variable is still unknown, it is impossible for a survey research design to claim that the variable has been controlled.

Survey research designs in general cannot solve the low internal validity limitation and a lab experimental design should be employed in the future to assert the causal relationship between the inconsistency and defection. However, this does not mean that this research is meaningless. What this research offers is that there is an association between two variables and the relationship has the potential to be a causal one. Also, if the causal relationship really exists, this research also offers great external validity to it. This is because both the BES 2010 and the ANES 2012 are nation-wide social survey data and the samples are more representative than what lab experiments usually use.

Also, the sample sizes of survey are usually much larger than of lab experiments. And this is very helpful in reducing the probability of type 2 errors.

The second limitation is related to the external validity of the analysis of the BES 2010. In the analysis, when more control variables are added into regressions, the numbers of observations decline. It is possible that when the number of observations is small, what I have analyzed is not a representative but a selective sample and it is unconvincing to generalize the conclusion to the population. By comparing the means of each variable of the whole sample and the sample the regressions have analyzed, I find that compared to the whole sample group, the latter group is more politically sophisticated, more interested in politics, having more union members, and wealthier when using personal economic evaluations as economic evaluations. And when using national economic evaluations as economic evaluations, I find that the latter group is more politically sophisticated, more interested in politics, having more union members, elder, and wealthier.<sup>12</sup> From the evidence we have here, it is hard to tell how these factors may affect the results and further research is needed.

The last limitation of this research is that it does not test auxiliary hypotheses. Besides the main hypotheses about the inconsistency and defection, auxiliary hypotheses, such as political sophistication leads to lower level of uncertainty and uncertainty has effects on voting behaviors, are also important. If they are supported by evidence, it can provide credit to the main hypothesis and the theory.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C for the statistical results.

## Chapter 6.

### Conclusion

This research attempts to answer questions of whether the inconsistency between economic evaluations and partisanship affects voting defection, and if so, how does it work? Employing Downs's voting decision model and based on different assumptions about what roles partisanship plays, this study develops two central hypotheses. The results of analyzing the survey data of the 2010 British General Election and the 2012 American Presidential Election support the hypothesis that the inconsistency only leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters. The theory behind this hypothesis is: voters only vote for the candidate or party that maximizes their utilities, also, this calculation of utilities faces uncertainty and partisanship is employed to solve it, when economic evaluations and partisanship impel voters to favor different voting choices, if voters think their decisions have great uncertainty, they will vote for the parties they belong to, otherwise, if they are confident about their decisions, they choose to vote according to their utility calculation and defect in an election, usually politically sophisticated voters think their decisions have less uncertainty, therefore the inconsistency only leads to defection among politically sophisticated voters. And this conclusion mainly has four implications.<sup>13</sup>

Extending previous research about information shortcuts and voting behavior, this research suggests that the relationships among information shortcuts are also able to impose effects on voting choices.

<sup>13</sup> It might be possible that political sophistication leads to the inconsistency and then leads to defection. In the BES 2010, the Pearson's chi-square test of political sophistication and the inconsistency is 14.92 ( $p=0.06$ , personal economic evaluations as economic evaluations) and 32.24 ( $p<0.001$ , national economic evaluations as economic evaluations). And in the ANES 2012, the Pearson's chi-square test of the two variables is 17.83 ( $p=0.01$ , personal economic evaluations as economic evaluations) and 178.74 ( $p<0.001$ , national economic evaluations as economic evaluations). But two pieces of evidence can rebut the idea that political sophistication leads to the inconsistency and then leads to defection. First, when I calculate the marginal effects of the inconsistency, I hold the level of political sophistication constant. Second, political sophistication does not have statistically significant effect on defection in the multivariate logistic regressions using political sophistication as the independent variable and excluding the inconsistency. For statistical results, see appendix D.

Also, this research shows that well informed voters may not vote the same as the uninformed voters. From this study, it can be found that when economic evaluations and partisanship indicate different choices, politically sophisticated voters who are also well informed about politics are more likely to defection compared to political unsophisticated voters. Even though all voters use information shortcuts to make decisions, they do not always use them in the same way. Consistent with Bartels (1996) research conclusion, the conclusion of this research weakens the argument that uninformed voters can act like fully informed by using information shortcuts (e.g. Key, 1966; Popkin, 1991).

