Rejoinder to "Comment" by Jack Citrin: Political Discontent or Ritualism?

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In 1958 only 22 per cent of the total population felt that they could not "trust the government in Washington to do what is right" all or most of the time. By the fall of 1972 that figure had climbed to 45 per cent. Furthermore, the percentage of eligible voters participating in the 1972 presidential election was the lowest it has been since 1948; crises and scandals have continually plagued the government since the Watergate revelations; and the economic conditions of the country have provoked widespread uncertainty and anxiety among the populace. There is good reason, then, for the intense current interest in attitudes of political disaffection and alienation.

Present U.S. conditions demonstrate that political alienation is a phenomenon of fundamental significance in political processes. Feelings of political cynicism and alienation may substantially diminish the willingness of citizens to participate in politics or to support programs directed at resolving the social problems that stimulate discontent. Attitudes of political alienation have likewise been related to public demands for radical political reforms during trying periods of social or economic discontent. Alienation and non-participation, however, go beyond just questions of voluntary compliance with policies or the possibilities for radical change; they strike at a very basic democratic norm. Democratic theory emphasizes voluntary consent as the basis of political obligation and legitimacy. Democratic government assumes—indeed, requires—widespread participation, political equality, the accountability of leaders and protection of the individual citizen's constitutional guarantees. The full attainment of these values is only possible when the relationship between the leaders and the public is based on mutual understanding and reciprocal trust rather than on the use of coercive and arbitrary authority.

Political distrust has varying significance for different political systems. Distrust obviously has other implications in a two-hundred-year-old democracy than it would in a dictatorship that has been in existence for only a brief period. Because of these differences a concern with questions of legitimacy in the United States seems more reasonable when focused on satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the implementation of values rather than on the acceptance or rejection of those values. Distrust of government in the U.S. may, for some, be associated with the partisan hopes of "voting the rascals out;" for others, it may indicate a sense of enduring inequities in government decisions and outputs. It does not, therefore, necessarily imply a desire for a completely different form of government—although for some it may mean exactly this. These varying "foci" of distrust may be conceptualized as a continuum incorporating distrust of the leaders, various institutions, political processes, and democratic values. The behavioral consequences of political disaffection may be expected to divaricate from apathy to participation in reform or protest behaviors, depending on the efficacy and social conditions of the population subgroups under investigation. Likewise, we can expect the several causes or correlates of a complex attitude such as trust in government to be affected by sociological and historical circumstances.

Because of these complexities it is understandable that Professor Citrin should raise, in his "Comment," questions about the meaning, behavioral consequences, and political correlates of trust in government. A number of conclusions that his discussion leads to are, however, inconsistent with the data, and more importantly, hold disturbing implications for the relevance of empirical political research as social commentary. These inconsistencies, problems of interpretations and the questions raised in the "Comment" can best be explicated by a further discussion of the three major points of the "Comment."

The Meaning of Declining Trust in Government

Political trust is the belief that the government is operating according to one's normative expectations of how government should function. The concept is closely related to the notion of legitimacy, a statement that government institutions and authorities are morally and legally valid and widely accepted. Presumably, the behavior and decisions of trusted authorities are more likely to be accepted as legitimate and worthy of support than are those of distrusted leaders. At an abstract, conceptual level, trust in government—through the notion of legitimacy—thus becomes associated with questions of identification with, or estrangement from, political institutions, symbols and values. On a more practical,
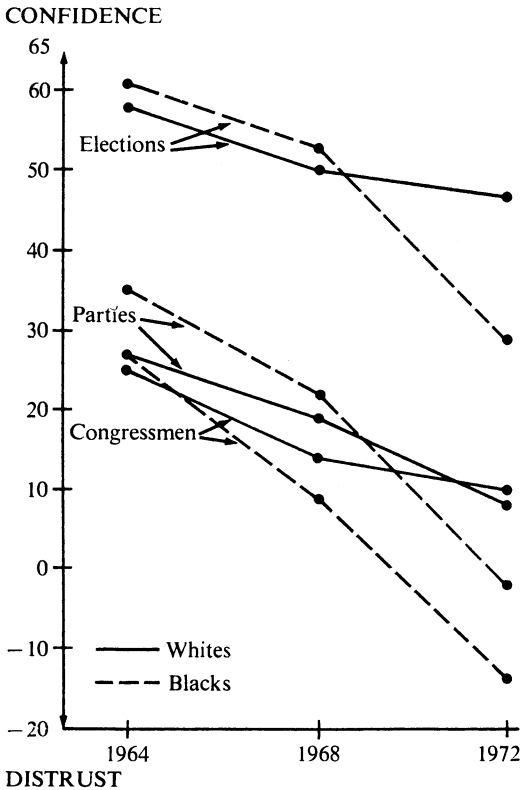
CONFIDENCE

Figure 1: Confidence in Leaders, Parties,
and Elections, 1964–1972

components—political efficacy and political trust.[2] Political efficacy, besides showing declining trends similar to that of political trust,[3] has become increasingly intercorrelated with trust, going from a Pearson r of .17 in 1964 to .35 in 1972. Furthermore, political trust has also been correlated with attitudes of government responsiveness (.35 in 1964 and .39 in 1972).

Prior to 1972 CPS surveys were not well suited to an examination of the extent to which distrust has been generalized across various governmental institutions. The trend lines for three government responsiveness items dealing with confidence in congressmen, parties and the institution of elections are, however, somewhat informative about the focus of political discontent; they are thus presented in Figure 1.[4]

It is clear from Figure 1 that by 1972, discontent had been generalized to several different aspects of the political system. As with the political trust scale, the trend is more severe among blacks, who changed from the more trusting to the less

operational level, political trust may be treated as an affective orientation toward the "government in Washington"—the most salient level of government in the United States.[1]

The validity of the trust in government scale as a measure of political disaffection cannot be ascertained simply from the manifest content of the five items used to construct the scale. Nor can the specific target of the distrust be determined from the scale items alone. Questions of validity and focus can only be answered through an examination of the relationship between the trust scale and other political indicators.

