CAN WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN CONFIDENCE? REVISITED

Tom W. Smith

GSS Methodological Report No. 1

National Opinion Research Center
University of Chicago

Preliminary draft, comments invited
Not for citation

April, 1979

For the last five years (1972-1977), the General Social Survey (GSS) at the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and Louis Harris and Associates have been asking parallel series on confidence in major national institutions. Comparison of NORC and Harris findings indicated that discrepancies frequently existed between the two series. These differences caught the attention of the GSS staff and other scholars (e.g., Ladd, 1976-1977 and Turner, 1978) and led to an evaluation of these differences (Smith, 1977). To examine the reason for the differences more fully and in general to better understand the meaning and nature of the confidence questions, a number of methodological experiments were conducted on the 1978 GSS. This paper updates the initial evaluation of differences between the NORC and Harris series and analyzes the confidence experiments. First, a detailed examination is made of sample population, question wording, format, placement, and related matters. The question here is simply how similar are the two series in form. Second, the marginals generated by the two series are compared. Inspection is made of the marginal differences at the same time points, of the trends of each series, of overall confidence averages, and of rank ordering. Third, the findings of the methodological experiments and other evidence are examined and these findings are related to the differences between NORC and Harris findings. Finally, the use of the confidence items as social indicators is considered.

COMPARISON OF FORMS

Altogether Harris has asked the confidence question twenty-two times and NORC six times between 1966 and 1977.[1]

Survey	Time
Harris 1574	2/66
Harris 1702	1/67
Harris 2131	8/71
Harris 2219	5/72
Harris 2236	10/72
Harris 2251	1/73
GSS 73	3/73
Harris 2319	3/73
Harris 2343	9/73
Harris 2354	12/73
NORC 4179	1/74
Harris 7482	2/74
GSS 74	3/74
Harris 7487	8/74
Harris 2430	9/74
Harris 2434	9/74
Harris 2515	3/75
GSS 75	3/75
Harris 7581	4/75
Harris 7585	8/75
Harris 2521	2/76
Harris 7681	3/76
GSS 76	3/76
Harris 7684	6/76
Harris 2628	7/76
Harris 2630	7/76
Harris 7690	1/77
GSS 77	3/77

All NORC surveys cover the non-institutionalized, population of the continental United States, eighteen years and over. This universe is also covered by Harris 1574, 2131, 2219, 2251, 2343, 2354, 7482, 7487, 2430, 2434, 2515, 2521, 2628, 7581, 7585, 7681, and 7690. Four Harris surveys were limited to electoral participators. Harris 1702 was restricted to those 21 and older, who voted in 1960, 1962, 1964,

---

[1] Both NORC and Harris have subsequently extended their series. This analysis covers surveys through January, 1977 for Harris and March, 1977 for NORC.

or 1966 or were registered to vote. Harris 2236 covered those 18 and older, who voted in 1968 or 1970, were registered to vote, or were under 25 years old. Harris 7684 and 2630 were limited to those who were either over 30 and voted in 1972 or 1974 or 18 to 29 and registered to vote or planning to register. Finally, Harris 2319 sampled those 16 and older who worked at least 35 hours per week. In addition, Harris 1574 included a sample of teenagers along with its adult sample and Harris 2343 had a supplementary sample of state and local officials. Two special surveys not discussed here include Harris 1577S, a student sample which included a related confidence in occupation item and Harris 2522, a sample of South Carolina.

The original use of the item was in 1966 by Harris and went as follows:

> As far as the people running (READ LIST) are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?

This wording was repeated on Harris 1702, 2131, 2236, 2251, 2319, and 2354 (except for variations in the interviewer instructions, see Table 1). Since then, Harris has used six variations of this original wording (see Table 1 for the exact wordings). The GSS version was based on the original Harris wording and has remained unchanged. It reads:

> I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the <u>people running</u> these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?

The NORC amalgam version (NORC 4187) is a variation of the GSS wording. It reads:

> Now I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the <u>people running</u> these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence in them, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? READ EACH ITEM; CODE ONE FOR EACH. REPEAT THE QUESTION OR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY.

TABLE 1

WORDING VARIATIONS ON HARRIS CONFIDENCE QUESTIONS[a]

1. As far as the people running (READ LIST) are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? (RECORD BELOW FOR EACH ITEM ON LIST.)

   2131, 2354
   1574, 1702 - (ROTATE ASKING ORDER AND RECORD BELOW)
   2236 - (RECORD BELOW AND CONTINUE WITH LIST)
   2251, 2319 - (READ FIRST ITEM ON LIST) ...(RECORD BELOW AND CONTINUE WITH LIST.)

2. Now let me ask you how much confidence you have in people who are in charge of managing (READ LIST)--a great deal of confidence, only some, or hardly any confidence? (RECORD BELOW FOR EACH ITEM ON LIST)

   2219

3. As far as the people in charge of running (READ LIST) are concerned would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? (RECORD BELOW FOR EACH ITEM ON LIST)

   2343, 2430, 2434, 7487, 7581, 7681
   7482 - NOW, ... (READ FIRST ITEM ON LIST) ... (RECORD BELOW AND CONTINUE WITH LIST.)

4. How much confidence do you have in the people running (READ FIRST ITEM ON LIST)--a great deal of confidence, only some, or hardly any confidence at all? (RECORD BELOW AND CONTINUE WITH LIST.)

   2515, 2628

5. As far as people in charge of running (READ LIST) are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? (RECORD BELOW FOR EACH ITEM ON LIST.)

   7690, 7585, 2521

6. How much confidence do you have in (READ LIST)--a great deal, only some, or hardly any? (RECORD BELOW FOR EACH ITEM.)

   7684

7. As far as the people running (READ LIST) are concerned, do you have a great deal of confidence in them, only some, or hardly any confidence in them at all? (RECORD BELOW FOR EACH ITEM ON LIST.)

   2630

---

[a]Phrases in parentheses are instructions to interviewer and are not read to respondent.

The various Harris and NORC versions differ in many particulars, although several basic similarities exist. The Harris versions all start off by inquiring about a list of institutions embedded into the question. At the appropriate place the interviewer is instructed to "READ LIST" or some similar command and then at the end of the questions an instruction such as "RECORD BELOW AND CONTINUE WITH LIST" appears. The GSS and NORC amalgam versions on the other hand preface the inquiry about confidence with an introductory sentence and replace the insertion of enumerated institutions with the general phrase "these institutions." On the GSS surveys and NORC 4179 the interviewer is then instructed to "READ EACH ITEM: CODE ONE FOR EACH." On the 1973, 1974, and 1977 GSSs and NORC 4179 the additional instruction "REPEAT THE QUESTION OR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY" appears. In 1975 and 1976 necessary repetitions were built into the question at the first, second, sixth, and eleventh items. These are as follows:

A. First, how much confidence do you have in the people running . . .
B. How about people running . . .
C.
D.
E.
F. How about the people running . . .
G.
H.
I.
J.
K. How about the people running . . .