Besides two implications mentioned above, the conclusion also has implication on the roles of partisanship. Campbell and his colleagues argued that partisanship can undo considerations that are not inconsistent with partisanship. But this research suggests that this may not always be true and the effect of partisanship varies case to case.

The last implication of this research is not based on the conclusion but on the comparison between the UK and the US cases. Even though the analysis results of both cases support the conclusion, from the marginal effects of the inconsistency on defection, it can be found that the conditions on which the inconsistency affects defection are not the same. In the UK case, the statistically significant impact of the inconsistency on defection only appears when political sophistication is 5 or higher. But in the US case from Table 14 we can find political sophistication only needs to be 2 or 3 to cause such effect. Of course this is not a conclusion based on a rigorous comparative study. But this finding is consistent with Duch and Stevenson's (2008) research result which argues that European voters need to be more politically sophisticated to deal with the parliamentary governments.

## References

- Anderson, C. J. (2007). The end of economic voting? Contingency dilemmas and the limits of democratic accountability. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 271–296.
- Bartels, L. M. (1996). Uniformed votes: Information effects in presidential elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(1), 194-230.
- Bartels, L. M. (2002). Beyond the running tally: Partisan bias in political perceptions. *Political Behavior*, 24(2), 117-150.
- Bartels, L. M. (2008). *Unequal democracy: The political economy of the new gilded age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bartle, J. (2007). The measurement of party identification in Britain: Where do we stand now? *British Election & Parties Review*, 11(1), 9-22.
- Beck, P. A. (2002). Encouraging political defection: The role of personal discussion networks in partisan desertions to the opposition party and perot votes in 1992. *Political Behaviour*, 24(4), 309-337.
- Berelson, B., Lazarsfeld, P. F., & McPhee, W. N. (1954). *Voting: A study of opinion formation in a presidential campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brady, H., & Sniderman, P. (1985). Attitude attribution: A group basis for political reasoning. *American Political Science Review*, 79(4), 1061–1078.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P., Miller, W., & Stokes, D. (1960). *The American voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Carmines, E. G., & Kuklinski, J. H. (1990). Incentives, opportunities, and the logic of public opinion in American political representation. In J. A. Ferejohn & J. H. Kuklinski (Eds.), *Information and democratic processes* (pp. 240-268). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Clarke, H. D., & Kornberg, A. (1996). Partisan dealignment, *electoral* choice and party system change in Canada. *Party Politics*, 2(4), 455-478.
- Clement, S., Cohen, J. & Craighill, P. M. (2012, November 6). Exit polls 2012: How the vote has shifted. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/2012-exit-polls/>
- Converse, P. E. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In D. E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and discontent* (pp. 206-261). New York: Free Press.

- Converse, P. E. (1966). The concept of a normal vote. In A. Campbell, P. E. Converse, W. E. Miller, & D. E. Stokes (Eds), *Elections and the political order* (pp. 9-39). New York: Wiley.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Duch, R. M., & Stevenson, R. T. (2008). *The economic vote: How political and economic institutions condition election results*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, G., & Andersen, R. (2006). The political conditioning of economic perceptions. *Journal of Politics*, 68(1), 194–207.
- Evans, G., & Pickup, M. (2010). Reversing the causal arrow: The political conditioning of economic perceptions in the 2000–2004 US presidential election cycle. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(4), 1236-1251.
- Feldman, S. (1982). Economic self-interest and political behaviour. *American Journal of Political Science*, 26(3), 446-466.
- Fiorina, M. P. (1976). The voting decision: Instrumental and expressive aspects. *Journal of Politics*, 38(2), 390–413.
- Fiorina, M. P. (1981). *Retrospective voting in American national elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Geer, J. G. (1988). The effects of presidential debates on the electorate's preferences for candidates. *American Politics Research*, 16(4), 486-501.
- Gerber, A., & Green, D. (1999). Misperceptions about perceptual bias. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2(1), 189-210.
- Gerber, A. S., Gimpel, J. G., Green, D. P., & Shaw, D. R. (2011). How large and long-lasting are the persuasive effects of televised campaign ads? Results from a randomized field experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 105(1), 135-150.
- Gelman, A., & King, G. (1993). Why are American presidential election campaign polls so variable when votes are so predictable? *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(4), 409-451.
- Gomez, B. T., & Wilson, M. J. (2001). Political sophistication and economic voting in the American electorate: A theory of heterogeneous attribution. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 899–914.