As noted in "Political Issues and Trust in Government," political alienation has been predominantly conceptualized in terms of negative affect for the existing political process, and it has been viewed as composed of two distinct attitudinal

[2] A more complete conceptual and theoretical statement of the different dimensions of alienation is presented in Ada W. Finifter, "Dimensions of Political Alienation," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June, 1970), 389–410, and William A. Gamson, *Power and Discontent* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1968).

[3] For a discussion of the efficacy trend, see Philip E. Converse, "Change in the American Electorate," in Angus Campbell and Philip E. Converse, eds., *The Human Meaning of Social Change* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1972).

[4] The three government responsiveness questions were:

1. How much do you feel that political parties help to make the government pay attention to what the people think: a good deal, some, or not much?
2. And how much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what people think: a good deal, some, or not much?
3. How much attention do you think most congressmen pay to the people who elect them when they decide what to do in Congress: a good deal, some, or not much?

A percentage difference index was computed for each of the three questions by subtracting the percentage responding "not much" from the percentage answering "a good deal." Positive values of the PDI therefore specify the degree of confidence, whereas negative values denote a lack of confidence. These PDI values are plotted in Figure 1 for whites and blacks.

It should be noted that these items indicate the respondent's confidence in elections, parties and congressmen to make government responsive and not the respondent's confidence, *per se*, in the institutions and leaders referred to by the questions. The interpretation of the items as indicators of "diffuse public support" was suggested by Jack Dennis in "Support for the Institution of Elections by the Mass Public," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (September, 1970), 819–835.

[1] Support for the notion that the federal government is the most salient level of the political system can be found in M. Kent Jennings and Harmon L. Zeigler, "The Salience of American State Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June, 1970), 523–535.

**Table 1. Relationship Between Confidence in the Responsiveness
of Elections and Parties and Political Trust, 1972**

Elections make government responsive	Trusting	Cynical	Parties make government responsive	Trusting	Cynical
A Good Deal	72%	41%	A Good Deal	37%	18%
Some	25	45	Some	53	53
Not Much	3	14	Not Much	10	29
	100%	100%		100%	100%
(N)	(825)	(776)	(N)	(803)	(763)
	Gamma = .40			Gamma = .35	

trusting group between 1964 and 1972. The data for blacks suggest that, in general, discontent is directed *first* at political leaders and parties and later becomes generalized to such institutions as elections. The persistently high degree of confidence in elections exhibited by whites is consistent with such a pattern. Their discontent with leaders and parties may not yet have reached the critical level at which it becomes broadly generalized to the most fundamental institution of all, that of elections.

The data of Figure 1 confirm what other scholars have suggested about political discontent, namely, that it is not necessarily an undifferentiated malaise directed with equal intensity at the leadership and at all political institutions. Dennis, for example, has reported that public evaluations not only vary across different institutions, but that the major governmental institutions are differentially rated with respect to trustworthiness, power and competence.[5] Gamson also hypothesized that discontent might first be directed at the authorities and then later become generalized to distrust of institutions if a change in leadership brought no reduction in discontent.[6]

One point which apparently needs emphasis is that while elections enjoy a greater degree of confidence than parties as mechanisms for making government responsive, evaluations of both these institutions are related to the general attitude of trust in government.[7] The strength of this rela-

[5] Jack Dennis, "Public Support for American National Political Institutions," (paper presented at the Conference on Public Support for the Political System, Madison, Wisconsin, August 13–17, 1973).

[6] Gamson, *Power and Discontent*, p. 51.

[7] This statement is very straightforward; it is emphasized here because Citrin has ignored the strong correlation between the "change in form of government question" and political trust, choosing instead to call attention to only a few cells in the cross-tabulation of the two variables.

The reader should also be aware of an important difference between the trust in government *index*

tionship can be ascertained from Table 1 which presents the crosstabulation of the trust scale and the two responsiveness items. The data demonstrate that trusting respondents were substantially more likely to express a "good deal" of confidence

that Citrin uses and the trust in government *scale* used in "Political Issues and Trust in Government" and in this "Rejoinder." The scale scores reflect the individual response pattern for the five trust in government items ordered according to the proportion of cynical responses. Individuals with no more than two missing data responses or scale errors were assigned the score that is the median value of the possible scale scores for that particular response pattern. Respondents with more than two errors or two missing data responses were excluded from the analysis. Citrin, however, simply formed an index by adding up responses to the five trust items, thereby ignoring the cumulative nature of the items. This method difference affects the overall distribution of the trust measure as indicated below for 1972:

	Trust Index[a]	Trust Scale
Low	42.8%	36.8%
Medium	36.2	24.0
High	21.0	39.2
	100.0%	100.0%

[a] Figures taken from Citrin's Table 2, this issue of the *Review*.

The index and scale scores are no doubt highly correlated but they are not identical. Citrin's analysis, therefore, cannot be viewed as a replication of "Political Issues and Trust in Government," nor is it strictly comparable to the analysis presented in this "Rejoinder."

The conceptual distinction between an additive index and a scale is well established in the empirical literature; for example, see Helen Peak, "Problems of Objective Observation," in Leon Festinger and Daniel Katz (eds.), *Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953), chapter 6. For a more recent statement of the response models underlying unidimensional scales, see Herbert F. Weisberg, "Dimensional Analysis of Legislative Roll Calls," (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1968) or Herbert F. Weisberg, "Dimensionland: Excursions into Spaces," *American Journal of Political Science* (forthcoming, November, 1974).

in both elections and parties as a means of producing responsive government than were cynical respondents. Despite the differences in the distribution of responses to the elections and parties questions, both items were strongly correlated with the trust in government scale.