Also, at this point on the 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1977 GSS surveys the interviewer hands the respondent a card with the response categories listed vertically in the order they were read. On GSS 1973 and NORC 4179 no card was used. No card is used on any of the Harris surveys.

Other differences also exist on the wordings of various parts of the question. The original Harris item and some later versions (wordings 1, 4, and 7 in Table 1) ask about "the people running" the enumerated

institutions. Later most surveys refer to the "people in charge of running" the listed institutions (wordings 3 and 5). One variation refers to "People who are in charge of managing" (wording 2) and another variation mentions only the institutions themselves (wording 6). The GSS and NORC amalgam versions follow the original Harris allusion to "the people running" and this phrase is emphasized.

The response categories on the Harris surveys differ in several slight ways, but they generally consist of "a great deal of confidence," "only some confidence," and "hardly any confidence at all in them" (see Table 1 for the variations). In Harris 1574, 1702, 2131, 2236, and 2319, however, an unsolicited response of "none" was precoded in the questionnaire for those who volunteered this answer. The GSSs always have the following response categories, "a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them." NORC 4179 varies this by inserting "in them" after "a great deal of confidence."

Differences also exist in the wording, order, and number of enumerated institutions. Table 2 compares the descriptors used in the surveys. (GSS covered institutions only.) It shows that of the thirteen institutions only two ("medicine" and "organized religion") have remained unchanged across all surveys. On two items ("education" and "television") Harris altered their original descriptors to cover more specific institutions ("higher education" and "television news") while the GSS continued to cover the originally chosen institutions (although "television" was replaced with "TV"). On two other items referring to the armed forces and the judicial system, items vary only by whether the article "the" was used. This pattern also occurs on the executive branch item along with a variant "the federal government" in Harris 2319; on the science

TABLE 2

ITEM DESCRIPTORS

Survey	Item												
	CONBUS	CONCLERG	CONEDUC	CONFED	CONPRESS	CONMEDIC	CONTV	CONFINAN	CONJUDG	CONSCI	CONLEGIS	CONARMY	CONLABOR
Harris 1574	Major companies	Organized religion	Education	Executive branch of federal government	The press	Medicine	Television	Banks and financial institutions	The U.S. Supreme Court	The scientific community	Congress	The military	Organized labor
Harris 1702	"	"	"	Executive branch of the government	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Harris 2131	"	"	"	Executive branch of government	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Harris 2219	Large business corporations	--	Colleges and universities	The Federal government	The newspapers	--	Television networks	Full service banks	--	--	--	--	Labor unions
Harris 2236	Major companies	"	Education	Executive branch of government	The press	"	Television	Banks and financial institutions	"	"	"	"	Organized labor
Harris 2251	"	"	"	The executive branch of the federal government	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Harris 2319	"	"	--	The Federal government	Television and the press	"	See CONPRESS	Banks and other financial institutions	--	--	--	--	"
GSS 73	"	"	Education	The executive branch of the federal government	Press	"	TV	--	U.S. Supreme Court	Scientific community	"	Military	"
Harris 2343	"	"	Higher educational institutions (colleges, universities, etc.	"	The press	"	Television news	--	The U.S. Supreme Court	--	The U.S. House of Representatives/The U.S. Senate	The	"
Harris 2354	"	"	Higher education (colleges and universities)	Executive branch of government	"	"	TV news	Banking	--	The scientific community	Congress	--	"
NORC 4179	"	--	--	Executive branch of the federal government	"	--	--	--	The U.S. Supreme Court	--	"	--	--
Harris 7482	"	--	--	"	--	"	"	--	--	--	--	--	--
GSS 74	"	"	Education	Executive branch of the federal government	Press	"	TV	--	U.S. Supreme Court	Scientific community	"	Military	"
Harris 7487	"	"	Higher educational institutions (colleges, universities, etc.)	The executive branch of the federal government	The press	"	Television news	--	The U.S. Supreme Court	--	"	The military	"
Harris 2430	"	--	--	"	"	"	"	--	"	--	"	--	--
Harris 2434	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	--	"	--	"	"	"

TABLE 2--Continued

Survey	Item												
	CONBUS	CONCLERG	CONEDUC	CONFED	CONPRESS	CONMEDIC	CONTV	CONFINAN	CONJUDG	CONSCI	CONLEGIS	CONARMY	CONLABOR
Harris 2515	"	--	Higher education	--	"	--	"	--	--	--	"	"	Labor unions
GSS 75	"	"	Education	"	Press	"	TV	Banks and financial institutions	U.S. Supreme Court	The scientific community	"	Military	Organized labor
Harris 7581	"	"	Higher education (colleges and universities)	"	The press	"	TV news	Banks	"	Science	"	The military	Labor unions
Harris 7585	"	"	Higher educational institutions (colleges, universities, etc.)	"	"	"	Television news	"	The U.S. Supreme Court	--	"	"	Organized labor
Harris 2521	"	"	Higher educational institutions (colleges universities, etc.)	"	"	"	"	"	"	--	"	"	"
Harris 7681	"	--	--	"	"	--	"	--	"	--	The U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate/Congress	"	--
GSS 76	"	"	Education	"	Press	"	TV	Banks and financial institutions	U.S. Supreme Court	The scientific community	Congress	Military	"
Harris 7684	--	--	--	"	--	--	--	--	"	--	"	--	--
Harris 2628	"	--	Higher education	--	The press	--	Television news	--	--	--	"	The military	Labor unions
Harris 2630	"	--	--	Executive branch of the federal government	"	"	TV news	Banks	--	Science	"	--	--
Harris 7690	"	"	Higher educational institutions (colleges, universities, etc.)	The executive branch of the federal government	"	"	Television news	"	The U.S. Supreme Court	--	"	"	Organized labor
GSS 77	"	"	Education	"	Press	"	TV	Banks and financial institutions	U.S. Supreme Court	The scientific community	"	Military	"

question along with the variant "science" in Harris 7581 and 2630; and on the press question along with the variant "television and the press" in Harris 2319 and "the newspapers" in Harris 2219. Having a single variant is the legislative question which was broken down into separate items on the Senate and the House of Representatives in Harris 2343 and the business question which appears as "large business corporations" in Harris 2219. Labor also has two versions, the standard "organized labor," and "labor unions" on Harris 2219, 2515, 7581, and 2628. Showing the greatest variation is the banking item which appears in five different forms.

Most variations occur between Harris and GSS or within the Harris series, the GSS varies only by the use of the article "the" in the science item in 1975 and 1976 and its omission in other years.