- Green, D., Palmquist, B., & Schickler, E. (2002). *Partisan hearts and minds: Political parties and the social identities of voters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hawkins, C. B., & Nosek, B. A. (2012). Motivated independence? Implicit party identity predicts political judgments among self-proclaimed independents. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(11), 1437-1452.
- Hayes, D. (2009). Has television personalized voting behavior? *Political Behavior*, 31(2), 231-260.
- Healy, A., & Malhotra, N. (2013). Retrospective voting reconsidered. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 285-306.
- Hetherington, M. J. (1996). The media's role in forming voters' retrospective evaluations in 1992. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(2), 372-395.
- Hillygus, S., & Shields, T. G. (2008). *The persuadable voter: Wedge issues in presidential campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johnston, R. (2006). Party identification: Unmoved mover or sum of preferences? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9(1), 329-351.
- Kahneman, D., Slovic, P., & Tversky, A. (1982). *Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kahneman, D. (2003). Maps of bounded rationality: Psychology for behavioral economics. *American Economic Review*, 93(5), 1449-1475.
- Kam, C. D. (2005). Who toes the party line? Cues, values and individual differences. *Political Behavior*, 27(2), 163-182.
- Key, V. O. (1966). *The responsible electorate: Rationality in presidential voting, 1936-1960*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Kinder, D. R., & Kiewiet, D. R. (1979). Economic grievances and political behavior: The role of personal discontents and collective judgments in congressional voting. *American Journal of Political Science*, 23(3), 495-527.
- Kinder, D., & Kiewiet, R. (1981). Sociotropic politics: The American case. *British Journal of Political Science*, 11(2): 129-141.
- Kramer, G. H. (1971). Short-term fluctuations in U.S. voting behavior, 1896-1964. *American Political Science Review*, 65(1), 131-143.

- Kramer, G. H. (1983). The ecological fallacy revisited: Aggregate versus individual-level findings on economics and elections, and sociotropic voting. *American Political Science Review*, 77(1), 92–111.
- Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2001). Advantages and disadvantages of cognitive heuristics in political decision making. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 951-971.
- Lohmann, S. (1999). What price accountability? The Lucas Island model and the politics of monetary policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(2), 396-430.
- Lupia, A. (1994). Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: Information and voting behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *American Political Science Review*, 88(1), 63-76.
- Luskin, R. C. (1987). Measuring political sophistication. *American Journal of Political Science*, 31(4), 856-899.
- Markus, G. B. (1988). The impact of personal and national economic conditions on the presidential vote: A pooled cross-sectional analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 32(1), 137-154.
- Mutz, D. C. (2002). The consequences of cross-cutting networks for political participation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(4), 838-855.
- Pattie, C. J., & Johnston, R. J. (2001). Routes to party choice: Ideology, economic evaluations and voting at the 1997 British General Election. *European Journal of Political Research*, 39(3), 373-389.
- Popkin, S. L. (1991). *The reasoning voter: Communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scacco, J. M., & Peacock, C. (2013). The cross-pressured citizen in the 2012 presidential campaign: Formative factors and media choice behavior. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58(9), 1214-1235.
- Sides, J., Citrin, J., & Cohen, J. (2002). The causes and consequences of crossover voting in the 1998 California election." In B. Cain and E. Gerber (Eds), *Voting at the political faultline: California's experiment with the blanket primary* (pp. 77-106). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sniderman, P. M., Brody, R. A., & Tetlock, P. E. (1993). *Reasoning and choice: explorations in political psychology*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

- The American National Election Studies. (n.d.). The ANES 2012 time series study [dataset]. Retrieved from [http://www.electionstudies.org/study/pages/anes\\_timeseries\\_2012/anes\\_timeseries\\_2012.htm](http://www.electionstudies.org/study/pages/anes_timeseries_2012/anes_timeseries_2012.htm)
- Vandenbroek, M. L. (2011). Lost our lease: Issue attention and partisan defection in the 2008 Presidential Election. *American Politics Research*, 39(6), 1045-1071.
- Weatherford, M. S. 1983. Economic voting and the 'symbolic politics' argument: A reinterpretation and synthesis." *American Political Science Review*, 77(1), 158-174.
- Wlezien, C., Franklin, M., & Twiggs, D. (1997). Economic perceptions and vote choice: Disentangling the endogeneity. *Political Behavior*, 19(1), 7-17.
- Whiteley, P.F., & Sanders, D. (2014). *British election study, 2010: Face-to-Face survey [computer file]*. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor].
- Treier, S., & Hillygus, D. S. (2009). The nature of political ideology in the contemporary electorate. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73(4), 679-703.
- Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

# Appendix A

## Wordings of Survey Questions

### The BES 2010 Face to Face Survey Data

#### (1) Partisanship

##### A. The first way of measuring partisanship

Question: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, (Scottish National/Plaid Cymru) or what?