It is not surprising to find relatively more public support for the institution of elections than for congressmen. Similarly, it is not surprising, nor inconsistent, to find that 45 per cent of the 1972 respondents felt that they could "trust the government in Washington to do what is right only some of the time," while at the same time 41 per cent thought that a change in "our whole form of government was needed to solve the problems facing our country," and only 14 per cent said "I can't find much in our form of government to be proud of."[8] The importance of differences in marginal distributions for more or less extremely worded survey questions should not be overstated. What is critical here is the relationship between these relatively more extreme items and the trust in government scale, as well as the determinance of what respondents mean, substantively, when they say that a change is needed in our form of government.

Both the "pride in our form of government" and "change in our form of government" questions are somewhat biased as indicators of political discontent because, unlike the trust and responsiveness scale items, they are more sensitive to discontent among those with a social change orientation than among those expressing a social control ideology.[9] While the trust and responsiveness items measure disaffection equally as well among both ideological groups, the "pride" and "change" questions can be expected to exhibit a larger proportion of discontented responses for individuals with a leftist rather than a rightist orientation. For example, 51 per cent of those with a social change orientation say that at least "some change" in our form of government is needed, whereas only 36 per cent of those on the right say "some change" is needed. The correlation between the "change" item and the trust scale is so strong, however, that despite this question bias, the two measures are substantially related even after controlling for ideology (see Table 2). In fact, the "pride" and "change" items have loadings of .77 and .67, respectively, on the single factor (which explains 61 per cent of the item variance) obtained from a factor analysis of these and the five individual trust in government

items. Thus, the "pride" and "change" items can be viewed as measuring the same underlying attitudinal dimension that is tapped by the trust in government scale.

Further support for this conclusion comes from the open-ended responses which give a good indication of what respondents had in mind when they replied that a change was needed in our form of government. These responses hardly intimate a strong desire among the populace for change from democracy to some other form of government: Less than 1 per cent of the respondents proposed a change toward a socialistic government. What *was* expressed by the open-ended statements was a discontent and dissatisfaction with the performance of the system and the need for reform to make it more responsive. A majority of the respondents commented: that the government pays more attention to some people than to others; that parties and the government bureaucracy are not responsive; that politicians are out of touch, unresponsive and untrustworthy; and that the electoral system is antiquated and in need of reform. The recommended changes included an increase in the representativeness of government, an increase in popular participation and control, a decrease in the power of the rich and an increase in the power of the poor, a more efficient government, and more governmental efforts directed at the problems of social welfare, crime control, unemployment, inflation and taxes. About one quarter of the responses suggested some type of institutional reform, such as changing the power relations among the President, Supreme Court and Congress, or reforming the parties, electoral system and government bureaucracy —but all with the intention of increasing popular control and government responsiveness.

To summarize, political cynicism is related to feelings of political inefficacy, to the belief that government is unresponsive, and to an apparent desire for structural and institutional reform. The trend toward increased distrust, therefore, reflects a growing dissatisfaction and discontent with the performance of government in the United States. In general, the trend indicates an increasing sense that the government is not functioning in a manner consistent with the normative expectations of how a democratic government ought to function. We should *not*, however, conclude that this trend simply reflects an increase in superficial, "ritualistic" responses just because distrust is not synonymous with the desire to replace democracy with another form of government. On the contrary, the trend is a serious statement that government in the U.S. is perceived as falling far short of democratic goals. We might expect, therefore, that the radicalism of desired change and reforms, as well as the methods used to effect that change,

[8] This is the same item referred to by Citrin. The question was contributed to the 1972 CPS election study by J. Merrill Shanks.
[9] The operational definition of the ideological orientations used here is the same as that used in "Political Issues and Trust in Government."

**Table 2. Relationship Between Desired Change in Our Form of Government
and Political Trust by Ideological Orientation, 1972**

	Social Change Ideology			Social Control Ideology		
	Trusting	Cynical	Total	Trusting	Cynical	Total
Desired Change						
Big Change	9%	35%	22%	4%	22%	11%
Some Change	24	33	29	17	29	25
Keep As Is	67	32	49	79	49	64
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(*N*)	(91)	(103)	(255)	(185)	(142)	(441)
		Gamma = − .47			Gamma = − .46	

would depend on the profundity and duration of political discontent.

Some Behavioral Consequences of Political Disaffection

It is suggested in the "Comment" that attitudes of political distrust and disaffection have no independent correlation with political participation, direction of vote, candidate evaluation, or support for protest behaviors; according to Citrin, this therefore implies that political cynicism is largely a ritualistic expression of fashionable clichés.

Space limitations did not allow the inclusion of an investigation of the behavioral consequences of political disaffection in "Political Issues and Trust in Government." Moreover, a few pages in a "Rejoinder" would hardly suffice as an introduction to the subject since one would expect this to be a complex set of relationships affected by social conditions and psychological motivations. The discussion in this section will therefore simply elaborate on some of the relationships briefly referred to in the "Comment."

Previous studies linking alienation and behavior have been limited in several respects: in their focus on a narrow set of behaviors; in their contradictory findings; in their failure to investigate racial differences—a very important factor in both alienation and behavior. In addition, they generally provide little insight into the conditions under which alienated individuals will or will not display certain types of behavior. Much of the confusion appears to arise from the complexity of these relationships and the failure to specify the conditions that affect them.

One would expect, for example, that the relationship between efficacy and political trust would be a critical determinant of whether one acts politically and of the direction that action takes. Indeed, in the 1972 presidential election, there was an 89 per cent turnout among the efficacious and

trusting, while only 62 per cent of those who felt inefficacious and distrusting voted.[10] Furthermore, whereas only 21 per cent of the efficacious and trusting respondents cast a Democratic vote for president, 49 per cent of the inefficacious and distrusting voted Democratic.[11] Both the rate of turnout and percentage of Democratic vote figures were different than would have been expected when related with efficacy or trust singly.