In addition to the description changes there were numerous alterations in the order in which the items were asked (see Table 3). What might be called the standard order occurred on Harris 1574, 1702, 2131, 2236, and 2251. GSS 1973 and 1974 retained this order, but omitted items 9, 13, and 15 from the Harris list. GSS 1977 also followed the original order through item 8, and then asked CONFINAN in the last position. All other surveys follow different patterns and except for GSS 1975 and 1976 and Harris 7585 and 7690 each is unique. The ordering changes are not random, however, and certain sub-orderings hold up through most, but not all, surveys. For example, confidence in business appears first in twenty-five surveys and immediately precedes religion in eighteen surveys. Many similar sub-orderings frequently occur for other items.

The last way in which the ordering varies is in the number of items asked. The GSS in 1973 and 1974 had twelve items and with the

TABLE 3

ORDER OF INSTITUTIONS[a]

Variable	Survey																										
	Harris 1574[b]	Harris 1702[b]	Harris 2131	Harris 2219	Harris 2236	Harris 2251	Harris 2319	GSS 73	Harris 2343	Harris 2354	NORC 4179	Harris 7482	GSS 74	Harris 7487	Harris 2430	Harris 2434	Harris 2515	GSS 75	Harris 7581	Harris 7585	Harris 2521	Harris 7681	GSS 76	Harris 7684	Harris 2628	Harris 2630	Harris 7690[c]	GSS 77
CONBUS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	5	-	1	1	1	1
CONCLERG . . .	2	2	2	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	2	2	-	9	-	6	6	2	2	-	6	-	-	-	2	2
CONEDUC . . .	3	3	3	6	3	3	-	3	(3)	(3)	-	-	3	(3)	-	(10)	(8)	7	(4)	(3)	(3)	-	7	-	(8)	-	(3)	3
CONFED	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	17	4	3	2	4	10	7	7	-	1	12	11	11	12	1	1	-	7	11	4
CONLABOR . . .	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	-	5	5	-	11	9	2	15	5	5	-	2	-	9	-	5	5
CONPRESS . . .	6	6	6	-	6	6	7[d]	6	6	6	5	-	6	6	3	3	6	3	7	6	6	3	3	-	6	8	6	6
CONMEDIC . . .	7	7	7	-	7	7	6	7	8	7	-	3	7	7	4	4	-	8	37	7	7	-	8	-	-	3	7	7
CONTV	8	8	8	10	8	8	7	8	(9)	(8)	-	(4)	8	(8)	(5)	(5)	(14)	9	(5)	(9)	(9)	(4)	9	-	(14)	(4)	(9)	8
CONFINAN . . .	9	9	9	2	9	9	8	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	10	8	8	-	13	-	-	9	8	13
CONJUDGE . . .	11	11	11	-	11	11	-	9	11	-	6	-	9	9	6	6	-	10	14	10	10	7	10	6	-	-	10	9
CONSCI	12	12	12	-	12	12	-	10	-	9	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	11	3	-	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	10
CONLEGIS . . .	14	14	14	-	14	14	-	11	4/7[e]	10	7	-	11	4	2	2	3	12	9	4	4	16[f]	12	4	3	5	4	11
CONARMY . . .	16	16	16	-	16	16	-	12	20	-	-	-	12	11	-	12	2	4	2	12	12	14	4	-	2	-	12	12

[a]Gives absolute position in questionnaire. Missing numbers are for other confidence items not covered.

[b]"Rotate asking order and record below."

[c]"Interviewer: Use two starting points on list from interview to interview. That is, on first interview start with item #1 on second interview with item #7. On third interview with item #1 again, etc."

[d]Items combined.

[e]Item split into parts on House of Representatives (#4) and Senate (#7).

[f]Also "U.S. Senate" is item 2 and the "U.S. House of Representatives" is item 5.

addition of financial confidence in 1975, have had thirteen since. NORC 4179 had seven items. The number on Harris varies as follows:

1574 - 17	2430 - 8
1702 - 17	2434 - 13
2131 - 17	2515 - 14
2219 - 14	7581 - 37
2236 - 17	7585 - 23
2251 - 20	2521 - 21
2319 - 9	7681 - 17
2343 - 22	7684 - 10
2354 - 32	2628 - 14
7482 - 13	2630 - 12
7487 - 13	7690 - 17

As a result, the order of the common Harris/GSS items has depended not only on their relationship to each other, but also on the placement and inclusion of a varying number of other confidence items.

Another aspect of the surveys that was examined was their general content and the placement of the confidence question. The Harris surveys emphasized political matters, with the exception of Harris 2354 which dealt primarily with business matters and Harris 2131 which concerned science. The GSS surveys and NORC amalgam, on the other hand, were eclectic, including a detailed demographic section and attitude and behavioral questions on familial, psychological, social, economic, and political topics. The precise placement of the confidence question and the content of the questions that immediately preceded them are summarized in Table 4. On several of the Harris surveys, the preceding questions have either a negative or problem orientation. On Harris 2430, 2434, 2521, and 7487 and NORC 4179, an alienation index offering several pessimistic statements on American society appears shortly before the confidence question. Harris 2343 asks about the biggest problems facing the country, 1702 asks about the Powell investigation, and 7581 inquires about crises. These types of items might very well lower the confidence

TABLE 4

QUESTIONNAIRE PLACEMENT

Survey	Confidence Question Number	Position Before Confidence Question	Content
Harris 1574	3	1	Complex question with A-M subparts and up to 16 parts to each letter--focus on 1) amount of progress in solving listed problems, 2) the standard of living, 3) the future of the free enterprise system
Harris 1702	16a	1	Seven-part item on Adam Clayton Powell.
		2	Fifteen-part item on spending priorities.
Harris 2131	8e	1	Four negative and four positive agree/disagree statements on science.
		2	"What are the two or three biggest problems you feel science has created as far as you personally are concerned? Any others?"
		3	As above with "benefits" replacing "problems."
Harris 2219	12	1	Four-part question on Loan sources.
		2	Four-part question on savings accounts.
Harris 2236	19	1	Ranking of political philosophy of Nixon, McGovern, Agnew, Shriver, self.
		2	Ten-part item comparing ability of Nixon and McGovern to solve national problems.
Harris 2251	1c	1	"In general, over the last ten years, do you feel that America has become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or is just about the way it was ten years ago? What has happened in America over the past ten years to make the country a (better/worse) place to live in? Anything else?"
Harris 2319	1c	1	"In general, over the past ten years, do you feel that America has become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or is just the way it was 10 years ago? (IF BETTER OR WORSE) What has happened over the past ten years to make the country a (better/worse) place to live in? Anything else?"
Harris 2343	5	1	Four-part question on how local, state, federal government affect lives.
		2	"What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country you would like to see something done about? Anything else? What do you think ought to be done about it? Anything else?
Harris 2354	4a	1	Three-part question about whether business has or should help to solve twenty listed problems.
		1	Three-part question rating business contribution to twenty-five economic goals, comparing confidence to that of ten years ago.
Harris 7482	1		No prior question, confidence first in survey.
Harris 7487	11	1	Five-item alienation index - "Now I want to read you some things some people have told us they have felt from time to time. Do you tend to feel or not (READ LIST)? a. The people running the country don't really care what happens to you. b. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. c. What you think doesn't count very much any more. d. You're left out of things going on around. e. Most people with power try to take advantage of people like yourself."
		2	Nine-part question on economic conditions and purchasing plans.
Harris 2430	8	1	Five-Item alienation index, see Harris 7487
		2	Presidential choice for 1976.
Harris 2434	8	1	Five-Item alienation index, see Harris 7487
		1	Presidential choice for 1976.
Harris 2515	4c	1,2,3	Energy questions.