Options: None/No, Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, Green Party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), British National Party (BNP), Other (WRITE IN)

IF 'none/no', DK OR REFUSAL at last question

Question: Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to one of the parties than the others?

Options: Yes, No

If 'yes' at last question

Question: Which party is that?

Options: None/No, Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, Green Party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), British National Party (BNP), Other (WRITE IN)

##### B. The second way of measuring partisanship

Question: Some people think of themselves as usually being a supporter of one political party rather than another. Do you usually think of yourself as being a supporter of one particular party or not?

Options: Yes, No

IF 'yes' at last question

Question: Which party is that?

Options: Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, Green Party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), British National Party (BNP), Other (WRITE IN)

#### (2) The Strength of Partisanship

Question: Would you call yourself very strong (party), fairly strong or not very strong?

Options: Very strong, Fairly strong, Not very strong.

(3) Personal Financial Situation Evaluation

Question: How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 12 months ago?

Options: Got a lot worse, Got a little worse, Stayed the same, Got a little better, Got a lot better.

(4) Vote Choice

Question: Which party did you vote for in the general election?

Options: Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, Green Party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), British National Party (BNP), Other (WRITE IN)

(5) Political Knowledge

Question: Please tell me if you think that the following statements are true or false. If you don't know, just say so and we will skip to the next one. Remember - true, false, or don't know.

Statements: Polling stations close at 10.00pm on election day (True); The Liberal Democrats favour a system of proportional representation for Westminster elections (True); The minimum voting age is 16 (False); The standard rate of income tax payable is 26p in the pound (False); The Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for setting interest rates in the UK (False); Labour promises withdrawing all British troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2010 (False); The Conservative Party favours reducing the budget deficit without cutting funding for the National Health Service (True); Any registered voter can obtain a postal vote if they want one - by contacting their local council and asking for a postal vote (True).

(6) Age

Question: What was your age last birthday?

(7) Ethnicity

Question: To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

Options: White British, Any other white background (WRITE IN), White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other mixed background (WRITE IN), Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Any other Asian background (WRITE IN), Black Caribbean, Black African, Any other Black background (WRITE IN), Chinese, Other ethnic ground (WRITE IN).

(8) Education

Question: What is the highest qualification you have?(If qualification is not in list, probe for equivalent if possible.)

Options: Postgraduate degree, First degree, Univ/poly diploma, Teaching qualification, Nursing qualification, HNC/HND, City&Guilds level 4, NVQ/SVQ 4/5, A level or equivalent, Scottish Higher or equivalent, ONC/OND, City&Guilds level 3, NVQ/SVQ 3, GCSE A\*-C, CSE grade 1, O level grade A-C, Scottish Standard grades, Ordinary bands, GCSE D-G, CSE grades 2-5, O level D-E, City&Guilds level 2, NVQ/SVQ 2 and equiv, City&Guilds level 1, NVQ/SVQ 1 and equiv, Clerical and commercial qualifications, Recognised trade apprenticeship, Youth training certificate, skill seekers, Other technical, professional or higher qualification

(9) Gender

Interviewer to observe and record: gender of respondent

Options: Male, Female

(10) National Economic Evaluation

Question: How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months ?

Options: Got a lot worse, Got a little worse, Stayed the same, Got a little better, Got a lot better

(11) Approval

On a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means strongly dislike and 10 means strongly like, how do you feel about the Labour Party? (Or how do you feel about the Labour Party?)

Options: 0 Strongly dislike, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 Strongly like

(12) Income

Question: Which of the letters on this card represents the total income of your household from all sources before tax-including benefits, savings and so on?

Options: Q, T, O, K, L, B, Z, M, F, J, D, H, P, S, A

(13) Religiosity

Question: Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?

Options: Yes, No

IF 'yes' at last question

Question: Which religion or denomination?