The 1972 election study also demonstrated that the relationship between distrust of government and the vote is not a simple linear relationship but one heavily affected by political ideology. McGovern obtained 82 per cent of the vote among cynical respondents with a "leftist" ideology—15 per cent more than would normally be expected from this group.[12] Cynical respondents with a "rightist" ideology, however, deviated further *below* their normal Democratic proportion of the two-party vote than did trusting respondents with a "rightist" ideology. Political cynicism thus had a substantial independent effect on the vote among social change advocates but actually worked against McGovern among social control advocates. This result not only demonstrates how ideology conditions the effect of political

[10] For the complete relationship among the four variables (political efficacy, political trust, turnout and two-party vote), see Table 4 of Arthur H. Miller, Warren E. Miller, Alden S. Raine and Thad A. Brown, "A Majority Party in Disarray: Policy Polarization in the 1972 Election," (paper presented at the 1973 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 4–8).

[11] Miller, Miller, Raine and Brown, Table 4.

[12] For a detailed discussion of these data, see Miller, Miller, Raine and Brown, pp. 47–53. The concept of the normal vote is discussed in Philip E. Converse, "The Concept of a Normal Vote" in Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, *Elections and the Political Order* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 9–39.
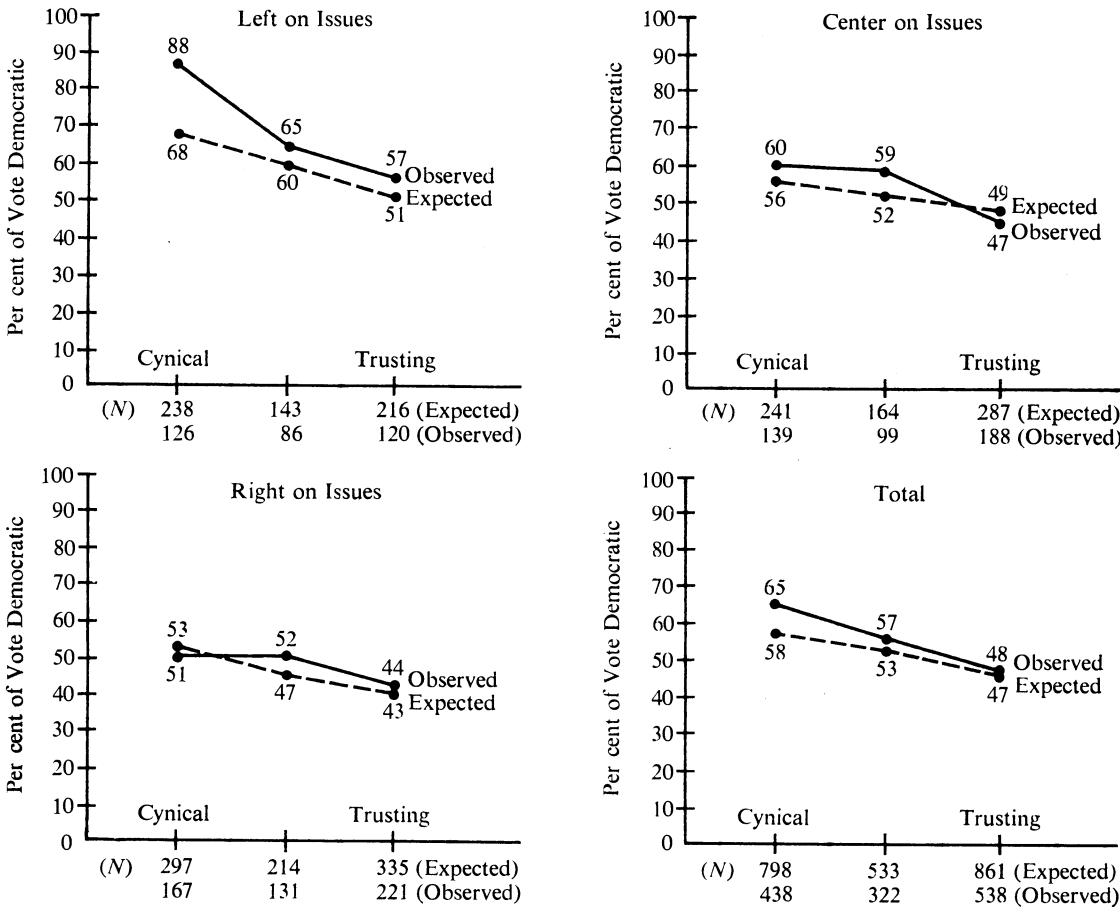
Figure 2. Expected Vote and 1972 Congressional Vote by Political Trust and Ideology

disaffection, but it also refutes the notion that distrust is simply directed at incumbent authorities.

It might, of course, be argued that this independent effect of political distrust on the vote among liberals is merely a function of the presidential race and the candidate personalities. To test this hypothesis, the above analysis was replicated with the 1972 congressional vote. The results (see Figure 2) demonstrate that for the total population cynics voted only slightly more Democratic than would normally be expected. Dividing the total population into ideological subgroups, however, results in a substantial augmentation of the independent effect of political distrust on the vote. Again, this effect appears primarily among liberals, thereby substantiating the hypothesis that ideology conditions the behavioral consequences of political disaffection.

Political distrust was also found to have had a direct impact on the voter's image of the candidates in the 1972 election.[13] Yet even this rela-

tionship may be conditioned by ideological and racial effects. Displayed in Table 3 are some data that contradict the hypothesis that " . . . political cynicism reflects a sense of identification with critics of the status quo."[14] George Wallace is surely a critic of the status quo, and yet it is quite obvious that among whites his affective ratings depended upon ideological orientations, not political trust. Among blacks, the Wallace ratings did differ by degree of political trust, but the differences are exactly opposite to those predicted by the hypothesis. In addition, black ratings of McGovern were uniformly high regardless of ideology and degree of political trust (his increased rating by black cynics of the left was not significantly higher). The relationship between political trust and evaluations of political leaders is clearly influenced by racial differences. Furthermore, the effect that ideology has on this relationship is suggested by the somewhat larger differences in McGovern and Nixon ratings by level of trust for

[13] This relationship is discussed in Miller, Miller, Raine and Brown, p. 64.