TABLE 4--Continued

Survey	Confidence Question Number	Position Before Confidence Question	Content
Harris 7581	2a	1	Three-part questions on access to information, "Do you feel we always have one crisis or another in America, or do you feel there is something deeply wrong in America today?", and "Compared to 10 years ago, do you feel the quality of life in America has improved, grown worse, or stayed the same?"
Harris 7583	1d	1	Three parts on changes over last ten years in a) quality of life (see Harris 7581), b) quality of America as a place to live (see Harris 2319) and c) quality of leadership (see Harris 2521 part C).
Harris 2521	2d	1	Four-part question - "Compared to 10 years ago, do you feel the leadership inside and outside government in this country has become better, worse, or stayed about the same?", quality of life (see 7581), six-item alienation question (see 7487).
Harris 7681	51a	1	Ten part question on Federalism
Harris 7684	P6a	1	Complex question with A-L subquestion and up to eight items per letter, focusing on presidential nominating process.
Harris 2628	3c	1,2	Energy questions
Harris 2630	1	1	Party choice in Congressional election
		2,3	Evaluation of Democratic convention
Harris 7690	2j	1	Nineteen-part question on Carter's economic program.
NORC 4179	88	1	Now to something different. I am going to read some of the kinds of things people tell us when we interview them and ask you whether you agree or disagree with them. I'll read them one at a time and you just tell me whether you agree or disagree. A. People like me don't have any say about what the government does. B. I don't think public officials care much what people like me think. C. Generally speaking, those we elect to Congress in Washington lose touch with the people pretty quickly. D. Parties are only interested in people's votes but not in their opinions.
		2	Series of split ballot policy questions.
GSS 73	56	1	Four-part question about police use of force.
		2	Five-part question about citizen use of force.
GSS 74	54	1	Last of nine questions on past, present, and future community of residence, preferred type.
GSS 75	44	1	Rate own social class.
		2	Rank family income.
		3	Change in financial situation over last few years.
		4	Satisfaction with financial situation.
GSS 76	1		No prior question, confidence first in questionnaire.
GSS 77	49	1	Gun ownership.
		2	Hunting participation.
		3	Ever ticketed or arrested.

levels by putting the respondent in a negative frame of mind. The impact of prior questions of the GSS surveys is less certain. GSS 76 and Harris 7482 have no prior question effect since it is the first question, but this fact could have a major impact itself. The questions on use of force in GSS 73 could have a depressing impact on confidence, but most of the rest appear fairly innocuous. While it is impossible to state with a great certainty whether a context effect might exist, the wide variation in prior question and the general focus of survey makes this a possibility.

From the preceding discussion of sample population, question wording, format, descriptors, institutional ordering, and context, it appears that the Harris and NORC series are a bewildering mixture of similarities and differences. On the similar side, Harris and NORC clearly are inquiring about the same basic attitude, "confidence" in the leadership of various important institutions. Identical response categories are usually employed, the populations sampled are usually the same, and the descriptors of the institutions are also frequently identical. On the difference side, there are many exceptions to the usual correspondence between sample populations, response categories, and institutional descriptors; multiple variations in wording and format; and many differences in the ordering of institutions and context. Some attempts will be made to evaluate the possible consequences of these differences after an initial inspection of the marginal differences between the Harris and NORC series.

COMPARISON OF DATA

Of the twenty-two Harris surveys with confidence questions under examination here, raw frequencies were avilable for nineteen studies. The raw data for Harris 1574 and 2131 are lost but published figures exist and neither raw nor published data survive for Harris 2251. Raw data were available for all NORC surveys. Complete marginals are given in the appendix, "Harris-GSS Confidence Marginals, 1967-1977."[2] The proportion replying "a great deal" appears in Table 5.

At six points Harris and NORC surveys were conducted at sufficiently close times (a month or less apart) to permit direct survey-to-survey comparisons.[3] The comparisons were between (1) Harris 2319 and GSS 1973;[4] (2) Harris 2354, NORC 2179, Harris 7482, and GSS 1974; (3) Harris 2525, GSS 1975, and Harris 7581; (4) Harris 7487, Harris 2430, and Harris 2434; (5) Harris 2521, Harris 7681, and GSS 1975; and (6) Harris 7684, Harris 2628, and Harris 2630. On these six comparisons between 18 surveys, a total of 93 comparisons between items were possible.[5] There were 45 comparisons between NORC and Harris surveys, 41 between different Harris surveys,

---

[2]The Appendix does not include marginals for the two Harris surveys, 1574 and 2131, for which raw data was not available. For these see Harris Survey, October 25, 1971.

[3]These comparisons do not eliminate the possibility of real across time changes between surveys, but at least tend to minimize this factor.

[4]GSS adapted to approximate Harris universe of electoral participators.

[5]To adjust for the clustering involved with multistage sampling, the standard deviations were multiplied by 1.414 and probabilities are calculated from these modified figures.