Options: Baptist, Brethren, Buddhist, Church of England/Anglican/Episcopal, Eastern Orthodox, Free Presbyterian, Hindu, Jewish, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian/Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Sikh, Sunni Muslim, Shiite Muslim, Other Islam/Muslim, United Reform Church, Other (WRITE IN), Don't know, Refused

(14) Union Membership

Question: Are you now a member of a trade union or staff association?

Options: Yes, trade union; Yes, staff association, No

(15) Interest in Politics

Question: On a scale of 0 to 10 how much attention do you generally pay to politics?

Options: 0 Pay no attention, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 Pay a great deal of attention

(16) Social Class

Question: Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular class? IF YES: Which class is that?

Options: Yes, middle class; Yes, working class; Yes, other (WRITE IN); No

### **The ANES 2012 Survey Data**

(1) Partisanship

Question: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?

Options: No preference, Democrat, Republican, Independent, Other party (Specify)

If Respondent's party identification is independent, no reference, other, DK,

Question: Do you think yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

Options: Closer to Republican, Neither, Closer to Democratic.

(2) The Strength of Partisanship

If respondent considers self a Democrat/Republican

Question: Would you call yourself a strong [Democrat / Republican] or a not very strong Democrat / Republican?

Options: Strong, Not very strong.

(3) Personal Financial Situation Evaluation

Question: Would you say that [you/you and your family living here] are better off or worse off than you were a year ago?

Options: Better, Worse, the Same.

Question: Much better or somewhat better / Much worse or somewhat worse?

Options: Much, Somewhat

(4) Vote Choice

Question: Who did you vote for?

Options: Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, Other Candidate

(5) Political Knowledge

Question: Now we would like to ask you some questions about the religion of the presidential candidates. Would you say that Obama] is Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, some other religion, or is he not religious?

Correct Answer: Protestant

Question: Would you say that Romney is Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, some other religion, or is he not religious?

Correct Answer: Mormon

Question: Do you happen to know how many times an individual can be elected President of the United States under current laws? (Open-ended question)

Correct Answer: Twice

Question: Is the U.S. federal budget deficit—the amount by which the government's spending exceeds the amount of money it collects—now bigger, about the same, or smaller than it was during most of the 1990s?

Correct Answer: Bigger

Question: For how many years is a United States Senator elected – that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. Senator? (Open-ended question)

Correct Answer: 6 years

Question: What is Medicare?

Options:

1. A program run by the U.S. federal government to pay for old people's health care [Correct answer]
2. A program run by state governments to provide health care to poor people
3. A private health insurance plan sold to individuals in all 50 states
4. A private, non-profit organization that runs free health clinics

Question: On which of the following does the U.S. federal government currently spend the least?

Options:

1. Foreign aid [Correct answer]
2. Medicare
3. National defense



#### 4. Social Security

##### (6) Black

Question: I am going to read you a list of five race categories. Please choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be: white; black or African American; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander?

##### (7) Age

Question: What is the month, day and year of your birth?

##### (8) Education

Question: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Options: Less than 1st grade, 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade, 5th or 6th grade, 7th or 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade no diploma, High school graduate-high school diploma or equivalent (for example: GED), Some college but no degree, Associate degree in college-Occupational/vocational program, Associate degree in college -- Academic program, Bachelor's degree (For example: BA, AB, BS), Master's degree (For example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA), Professional School Degree (For example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD), Doctorate degree (For example: PhD, EdD), Other {SPECIFY}

##### (9) Gender

Question: Are you male or female?

Options: Male, Female

##### (10) Approval

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

Options: Approve, Disapprove

Question: Do you approve strongly or not strongly? / Do you disapprove strongly or not strongly?

Options: Strongly, Not strongly

##### (11) Income

Question: [Information about income is very important to understand how people are doing financially these days. Your answers are confidential. Would you please give your best guess?] Please mark the answer that includes the income of all members of your family living here in 2011 before taxes.

Options: Under \$5,000; \$5,000-9,999; \$10,000-12,499; \$12,500-14,999; \$15,000-17,499; \$17,500-19,999; \$20,000-22,499; \$22,500-24,999; \$25,000-27,499; \$27,500-29,999; \$30,000-34,999; \$35,000-39,999; \$40,000-44,999; \$45,000-49,999; \$50,000-54,999; \$55,000-59,999; \$60,000-64,999; \$65,000-69,999; \$70,000-74,999; \$75,000-79,999;

\$80,000-89,999; \$90,000-99,999; \$100,000-109,999; \$110,000-124,999; \$125,000-149,999; \$150,000-174,999; \$175,000-249,999; \$250,000 or More; Refuse, Don't Know

#### (12) Religiosity

Question: Lots of things come up that keep people from attending religious services even if they want to. Thinking about your life these days, do you ever attend religious services, apart from occasional weddings, baptisms or funerals?