[14] Jack Citrin, "Comment," this issue of the Review, p. 976.

Table 3. Mean Ratings of Political Leaders by Race, Political Ideology and Trust in Government, 1972

	WHITES			
	Social Change Ideology		Social Control Ideology	
	Trusting (N=194)	Cynical (N=163)	Trusting (N=330)	Cynical (N=295)
Political Leaders				
George Wallace	37	36	62	64
George McGovern	56	68	35	42
Richard Nixon	62	43	78	65
	BLACKS			
	Social Change Ideology		Social Control Ideology	
	Trusting (N=34)	Cynical (N=88)	Trusting (N=10)	Cynical (N=23)
Political Leaders				
George Wallace	19	11	35	24
George McGovern	75	80	77	76
Richard Nixon	59	36	64	55

those whites with a social change ideology compared to those with a social control ideology.

Likewise, ideology can be expected to condition the predisposition to participate in protest behaviors. The CPS questions[15] that deal with these behaviors refer principally to protest activities acceptable to individuals with a social change orientation. We thus find large differences in responses to these items by ideological orientation (see Table 4). Given that these types of protest behaviors are more acceptable to social change advocates, one would expect stronger relationships between the protest items and political cynicism for that ideological group than for

[15] The political protest questions were worded as follows:

There are many possible ways for people to show their disapproval or disagreement with governmental policies and actions. I am going to describe three such ways. We would like to know which ones you approve of as ways of showing dissatisfaction with the government, and which ones you disapprove of.
1. How about taking part in protest meetings or marches that are permitted by the local authorities? Would you approve of taking part, disapprove, or would it depend on the circumstances?
2. How about refusing to obey a law which one thinks is unjust, if the person feels so strongly about it that he is willing to go to jail rather than obey the law? Would you approve of a person doing that, disapprove, or would it depend on the circumstances?
3. Suppose all other methods have failed and the person decides to try to stop the government from going about its usual activities with sit-ins, mass meetings, demonstrations, and things like that? Would you approve of that, disapprove, or would it depend on the circumstances?

those with a social control orientation. This is clearly confirmed by the data of Table 4.

The relationship between political cynicism and support for protest behaviors that is found for the social change group may, of course, possibly be a "spurious reflection of the association between mistrust of government and policy dissatisfaction."[16] That is, policy dissatisfaction may be a direct cause of both political cynicism and support for protest behavior. Thus, controlling for policy dissatisfaction would cause the relationship between cynicism and attitudes toward protest behavior to vanish. Indeed, this is what Citrin found when ideological orientations were ignored and the total sample was analyzed. Contrary to this, controlling for policy dissatisfaction *among social change advocates* did not reduce the strength of the relationship between trust and the predisposition toward protest behavior. Furthermore, the additional control actually clarified the relationship between trust and protest attitudes for social control advocates (see Table 5). Although social control advocates who were dissatisfied with Republican policies were, as a group, only slightly less negative toward protest behaviors than those with a control ideology who were satisfied with the policies, cynicism and support for protest were more strongly related among the former group than the latter.

Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate that the relationship between political trust and support for protest actions depends on a number of conditions and interactions. For individuals with a social

[16] Citrin, p. 982.

Table 4. The Relationship Between Political Protest and Political Trust by Ideological Orientation, 1972

	Social Change Ideology			Social Control Ideology		
	Trusting	Cynical	Total[a]	Trusting	Cynical	Total[a]
Legal Protest Marches:						
Approve	31%	44%	38%	12%	13%	12%
Depends	44	40	42	33	37	35
Disapprove	25	16	20	55	50	53
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(178)	(233)	(536)	(390)	(330)	(960)
Refusal to Obey Unjust Laws:						
Approve	22%	35%	30%	10%	13%	11%
Depends	42	44	43	33	36	35
Disapprove	36	21	27	57	51	54
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disruptive Sit-ins, Demonstrations:						
Approve	9%	23%	16%	4%	6%	5%
Depends	46	46	46	20	26	22
Disapprove	45	31	38	76	68	73
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[a] Total distribution is for all cases with the specified ideological orientation including those in the middle category of trust. The center category on the trust scale was excluded from the table because the relationships are linear.

change ideology, the interaction of the ideological orientation and distrust of the government was sufficient to result in positive predispositions toward protest behavior. For those with a social control ideology, however, a moderate degree of policy dissatisfaction was also needed before distrust of the government was translated into a more positive attitude toward protest actions. Most assuredly, dissatisfied "cynics of the right" were not as favorably disposed toward protest participation as dissatisfied "cynics of the left," but they were more supportive of illegal protest behaviors than their ideological counterparts who were satisfied with Republican policies.

There are numerous other social and psychological conditions that can be expected to affect the trust/behavior relationship. The preliminary analyses presented here demonstrate that a superficial investigation of these complex relations would only serve to confuse the issue. Perhaps the brief analysis of this "Rejoinder" will stimulate greater concern for those conditions that affect the translation of political disaffection into political behaviors.

Political Trust and Public Policy

Political disaffection is a complex phenomenon that almost certainly depends on the convergence of different explanations rather than on one single cause. Thus, while policy dissatisfaction has been isolated as a strong correlate of political cynicism, no one would claim that it is the only explanation of political distrust. Yet, in an age when government policy impinges directly on the citizen's life in so many ways, it seems reasonable that public policy itself would weigh heavily as a determinant of discontent. Furthermore, in a period of increased issue politics and issue ideology it is not surprising that individuals would evaluate government performance with respect to a broad range of public policies. This relationship between judgments of governmental policy performance and distrust is affected by a number of social and political conditions which were discussed throughout "Political Issues and Trust in Government." It seems appropriate, however, to state some of these conditions more explicitly, especially as they apply to dissatisfaction with the policies of both parties.