TABLE 5

PROPORTION WITH "A GREAT DEAL" OF CONFIDENCE

	Survey																											
	Harris 1574	Harris 1702	Harris 2131	Harris 2219	Harris 2236	Harris 2251	Harris 2319	GSS 73	Harris 2343	Harris 2354	NORC 4179	HARRIS 7482	GSS 74	Harris 7487	Harris 2430	Harris 2434	Harris 2515	GSS 75	Harris 7581	Harris 7585	Harris 2521	Harris 7681	GSS 76	Harris 7684	Harris 2628	Harris 2630	Harris 7690	GSS 77
CONBUS	.550	.466	.270	.305	.268		.338	.293	.298	.276	.218	.241	.314	.217	.152	.159	.181	.193	.197	.197	.163	.215	.220	--	.205	.199	.204	.272
CONCLERG . . .	.410	.396	.270	--	.294		.332	.348	.356	.289	.321	--	.443	.318	--	.320	--	.244	.322	.355	.237	--	.307	--	--	--	.293	.400
CONEDUC . . .	.610	.555	.370	.310	.334		--	.370	.442	.455	--	--	.491	.391	--	.393	.362	.309	.361	.366	.279	--	.375	--	.317	--	.370	.406
CONFED	.410	.372	.230	.336	.272		--	.293	.194	.134	.142	.117	.136	.283	.200	.177	--	.133	.131	.160	.108	.165	.135	.223	--	.145	.233	.279
CONLABOR . . .	.220	.196	.140	.103	.153		.229	.155	.198	.162	.187	--	.182	.174	--	.185	.163	.101	.135	.180	.099	--	.116	--	.106	--	.145	.148
CONPRESS . . .	.290	.265	.180	.165	.184		--	.231	.303	.278	.251	--	.259	.248	.309	.256	--	.239	.259	.275	.201	.213	.285	--	.250	.247	.178	.251
CONMEDIC . . .	.720	.605	.610	--	.482		.629	.541	.576	.599	--	.526	.604	.493	.497	.485	--	.505	.428	.537	.420	--	.541	--	--	.501	.425	.515
CONTV	.250	.203	.220	.157	.179		--	.186	.403	.366	--	.342	.234	--	.362	.323	.336	.178	--	.366	.279	.283	.187	--	.326	.345	.276	.174
CONJUDGE . . .	.500	.395	.230	--	.285		--	.315	.333	--	.341	--	.332	.401	.348	.350	--	.308	.287	.275	.219	.316	.354	.379	--	--	.286	.357
CONSCI	.560	.451	.320	--	.368		--	.369	--	.455	--	--	.450	--	--	--	--	.377	.479	--	--	--	.429	--	--	.444	--	.410
CONLEGIS . . .	.420	.409	.190	--	.210		--	.235	.297	.171	.227	--	.171	.178	.162	.164	.124	.133	.136	.121	.088	.179	.137	.167	.095	.127	.165	.191
CONARMY . . .	.620	.555	.270	--	.361		--	.317	.405	--	--	--	.396	.339	--	.307	.267	.352	.245	.303	.225	.362	.392	--	.304	--	.276	.363
CONFINAN . . .	.670	.543	.360	.591	.391		.499	--	--	.412	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.319	.415	.423	.335	--	.395	--	--	.360	.400	.419

and 7 between NORC surveys. Table 6 shows the difference in proportions between these 93 pairs of marginals and tests for their statistical significance.[6]

Between NORC and Harris .511 of the differences were significant, between Harris and Harris .366 were significant, and between the few NORC-to-NORC comparisons .429 were significant. The average absolute difference in proportions were Harris-NORC = .048, Harris-Harris = .037, and NORC-NORC = .043 (or inter-house = .048, intra-house = .038). Both in terms of the proportion of differences significant and the magnitude of the average absolute differences there is considerable variation between surveys. By far the largest inter- and intra-house differences occur respectively between Harris 2521 and GSS 1976 and Harris 2521 and Harris 7681. Eight of the ten items differ significantly between Harris 2521 and GSS 1976 (average difference = .079) and five of the six items differ between Harris 2521 and Harris 7681 (average difference = .074). By contrast GSS 1976 and Harris 7681 had only two out of six items significantly differing (average difference = .036). Likewise across the other five points of comparison only .286 of Harris-Harris differences vary significantly and only .448 of Harris-GSS differences are significant. This of course suggests that Harris 2521 is the source of atypically large variations between surveys.

Even without these especially large variations, it appears that both within houses and across houses the confidence items often vary

---

[6]With a few exceptions all of these pairs of comparisons were between identical or very similar descriptors and similar sample populations. The chief exceptions are that Harris 2515, 7581, and 2628 used "Labor Unions" while Harris 7690 and GSS employed "Organized Labor." Also, Harris 7684 and 2630 were of electoral participators and Harris 2628 was of adults in general. The evidence indicates that little difference was attributable to these variations.

TABLE 6

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CONTIGUOUS SURVEYS[a]

Item	Harris 2319	GSS 73	Harris - GSS	Prob.
CONBUS	.338	.325	.013	.650
CONCLERG	.332	.331	.001	.971
CONEDUC	--	--	--	--
CONFED	--	--	--	--
CONLABOR	.229	.142	.087	<.001
CONPRESS	--	--	--	--
CONMEDIC	.629	.553	.076	.010
CONTV	--	--	--	--
CONJUDGE	--	--	--	--
CONSCI	--	--	--	--
CONLEGIS	--	--	--	--
CONARMY	--	--	--	--
CONFINAN	--	--	--	--

NOTE: prob. = probability

[a]To adjust for multistage sampling standard deviations multiplied by 1.414.

TABLE 6--Continued

Item	Harris 2354	NORC 4179	Harris 7482	GSS 74	Harris 7482-NORC 4179	Prob.	GSS 74-NORC 4179	Prob.	GSS 74-Harris 7482	Prob.	NORC 4129-Harris 2354	Prob.	Harris 7482-Harris 2354	Prob.
CONBUS . .	.276	.218	.241	.314	.023	.293	.096	<.001	.073	.002	-.058	.009	-.035	.120
CONCLERG .	.289	.321	--	.443	--	--	.122	<.001	--	--	.032	.177	--	--
CONEDUC .	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFED . .	.134	.142	.117	.136	-.025	.148	-.006	.738	.019	.271	.008	.660	-.017	.675
CONLABOR .	.162	.187	--	.182	--	--	-.005	.800	--	--	.025	.202	--	--
CONPRESS .	.278	.251	--	.259	--	--	.008	.724	--	--	-.027	.237	--	--
CONMEDIC .	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONTV . .	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONJUDGE .	--	.341	--	.332	--	--	-.009	.715	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONSCI . .	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONLEGIS .	.171	.227	--	.171	--	--	-.056	.007	--	--	.056	.007	--	--
CONARMY .	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFINAN .	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TABLE 6--Continued

Item	Harris 2515	GSS 75	Harris 7581	Harris 2515-GSS 75	Prob.	Harris 7581-GSS 75	Prob.	Harris 2515-Harris 7581	Prob.
CONBUS	.181	.193	.197	-.011	.541	.004	.838	-.016	.595
CONCLERG	--	.244	.322	--	--	.078	.001	--	--
CONEDUC	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFED	--	.133	.131	--	--	-.002	.904	--	--
CONLABOR	.163	.101	.135	.062	.001	.034	.036	.028	.101
CONPRESS	--	.239	.259	--	--	.020	.631	--	--
CONMEDIC	--	.505	.428	--	--	-.077	.003	--	--
CONTV	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONJUDGE	--	.308	.287	--	--	-.021	.627	--	--
CONSCI	--	.377	.479	--	--	.102	<.001	--	--
CONLEGIS	.124	.133	.136	-.009	.593	.003	.858	-.012	.530
CONARMY	.267	.352	.245	-.085	.001	-.107	<.001	-.022	.299
CONFINAN	--	.319	.415	--	--	.096	<.001	--	--