Options: Yes, No

Question: Do you mostly attend a place of worship that is Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or something else?

Options: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Other

Question: Do you consider yourself Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or something else?

Options: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Other

#### (13) Union Membership

Question: Do you or anyone else in this household belong to a labor union or to an employee association similar to a union?

Options: Yes, No

Question: Who is it that belongs?

Options: Respondent, Spouse/partner, Someone else

#### (14) Ideology

Question: Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

Options: 1.Extremely liberal, 2.Liberal, 3.Slightly liberal, 4.Moderate (middle of the road), 5.Slightly conservative, 6.Conservative, 7.Extremely conservative

#### (15) Interest in Politics

Question: How often do you pay attention to what's going on in government and politics? [always, most of the time, about half the time, some of the time, or never / never, some of the time, about half the time, most of the time, or always]?

Options: Always, Most of the time, About half the time, Some of the time and Never

Question: Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you have been [very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested/not much interested, somewhat interested or very much interested] in the political campaigns so far this year?

Options: Very much interested, Somewhat interested, Not much interested

Question: Do you happen to know where people who live in your neighbourhood go to vote?

Options: Yes, No, Vote only by Mail

#### (16) Social Class

Question: There's been some talk these days about different social classes. Most people say they belong either to the middle class or the working class. Do you ever think of yourself as belonging in one of these classes?

Options: Yes, No

If "yes" at the last question

Question: Which one?

Options: Lower class or poor, Middle class, Working class, Both, Upper class, Other {SPECIFY}

If "no" at the first question

Question: Well, if you had to make a choice, would you call yourself middle class or working class?

Options: Lower class or poor, Middle class, Working class, Both, Upper class, Other {SPECIFY}

#### (17) Honesty

Question: In your opinion, does the phrase 'he is honest' describe [preload: dem\_pname] [extremely well, very well, moderately well, slightly well, or not well at all/not well at all, slightly well, moderately well, very well, or extremely well]? / (What about) 'honest'? (Does this phrase describe [preload: dem\_pname] [extremely well, very well, moderately well, slightly well, or not well at all? / not well at all, slightly well, moderately well, very well, or extremely well])

Options: Extremely well, Very well, Moderately well, Slightly well, or Not well at all

#### (18) National Economic Evaluation

Question: Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?

Options: Gotten better, Stayed about the same, Gotten worse

## **Appendix B**

### **Three Specifications of the Recoding Rules**

#### **Defection**

This is a binary variable with 1 meaning respondents defected in the election and voted across the party lines and 0 meaning did not defect. It is constructed based on respondents' vote choice and partisanship. One problem with this variable is that the number of defections measured by this method is less than the real defection number as both the partisanship and vote choice are recoded as binary variables and some defections may happen in the "Other" categories. For example, some people may identify themselves as Conservatives but voted for the Liberal Democrats. This is defection according to the definition used in this study. But the measurement used by this research cannot capture that.

#### **Political Sophistication**

There are 8 questions in the post-election survey of the BES 2010 which measure respondents' political knowledge. Based on these questions, a composite political knowledge scale is constructed. For each of the questions, if the respondent's answer is correct, s/he gets one point. Otherwise, s/he gets zero. And the composite scale is formed by adding the scores of 8 questions together and is a 0-8 scale. "Don't Know" answers are recoded as "not correct". Previous research has suggested that some people are more likely to guess when they don't know the answers while some prefers to response as "don't know" when they are not confident about their answers and this psychology characteristic may influence the measurement if "Don't know" is simply recoded as "not correct" (Mondak & Anderson, 2004). One justification for the coding method used in this research is that when asking those questions, the instruction is worded as "Please tell me if you think that the following statements are true or false. If you don't know, just say so and we will skip to the next one". This may discourage people who want to guess.