Policy dissatisfaction may be conceptualized as a function of the discrepancy between one's own policy preference and the policy alternatives offered by political authorities on salient issues. Under this definition, an individual may prefer centrist policies and yet be dissatisfied if the policy alternatives he identifies with the authorities are either more liberal or more conservative than he prefers. Policy dissatisfaction, in other

words, is not simply dependent on the individual's own policy position. In a polarized society where the political authorities are perceived as offering centrist policies we should find, however, that both "liberals" and "conservatives" are more dissatisfied than "moderates." If there is a correlation between policy dissatisfaction and political cynicism, we should also expect these groups to display similar relative degrees of distrust. These relative degrees of aggregate dissatisfaction and distrust will, therefore, be a function of the extent to which the various sets of authorities offer viable policy alternatives. For example, if Democrats and Republicans offer nearly identical policy alternatives, dissatisfaction and discontent should be directed equally at both of them.

Generally, the relationship between dissatisfaction with the policies of both parties and distrust of government will be affected by several factors: the saliency and relative importance of particular issues, the degree of polarization on each issue, and the relative acceptability of the policy alternatives offered by each party. The hypothesis proffered by Citrin that policy satisfaction and political trust are synonymous with support for the incumbent president and that changes in the partisan focus of distrust reflect "out-of-power" disgruntlement can also be considered an explanation of the relationship.

The attempted replication of Table 8 from "Political Issues and Trust in Government" in the "Comment" demonstrates that in 1972 political cynicism was more strongly related to dissatisfaction with Republican than Democratic policies. In 1970 dissatisfaction with Democratic policy alternatives had been almost as strongly correlated with cynicism as was dissatisfaction with Republican policies. The change in this relationship can be partially understood by disaggregating the sample into the racial and partisan subgroups analyzed in Tables 6 and 7 of "Political Issues and Trust in Government." Mean cynicism by dissatisfaction with the policy alternatives identified with the Democratic and Republican parties is presented for these groups in Table 6.

The data of Table 6 demonstrate that the reduction in the relationship between dissatisfaction with Democratic policies and cynicism occurred primarily for Republicans and Independents. The 1972 relationship for white Democrats, however, was only slightly weaker than that found in 1970. Similarly, while there was a reduction from 1970 to 1972 in the relationship for black Democrats, the correlation remained moderately strong and almost equal to that found for dissatisfaction with Republican policies.

Apparently, the policies of the Democratic party had become less viable between 1970 and

Table 5. The Relationship Between Political Protest and Political Trust by
Policy Dissatisfaction for Social Control Ideologues Only, 1972

	Satisfied with Policies			Dissatisfied with Policies		
	Trusting	Cynical	Total[a]	Trusting	Cynical	Total[a]
Legal Protest Marches:						
Approve	14%	14%	14%	9%	15%	12%
Depends	36	37	37	30	38	36
Disapprove	50	49	49	61	47	52
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(195)	(102)	(409)	(94)	(126)	(295)
Refusal to Obey Unjust Laws:						
Approve	8%	10%	9%	5%	16%	10%
Depends	32	33	33	34	39	38
Disapprove	60	57	58	61	45	52
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disruptive Sit-ins, Demonstrations:						
Approve	3%	8%	5%	4%	9%	6%
Depends	16	15	16	20	22	22
Disapprove	81	77	79	76	69	72
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[a] The total is for all cases with the specified ideological orientation and level of policy satisfaction.

Table 6. Mean Cynicism by Dissatisfaction with Democratic and Republican Policies

	White Democrats		Black Democrats		Republicans		Independents	
	Mean[a]	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Distance from Democratic Party								
0	1.98	(11.4)	4.00	(16.1)	2.27	(6.0)	2.36	(7.9)
1	2.45	(44.0)	3.19	(46.2)	1.89	(29.1)	2.46	(37.2)
2	2.40	(27.8)	3.60	(31.3)	1.97	(34.8)	2.35	(31.4)
3	2.78	(11.0)	4.35	(6.4)	2.17	(17.5)	2.42	(16.3)
4–6	2.66	(5.8)	[b]	—	2.40	(12.6)	2.63	(7.2)
Group Mean and Total Percent	2.51	100.0	3.59	100.0	2.10	100.0	2.45	100.0
(N)	(909)		(180)		(612)		(874)	
Eta	.15		.24		.09		.04	
Distance from Republican Party								
0	2.00	(13.0)	[b]	(0.8)	1.76	(26.5)	1.44	(12.6)
1	2.04	(31.7)	2.67	(11.5)	1.92	(49.0)	2.14	(39.8)
2	2.54	(31.0)	3.25	(23.6)	2.73	(17.6)	2.51	(26.8)
3	2.89	(13.6)	3.59	(21.1)	2.11	(5.9)	3.06	(11.9)
4–6	3.71	(10.7)	3.86	(43.0)	3.25	(1.0)	3.66	(8.9)
Group Mean and Total Percent	2.51	100.0	3.59	100.0	2.10	100.0	2.45	100.0
(N)	(909)		(180)		(612)		(874)	
Eta	.29		.32		.20		.35	

[a] The cynicism scale ranged from 0 = least cynical to 5 = most cynical.
[b] N was less than 5.