TABLE 6--Continued

Item	Harris 7487	Harris 2430	Harris 2434	Harris 2430 - Harris 7487	Prob.	Harris 2434 - Harris 7487	Prob.	Harris 2434 - Harris 2430	Prob.
CONBUS	.217	.159	.152	-.058	.010	-.065	.004	-.007	.772
CONCLERG	.318	--	.320	--	--	.002	.931	--	--
CONEDUC	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFED	.283	.200	.177	-.083	<.001	-.106	<.001	-.023	.606
CONLABOR	.174	--	.185	--	--	.011	.584	--	--
CONPRESS	.248	.309	.256	.061	.044	.008	.720	-.053	.081
CONMEDIC	.493	.497	.485	.004	.902	-.008	.754	-.012	.724
CONTV	--	.362	.323	--	--	--	--	-.039	.226
CONJUDGE	.401	.348	.350	-.053	.100	-.051	.037	.002	.949
CONSCI	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONLEGIS	.178	.162	.164	-.016	.534	-.014	.524	-.002	.934
CONARMY	.339	--	.307	--	--	.032	.179	--	--
CONFINAN	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TABLE 6--Continued

Item	Harris 2521	Harris 7681	GSS 76	Harris 7681-Harris 2521	Prob.	GSS 76-Harris 2521	Prob.	GSS 76-Harris 7681	Prob.
CONBUS	.163	.215	.220	.052	.010	.057	.005	.005	.809
CONCLERG	.237	--	.307	--	--	.070	.003	--	--
CONEDUC	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFED	.108	.165	.135	.057	.002	.027	.106	-.030	.099
CONLABOR	.099	--	.116	--	--	.017	.289	--	--
CONPRESS	.201	.213	.285	.012	.573	.084	<.001	.072	.002
CONMEDIC	.420	--	.541	--	--	.121	<.001	--	--
CONTV	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONJUDGE	.219	.316	.354	.097	<.001	.135	<.001	.038	.114
CONSCI	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONLEGIS	.088	.179	.137	.091	<.001	.049	.003	-.042	.024
CONARMY	.225	.362	.392	.137	<.001	.167	<.001	.030	.227
CONFINAN	.335	--	.395	--	--	.060	.015	--	--

TABLE 6--Continued

Item	Harris 7684	Harris 2628	Harris 2630	Harris 2628-Harris 7684	Prob.	Harris 2630-Harris 7684	Prob.	Harris 2630-Harris 2628	Prob.
CONBUS	--	.205	.199	--	--	--	--	-.006	.759
CONCLERG	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONEDUC	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFED	.223	--	.145	--	--	-.078	<.001	--	--
CONLABOR	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONPRESS	--	.250	.247	--	--	--	--	-.003	.882
CONMEDIC	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONTV	--	.326	.345	--	--	--	--	.019	.582
CONJUDGE	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONSCI	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONLEGIS	.167	.095	.127	-.072	<.001	-.040	.028	.032	.036
CONARMY	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CONFINAN	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

significantly within a relatively short time span. How much of this is due to real fluctuations in confidence ratings and how much results from artifical differences in context, wording, and so forth is difficult to ascertain. If we compare the mean inter-house difference (.048) with the mean intra-house difference (.038), we find that on average items differ by a percentage point more between Harris and NORC surveys than between surveys conducted by the same house. While this comparison is hardly experimentally rigorous, it probably accurately reflects the fact that a combination of form differences in the items and more basic differences in house procedures (e.g., sample frame, multistage procedures, interviewer training, etc.) create an added measure of variation between Harris and NORC on these confidence items. Examining further the similarities and differences between the Harris and NORC data, a comparison of Harris and NORC trends from 1972 to 1977 was made. Taking a conservative approach, Harris surveys that sampled electoral participators (2236, 7684, and 2630), employed persons (Harris 2319) or used institutional descriptors that were judged to be major variants ("large business corporations," "full service banks," "newspapers," "federal government," in Harris 2219; "labor unions" in Harris 2219, 2515, 7581, and 2628; "The U.S. House of Representatives" and "The U.S. Senate" in Harris 2343; and "Science" in Harris 7581 and 2630) were dropped from the initial time series comparions between Harris and NORC (Tables 7 and 8). This allowed the comparison of Harris and GSS trends on ten institutions--the Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, the executive branch, organized religion, medicine, the press, organized labor, the military, major companies, and banking.

TABLE 7

TREND IN PROPORTION RESPONDING "A GREAT DEAL," 1972-1977

Variable	House	Model	X^2	df	Probability	Decision
CONJUDGE	Harris	p=c	159.3	8	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	102.3	7	<.001	R
		L.R.	57.3	1	<.001	S
	NORC	p=c	13.7	5	.018*	A
CONARMY	Harris	p=c	197.2	9	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	155.9	8	<.001	R
		L.R.	41.3	1	<.001	S
	NORC	p=c	27.4	4	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	21.8	3	<.001	R
		L.R.	5.6	1	.017*	NS
CONLEGIS	Harris	p=c	154.5	10	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	126.7	9	<.001	R
		L.R.	27.8	1	<.001	S
	NORC	p=c	96.5	5	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	72.7	4	<.001	R
		L.R.	23.8	1	<.001	S
CONMEDIC	Harris	p=c	219.3	9	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	83.0	8	<.001	R
		L.R.	136.2	1	<.001	S
	NORC	p=c	36.4	4	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	28.2	3	<.001	R
		L.R.	8.2	1	.004	S
CONPRESS	Harris	p=c	64.2	10	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	22.6	9	<.001*	A
		L.R.	41.6	1	<.001	S
	NORC	p=c	13.5	5	.019*	A
CONCLERG	Harris	p=c	79.3	8	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	63.4	7	<.001	R
		L.R.	16.0	1	<.001	S
	NORC	p=c	171.1	5	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	172.5	4	<.001	R
		L.R.	1.3	1	1.000	NS
CONFED	Harris	p=c	267.6	11	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	283.7	10	<.001	R
		L.R.	-16.1	1	1.000	NS
	NORC	p=c	256.9	5	<.001	R
		p=a + bx	272.9	4	<.001	R
		L.R.	-15.9	1	1.000	NS