In the ANES 2012, there are 7 questions in the pre-election survey measuring respondents' political knowledge. Based on these questions, a composite political knowledge scale is constructed used to represent the measurement of political sophistication. For each of the questions, if the respondent's answer is correct, s/he gets one point. Otherwise, s/he gets zero. And the composite scale is formed by adding the scores of 7 questions together and is a 0-7 scale. "Don't Know" answers are recoded as "not correct". This coding method also suffers from the critique that coding "don't know" as not correct may exaggerate the effect of guessing. Two arguments may ease this problem. First, some political knowledge questions are opened-end and make respondents more difficult to be correct by accident. Second, for those questions that have options, the number of options for each question is always greater than three. And more options can reduce the probability that respondents' answers are correct due to guessing.

#### **Vote Choice for the ANES 2012 only**

This variable was measured in the post-election wave of the ANES 2012 and is recoded as 1 meaning people voted for the Democratic Party and 0 meaning people voted for another party. "Refused" and "Don't know" are coded as missing.

The reason that this variable is used is to make sure that voting behavior is after their attitudes chronically. But in the 2012 American Presidential Election, early vote is allowed in the election which suggesting that some voters had already voted before their received the pre-election interview and analyzing their data cannot offer us the chronological order and it is possible that they may use their attitudes to justify their behavior. In the pre-election survey, there are 386 respondents who had voted before the interview, which is 6.5% of all the respondents of the survey.

#### Reference

Mondak, J. J., & Anderson, M. R. (2004). The knowledge gap: A reexamination of gender-based differences in political knowledge. *Journal of Politics*, 66(2), 492-512.

## Appendix C

### Descriptive Analysis Results of the BES 2010

For both the representative sample and the selective sample (the sample I used to run the regressions with all control variables in), I calculate the means of each variable and compared the means of the two groups. For binary variables, means are the same as proportions. Even though some variables are nominal, like ethnicity and social class, comparing the means can still tell us whether the two groups are the same in terms of these variables.

**Table C.1. Estimated Means with Personal Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the BES 2010, (standard errors in the parentheses, two tailed t test)**

Variable	Representative Sample		Selective Sample		T-test
	Mean (sd)	N	Mean (sd)	N	t-statistic
Defection	0.14 (0.35)	1053	0.14 (0.35)	214	0.08
The Inconsistency (personal)	0.42 (0.49)	1010	0.43 (0.50)	214	0.39
Political Sophistication	5.32 (1.83)	3075	6.15 (1.49)	214	<b>-7.75***</b>
The Strength of Partisanship	1.70 (0.69)	1564	1.78 (0.68)	214	-1.61
Approval	0.17 (0.38)	1308	0.16 (0.37)	214	0.37
Gender	0.54 (0.50)	3512	0.53 (0.50)	214	0.28
Ethnicity	0.89 (0.31)	3503	0.89 (0.32)	214	0.18
Education	0.31 (0.46)	2571	0.33 (0.47)	214	-0.60
Age	51.22 (18.10)	3494	52.03 (14.96)	214	-0.76
Income	6.20 (3.92)	2715	7.44 (3.86)	214	<b>-4.52 ***</b>
Religiosity	2.09 (1.23)	1837	1.98 (1.21)	214	1.26
Union Membership	0.19 (0.39)	3504	0.28 (0.45)	214	<b>-2.86 **</b>
Interest in Politics	5.18 (2.67)	1932	6.27 (2.18)	214	<b>-6.77 ***</b>
Social Class	0.83 (0.88)	3038	0.83 (0.86)	214	0.03
region	1.36 (0.62)	3075	1.31 (0.63)	214	1.12

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table C.2. Estimated Means with National Economic Evaluations as Economic Evaluations, the BES 2010, (standard errors in the parentheses, two tailed t test)**

Variable	Representative Sample		Selective Sample		T-test Result
	Mean (sd)	N	Mean (sd)	N	t-statistic
Defection	0.14 (0.35)	1053	0.13 (0.34)	288	0.44
The Inconsistency (national)	0.39 (0.50)	1379	0.41 (0.49)	288	-0.63
Political Sophistication	5.32 (1.83)	3075	6.16 (1.49)	288	<b>-8.96 ***</b>
The Strength of Partisanship	1.70 (0.69)	1564	1.77 (0.70)	288	-1.56
Approval	0.17 (0.38)	1308	0.17 (0.37)	288	0.17
Gender	0.54 (0.50)	3512	0.53 (0.50)	288	0.33
Ethnicity	0.89 (0.31)	3503	0.89 (0.31)	288	
Education	0.31 (0.46)	2571	0.33 (0.47)	288	-0.69
Age	51.22 (18.10)	3494	54.22 (15.84)	288	<b>-3.05 **</b>
Income	6.20 (3.92)	2715	7.26 (3.93)	288	<b>-4.35 ***</b>
Religiosity	2.09 (1.23)	1837	2.07 (1.25)	288	0.25
Union Membership	0.19 (0.39)	3504	0.29 (0.46)	288	<b>-3.59 ***</b>
Interest in Politics	5.18 (2.67)	1932	6.33 (2.20)	288	<b>-8.03 ***</b>
Social Class	0.83 (0.88)	3038	0.78 (0.84)	288	0.96
Region	1.36 (0.62)	3075	1.29 (0.61)	288	1.86