1972 as alternatives to Republican policies for Republicans and Independents. These groups were slightly less satisfied with Democratic policy alternatives in 1972 than they had been in 1970 and slightly more satisfied with Republican alternatives, resulting in higher trust, on the average, for Republicans and Independents. Both groups perceived the Democratic party as further *left* on the issues in 1972 than either group had perceived them in 1970.[17] With the leftward shift of Democratic policy alternatives, both parties were thus no longer equally centrist and Democratic alternatives therefore became less meaningful than Republican alternatives as a

[17] The average location of the Democratic party on the five issues of Vietnam, Urban Unrest, Campus Unrest, Protecting the Rights of the Accused, and Government Aid to Minorities was 3.49 in 1970 and 3.25 in 1972 for the total population. In 1970, Independents had placed the Democratic party, on the average, at 3.58 and in 1972 they located it at 3.22. Republicans placed the Democratic party at 3.20 in 1970 and 3.02 in 1972. For a further discussion of these shifts, see Miller, Miller, Raine and Brown, pp. 13–16.

reference for policy judgments among Republicans and Independents. In this regard it is most important to note that from 1970 to 1972 the association between dissatisfaction with Republican—or Nixon's—policies and political cynicism remained basically unchanged for Republicans, not surprisingly since that party is the focus of their partisan identification. The correlation increased, however, for Independents—as would have been predicted by the shifting reference hypothesis. These data support the "viability of alternatives" argument and illustrate the weakness of the "out-party" disgruntlement hypothesis, namely, that it does not explain distrust among Republicans.

Further evidence of change in the conditions that would affect the relationship between policy dissatisfaction and cynicism comes from attitudinal shifts occurring among Democrats. Between 1970 and 1972 Democratic attitudes became somewhat more liberal on a number of important issues, especially the Vietnam war. These shifts did not, however, parallel the change in the perception of the Democratic policy alternatives,

nor did they eliminate the profound issue polarization that had existed in Democratic ranks since 1968. In fact, the net result of these aggregate shifts was, for Democrats, an increased dissatisfaction with Democratic party policy alternatives. Black Democrats, in particular, exhibited a substantially higher degree of dissatisfaction with Democratic policies in 1972 than they had in 1970. They also registered a large increase in dissatisfaction with Republican policies and an aggregate *increase* in political distrust. Among white Democrats, on the other hand, there was a decrease in satisfaction with Democratic policies, a slight enlargement in the proportion most satisfied with Republican policies, and no change at all in the aggregate level of distrust. In general, then, aggregate shifts in mean cynicism coincided closely with aggregate changes in policy dissatisfaction.

The strength of the 1972 relationship between dissatisfaction with Democratic policies and cynicism was only slightly weaker for white Democrats than it had been in 1970, and there was no noticeable change at all in the relationship with the Republican policy dissatisfaction measure. Similarly, for black Democrats it was not surprising to find that cynicism was still related to dissatisfaction with Democratic *and* Republican policies since for them the policies of both parties had declined in acceptablity. The strength of the relationships had, however, decreased from 1970.[18] Despite these slight fluctuations, the relationships remained significant demonstrating the importance of dissatisfaction with Democratic policy alternatives as a source of political discontent for certain subpopulations.

Fluctuations in the strength and partisan focus of these relationships may also reflect the increased importance of other issues or factors having an independent effect on political trust. The relative saliency and importance of various political issues may influence the relationship between policy dissatisfaction and political trust.

[18] Other factors, such as increased group identification among blacks, were substantially affecting black cynicism in 1972. Blacks who were not necessarily dissatisfied with the particular policy items analyzed were becoming distrusting for other reasons, thereby reducing the clarity and linearity of the policy dissatisfaction/cynicism relationship. The curvilinearity of the 1972 relationship between dissatisfaction with Democratic policy alternatives and trust partially reflects strength of party identification and the associated desire to replace Republican policies with Democratic policies. The curvilinearity also results, however, from perceived discrimination and patterns of social integration among blacks. For a discussion of these sources of black political cynicism, see Arthur H. Miller, Alden S. Raine and Thad A. Brown, "Racial Trends in Political Estrangement, 1958–1972," (unpublished paper, The University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies, 1974).

Table 7. Regression Analysis Predicting Political Cynicism, 1972

Independent Variables	Beta
Dissatisfaction with administration policies regarding:	
Vietnam	.11
Pollution	.01
Urban Unrest	.07
Campus Unrest	.07
Rights of Accused	.07
Assistance to Minorities	.02
The Economy[a]	.26
Nixon thermometer rating	.10
Party identification	.02
	$R^2 = .24$

[a] This is a restricted variable in the 1972 election study. The wording of the question was "How do you feel about what our government is doing about the economy—jobs, prices, profits?" The responses ranged from 1 = Delighted to 7 = Terrible.

For example, by 1972 the Vietnam war had, at least for Democrats, become "Mr. Nixon's" war —a change that could be expected to alter the partisan focus of policy dissatisfaction. Similarly, if trust in government was primarily a statement of support for the incumbent authorities—in this case President Nixon—we might expect an increased partisan effect during presidential campaigns. Some brief but very persuasive data relevant to these points are presented in Table 7.

The standardized regression coefficients presented in Table 7 clearly demonstrate that although they are intercorrelated, both support for the President and policy evaluations are independent predictors of political trust.[19] Obviously, policy dissatisfaction is not synonymous with presidential support, nor is it simply a statement of partisan identification. Likewise, trust in government is not just a function of presidential approval or party identification; it is, rather, primarily associated with policy evaluations. The policy performance and dissatisfaction measures alone can account for 20 per cent of the variance

[19] The Nixon thermometer rating, rather than the performance evaluation item Citrin used in his Table 2, was used for the regression analysis because the performance question was only asked of half the 1972 sample and thus could not be correlated with all of the issue measures included in the regression analysis. It should be noted that the Nixon thermometer and the performance evaluation questions were strongly correlated ($r = .68$) for that half-sample that presented both items; and the zero-order correlations of each item with trust were nearly identical (.31 and .32, respectively). It is therefore unlikely that the regression results would have differed had the performance question been used in place of the thermometer.

in political trust. At the zero-order level Nixon's rating, however, explains less than ten per cent of the variance in trust ($r = .31$), and it adds less than four per cent of explained variance to the multiple regression.