TABLE 7--continued

Variable		Model	X^2	df	Probability	Decision
CONLABOR	Harris	p=c	91.3	6	< .001	R
		p=a + bx	53.4	5	< .001	R
		L.R.	37.8	1	< .001	S
	NORC	p=c	75.4	5	< .001	R
		p=a + bx	61.0	4	< .001	R
		L.R.	14.5	1	< .001	S
CONBUS	Harris	p=c	181.0	12	< .001	R
		p=a + bx	142.7	11	< .001	R
		L.R.	38.3	1	< .001	S
	NORC	p=c	92.5	5	< .001	R
		p=a + bx	88.3	4	< .001	R
		L.R.	4.2	1	.038*	NS
CONFINAN (1975-77)	Harris	p=c	31.4	3	< .001	R
		p=a + bx	31.4	2	< .001	R
		L.R.	0	1	1.000	NS
	NORC	p=c	36.1	2	< .001	R
		p=a + bx	2.9	1	< .087	A

p = proportion
c = constant
df = degrees of freedom
Prob. = significance level
R = reject
A = accept
S = significant at .05
NS = not significant at .05
L.R. = Linear reduction
* = Not significant at .05 when adjusted multistage sampling

TABLE 8

HARRIS AND GSS, TRENDS, 1972-1977

(Standard descriptions and adult samples as in Table 7)

Variable		p=c	p=a + bx	Linear reduction	Slope	b_h-b_g prob	Pooled p	pp_h-pp_g prob.
CONLEGIS	Harris	R	R	S	-.0192	NS	.135	< .001
	NORC	R	R	S	-.0157		.176	
CONJUDGE	Harris	R	R	S	-.0320	--	.306	.003
	NORC	A	--	--	--		.334	
CONFED	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.161	.187
	NORC	R	R	NS	--		.170	
CONCLERG	Harris	R	R	S	-.0160	--	.309	.002
	NORC	R	R	NS	--		.338	
CONMEDIC	Harris	R	R	S	-.0476	NS	.499	< .001
	NORC	R	R	S	-.0117		.542	
CONPRESS	Harris	R	A	--	-.0296	--	.245	< .539
	NORC	A	--	--	--		.252	
CONLABOR	Harris	R	R	S	-.0198	NS	.158	.024
	NORC	R	R	S	-.0113		.142	
CONARMY	Harris	R	R	S	-.0256	--	.298	< .001
	NORC	R	R	NS	--		.363	
CONBUS	Harris	R	R	S	-.0184	--	.205	< .001
	NORC	R	R	NS	--		.247	
CONFINAN (1975-77)	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.392	.233
	NORC	R	A	--	.0504		.376	

The trend comparisons were also hampered by the differences in the time points covered. The two series often started and/or ended several months apart and of course usually covered different times within the span of years encompassed. The possible impact of these differences in coverage on the trends will be considered in particular cases.

To evaluate the trends, first no change or constant models were fitted to the seperate GSS and Harris series. If this model proved inadequate to explain the series, a linear change model was fitted to the marginals. The results of these tests are given in Table 7.

Taking the Harris military points as an example, the constant hypothesis is rejected because there is a significant amount of variation (chi square) unexplained by a constant fit. The linear hypothesis is likewise rejected since again a significant amount of chi square remains unexplained by the best linear fit. However, the linear reduction (the amount of chi square unexplained by the constant model minus the amount unexplained by the linear model) is significant. This indicates that although a simple linear model does not adequately fit the data there is a significant linear component in the more complex trend. In other words, the figures bounce too much to be linear, but the bouncing has a direction to it. Looking at the NORC military series, shows another possible outcome. Here neither the constant nor the linear model fits the data and the linear model is not a significant improvement over the constant model. This represents a non-linear trend. In brief, for each of the series there are four possible evaluation of the trends: 1) constant, 2) linear, 3) linear component, or 4) non-linear. (For further details on the methods used here see Taylor, 1976.)

Comparison between the Harris and NORC series were made in several ways. First, they were compared on what type of trends fit each series. Second, they were compared on their pooled proportion. Last, for those series that tested as linear or linear component their slopes were calculated. When both Harris and NORC showed linearity, a test was made to see if their slopes differed.

In general the two series showed a fairly wide degree of divergence. On NORC two items tested as constant, one as linear, three as linear components, and four as non-linear. On Harris none were constant, one was linear, seven were linear components, and two were non-linear. As we see below in only four of ten cases did the data model in a similar fashion for Harris and NORC:

NORC Items	Harris Items				
	Constant	Linear	Linear Component	Non-Linear	
Constant	0	1	1	0	2
Linear	0	0	0	1	1
Linear Component	0	0	3	0	3
Non-Linear	0	0	3	1	4
	0	1	7	2	10

Similarly, when the pooled proportions were compared in only three out of ten comparisons were the differences statistically insignificant (see Table 8). In looking at the slopes on the three series that showed linearity (Congress, medicine, and organized labor), no significant differences were found in the slopes, although this was as much from the weakness of the linear fits (and thus large standard deviations) as from the proximity of the slopes.[7] Using the Harris series with

---

[7] The r^2 between the NORC and Harris series and time were relatively modest: Congress = .292 (NORC), .165 (Harris); Medicine = .223 (NORC), .612 (Harris); and Organized Labor = .241 (NORC), .412 (Harris).

variants included changes the trend fit for several Harris items (see Table 9), but results in about the same degree of matching with the NORC series. Three items out of eleven test out to similar model; two of eleven items do not significantly differ in their pooled proportions, and the two items that show linearity on both series (Congress and medicine) do not significantly differ in their slopes.[8]

---

[8] It is of course highly probable that the inclusion of the variant populations and descriptor surveys will add differences attributable to these particular variations. Since the demonstrable differences in these surveys did not appear to be clearly excessive, it was decided to test how the Harris variant series with its additional data points and slightly different time overlap compared to the Harris standard series in its matching with the NORC series. Evidence on the possible usability of the electoral participators surveys comes from two sources. The 1973 GSS was adjusted to eliminate non-participators and none of the modified marginals differed from the unmodified GSS sample by a significant degree (maximum change was only 1.5 percent). Also, Harris 2628 (an adult sample) did not significantly differ from Harris 7684 and 2630 in four out of five comparisons (see Table 6). On the institutional descriptors there is less evidence to judge how much the marginals might be affected by the variants. With the exception of "full service banking" none produced marginals that were incontestably at odds with the standard versions (since this variant appeared in a 1972 survey and Harris and GSS had parallel series only from 1975 to 1977 on the banking items this variant was automatically dropped from further consideration). The Congress/Senate version on Harris 2343 also appeared to be suspiciously high, but when "U.S. Senate," "The U.S. House of Representatives," and "Congress" were all asked on Harris 7681 their marginals were close (respectively .193, .196, and .179). Because of this similarity the Harris 2343 marginals cannot be clearly dismissed as a result of the variant descriptor. On the executive branch, business and science the marginals from the variant descriptors are plausible given the GSS and Harris trends, but it is really impossible to know how much they may vary from the standard version. On labor there are actually two series, "Organized Labor" with seven Harris points and "Labor Unions" with four points. The standard version had a pooled average proportion of .158 that is significantly higher than the .119 on the variant wording (as the Procter & Gamble data also suggests). Inspection of the time series reveals, however, that it is not possible to rule out that the differences come from the temporal occurance of the surveys.