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

## Appendix D

### Political Sophistication and the Inconsistency

Table D.1. Contingency Table of the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication, the BES 2010

	The Inconsistency (personal)		The Inconsistency (national)	
	Inconsistent	Consistent	Inconsistent	Consistent
<b>0</b> (Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)	0	2	0	2
<b>1</b>	5	1	4	3
<b>2</b>	12	9	20	11
<b>3</b>	27	27	42	43
<b>4</b>	45	49	55	72
<b>5</b>	59	88	82	125
<b>6</b>	67	110	90	141
<b>7</b>	71	115	75	170
<b>8</b> (Highest Level of Political Sophistication)	42	78	43	117
Total	328	479	411	684



**Table D.2. Contingency Table of the Inconsistency and Political Sophistication, the ANES 2012**

	The Inconsistency (personal)		The Inconsistency (national)	
	Inconsistent	Consistent	Inconsistent	Consistent
<b>0</b> <b>(Lowest Level of Political Sophistication)</b>	19	23	36	6
<b>1</b>	55	110	117	48
<b>2</b>	163	266	274	155
<b>3</b>	270	476	400	346
<b>4</b>	372	662	467	567
<b>5</b>	339	716	455	610
<b>6</b>	239	509	284	464
<b>7</b> <b>(Highest Level of Political Sophistication)</b>	98	254	126	226
Total	1555	3016	2149	2422

**Table D.3. Estimated Logistics Regression Coefficients with Political Sophistication as the Independent Variable, BES 2010**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>
<b>Political Sophistication</b>	-0.05 (0.15)
<b>The Strength of Partisanship</b>	<b>-0.70 (0.31) *</b>
<b>Approval (Honesty)</b>	<b>1.02 (0.45) *</b>
<b>Gender</b>	0.11 (0.42)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	0.47 (0.66)
<b>Education</b>	0.28 (0.38)
<b>Age</b>	-0.02 (0.02)
<b>Income</b>	-0.07 (0.05)
<b>Religiosity</b>	
<b>Presbyterian</b>	0.01 (1.05)
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	0.66 (0.54)
<b>Other</b>	0.36 (0.52)
<b>Union Membership</b>	0.21 (0.40)
<b>Interest in Politics</b>	0.60 (0.48)
<b>Social Class</b>	
<b>Middle Class</b>	0.59 (0.48)
<b>Working Class</b>	0.51 (0.56)
<b>Region</b>	
<b>Scotland</b>	-0.80 (0.88)
<b>Wales</b>	0.73 (0.71)
<b>Constant</b>	0.06 (1.40)
<b>N</b>	310

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table D.4. Estimated Logistics Regression Coefficients with Political Sophistication as the Independent Variable, the ANES 2012**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>
<b>Political Sophistication</b>	-0.59 (0.08)
<b>Strength of Partisanship</b>	<b>-0.47 (0.10) ***</b>
<b>Approval (Honesty)</b>	<b>1.48 (0.21) ***</b>
<b>Gender</b>	-0.02 (0.19)
<b>Black</b>	-0.31 (0.39)
<b>Education</b>	-0.12 (0.09)
<b>Age</b>	0.01 (0.01)
<b>Income</b>	-0.00 (0.01)
<b>Religiosity</b>	
<b>Protestant</b>	0.27 (0.29)
<b>Catholic</b>	0.51 (0.27)
<b>Jewish</b>	0.91 (0.59)
<b>Other</b>	0.09 (0.31)
<b>Union Membership</b>	0.21 (0.13)
<b>Ideology</b>	-0.22 (0.07)
<b>Interest in Politics</b>	0.14 (0.06)
<b>Social Class</b>	-1.08 (0.92)
<b>Constant</b>	-0.58 (1.07)
<b>N</b>	3030

Note. \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001