Clearly, support for Nixon in 1972 was only partially dependent on the policy performance of his administration, whereas political trust was strongly affected by policy evaluations, thus making possible "the coexistence of widespread support for the President and a pervasive mistrust of 'government.'"[20] This "coexistence" of presidential support and mistrust of government cannot be explained by what Citrin contends is a "short-term rationalization of an anti-McGovern vote."[21] because the same phenomenon occurred in 1970, long before McGovern was even a candidate. Since the political focus of discontent was obviously not just the incumbent authorities, there is no inconsistency in finding the coexistence of a popular president, as Nixon was in 1972, and pervasive mistrust of government. Much more than a friendly face in the Oval office is necessary for government to be judged responsive and trustworthy.

"Out-party disgruntlement" and partisan identification appear to be weak explanations for shifts in the partisan focus of political discontent. The regression analysis of Table 7 suggests, however, that a partial explanation may be found in the relative importance of various issues. In 1970, the social issues were the primary focus of policy discontent. In 1972, dissatisfaction with the policy alternatives offered as solutions to social problems (which included Vietnam) remained an important source of distrust. At the same time, although the 1972 survey predated the energy crisis, economic problems had also become a substantial source of discontent. A regression analysis including only the 1972 social issues explained 15 per cent of the variance in trust; an additional five per cent was explained by incorporating evaluations of how well the government was handling economic problems.

We would expect economic discontent that arises during the term of a particular administration to be principally directed at the performance rating of that administration. Only if the economic dissatisfaction persisted across different administrations or became part of a generalized policy dissatisfaction would we expect economic discontent to be directed at both parties equally. An increase in the relative importance of economic dissatisfaction between 1970 and 1972 may thus be a partial explanation for the shift in the partisan focus of political discontent that occurred during that period.

In summary, the parties were perceived as

having shifted in their issue positions so that they were no longer seen as equally centrist; there had been a slight reduction in the polarization of the *total* population on some issues; and the relative importance of various issues had apparently changed. These factors ostensibly affected the partisan focus of policy dissatisfaction and, in turn, the relationship between policy judgments and political trust. A decline in the relationship between dissatisfaction with Democratic policy alternatives and political cynicism was, therefore, not unexpected. Furthermore, some groups still felt that the policies of both parties were somewhat unacceptable, and for them dissatisfaction with the policies of *both* parties was still related to distrust. This further analysis, therefore, confirms the conditions previously hypothesized in "Political Issues and Trust in Government" as affecting the relationship between policy dissatisfaction and political cynicism. More importantly, the analysis reconfirms policy dissatisfaction as a major source of political discontent.

Conclusion

Professor Citrin has suggested that declining trust is just a reflection of dissatisfaction with the incumbent; that political trust should correlate with political action but that the trust index does not; and that centrist policies are not a cause of political distrust. The analysis presented in this "Rejoinder" demonstrates, however, that while distrust of the incumbent authorities exists, other forms of discontent predominate and a lack of citizen fervor to replace the regime does not mean that distrust is ritualistic. Furthermore, the trust scale does correlate with political actions and support for illegal protest behaviors under appropriate conditions, but care must be taken to apply the relevant controls. Simple relationships may not be present, but relationships emerge when properly examined. Finally, the change between 1970 and 1972 in the relationship between policy dissatisfaction and trust is due to the Democrats being *perceived* as less centrist, which explains why trust no longer correlates with dissatisfaction with their policy alternatives. Again, careful indication of specific control conditions are essential to clarify the relationship. In sum, the analysis results demonstrated the validity of the trust in government scale as a meaningful measure of political discontent. Moreover, they also confirmed the political relevance, importance and validity of the ideological orientations specified in "Political Issues and Trust in Government." Ignoring these orientations not only detracts from our recognition of the serious social and political implications of distrust, but it also limits our comprehension of the behavioral implications of political discontent.

A little common sense and a great deal of data

[20] Citrin, "Comment," pp. 976–978.
[21] Citrin, "Comment," p. 978.

suggests that there is much discontent with numerous facets of government in the U.S. today. To conclude, therefore, that a ten-year trend of declining confidence in government indicates little more than a shift in superficial or "ritualistic" verbal responses is not to just call into question particular survey methods. To do so is, rather, to ignore the political turmoil that has polarized this country since the mid-sixties, and, more importantly, it suggests that the turbulence and distrust spring from superficial rather than real social problems. The civil rights movement, the peace movement, and the women's movement express a discontent that grows out of repressive and discriminatory practices which require institutional and structural changes if permanent rectification of the situation is to be attained. Both positive attitudes towards these movements and negative reactions to them are related to distrust of government; to deem these attitudes and reactions "ritualistic" is tantamount to treating the events, experiences and evaluations of government performance that cause the distrust as fictions and abstractions.

More extensive work is needed if we are to fully explain how individual experience is translated into societal and political discontent. This is a timely and relevant problem that deserves serious consideration. A more complete understanding of political discontent can best be attained through careful analysis of trend data. Analogies between baseball and politics are weak and rarely help us understand either, although I would remind Professor Citrin that the endless changes of baseball managers and players in which many teams engage have not brought back the fans who became disinterested in the game because of its inherent structural flaws—for example, its lack of speed. Furthermore, the visible actors in baseball have little if any impact on the rules of the game; in politics, they make the rules. A change in the political leadership, therefore, holds the potential for profound systemic political change which may in turn increase confidence in government. On the other hand, a replacement of political leaders with no subsequent improvement in the performance of the government may generate a new spiral of political distrust. As noted at the outset of this rejoinder, democracy rests upon the trust that citizens extend to their government; when that trust is undermined, the whole system of government is threatened.