TABLE 9

HARRIS AND GSS, TRENDS, 1972-1977

(Includes variant wordings and electoral participator samples)

Variable		p=c	p=a + bx	Linear reduction	Slope	b_h-b_g prob	Pooled p	pp_h-pp_g prob.
CONLEGIS	Harris	R	R	S	-.0270	NS	.147	<.001
	GSS	R	R	S	-.0157		.176	
CONSCI	Harris	R	R	S	.0205	--	.435	.015
	GSS	R	R	NS	--		.406	
CONJUDGE	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.310	.006
	GSS	A	--	--	--		.334	
CONFED	Harris	R	R	S	-.0246	--	.184	.031
	GSS	R	R	NS	--		.170	
CONCLERG	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.307	<.001
	GSS	R	R	NS	--		.338	
CONMEDIC	Harris	R	R	S	-.0247	NS	.497	<.001
	NORC	R	R	S	-.0117		.542	
CONPRESS	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.226	<.001
	GSS	A	--	--	--		.252	
CONLABOR	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.139	.633
	GSS	R	R	S	-.0113		.142	
CONARMY	Harris	R	R	S	-.0244	--	.303	<.001
	GSS	R	R	NS	--		.363	
CONBUS	Harris	R	R	S	-.0246	--	.218	<.001
	GSS	R	R	NS	--		.247	
CONFINAN (1975-77)	Harris	R	R	NS	--	--	.386	.557
	GSS	R	A	--	.0504		.376	

Next, each of the series were considered on a case-by-case basis. The trends are depicted in Figures 1-11. The NORC series is represented by the heavy solid line, the standard Harris points by the narrow solid line and the variant Harris points are connected to the standard Harris points with a narrow broken line. Figure 1 shows that both series find a decline in confidence in the Congress with a parital recovery in 1977. Both the Harris series and the NORC series show a declining linear component and their slopes do not significantly differ. NORC and Harris differ in that NORC's pooled confidence is significantly higher than that of Harris (.041 above the standard, .029 above the variant pooled proportions).

On science (Figure 2) the Harris variant series (no standard series exists) shows a linear component increase in confidence while the NORC series is non-linear. Harris also has a higher pooled confidence than NORC (Harris-NORC = .029).

On the U.S. Supreme Court (Figure 3) the Harris standard shows a linear component decline, the Harris variant is non-linear, and NORC is constant. NORC averages slightly more confidence than the Harris series (standard = .024 and variant = .028). NORC also differs in that it shows considerable less variability than the Harris series.

On the executive branch the NORC series shows a non-linear u-shaped trend while Harris has a w-shaped trend (non-linear on the standard, linear component decline on the variant). The middle peak on the Harris "w" comes from a survey after Richard Nixon's resignation and before his pardon by Gerald Ford, a point of sharp and very short lived confidence in the presidency. Immediately after the pardoning, confidence began to plummet back to pre-resignation levels (Smith and

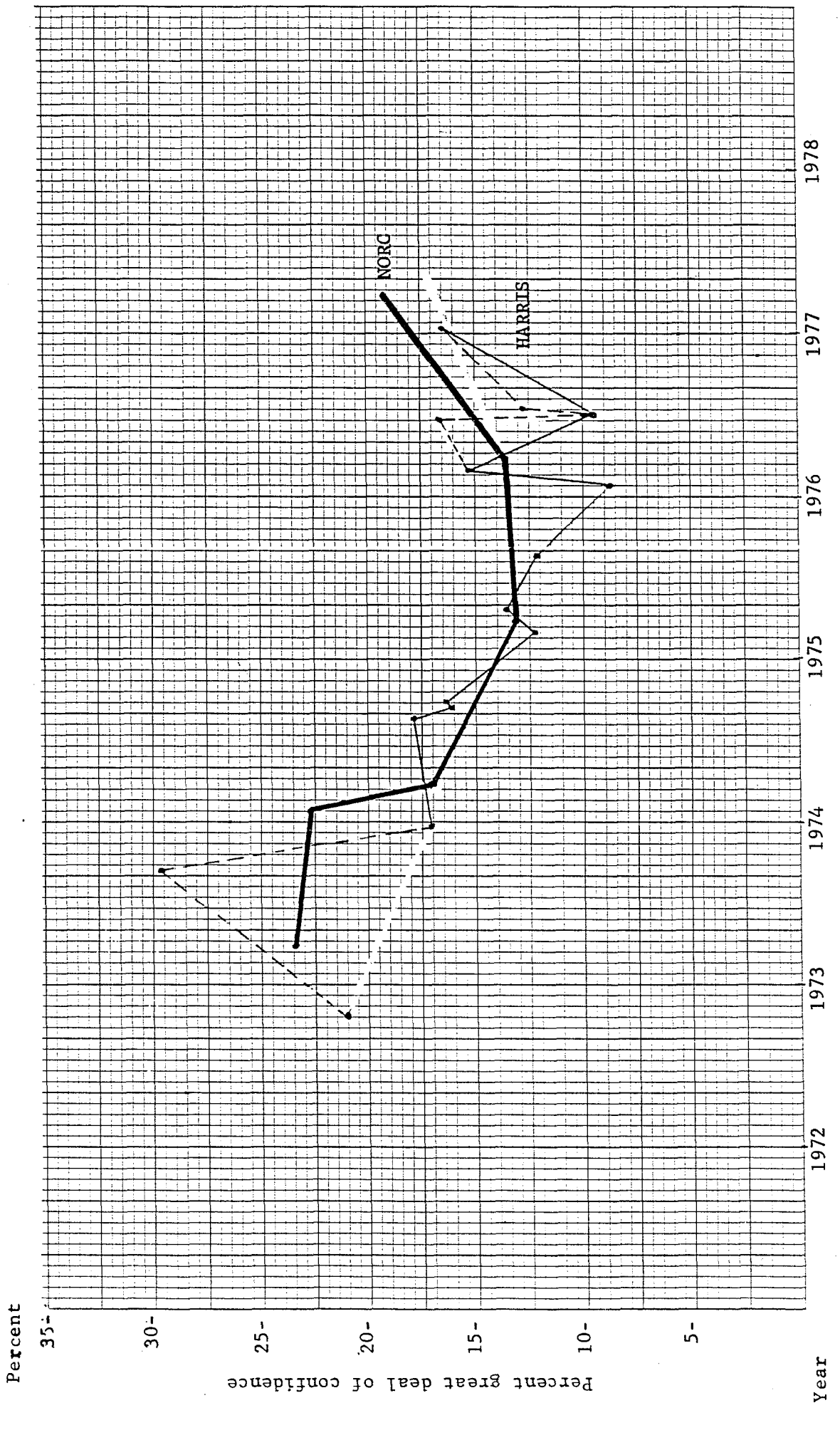

Fig. 1. Congress

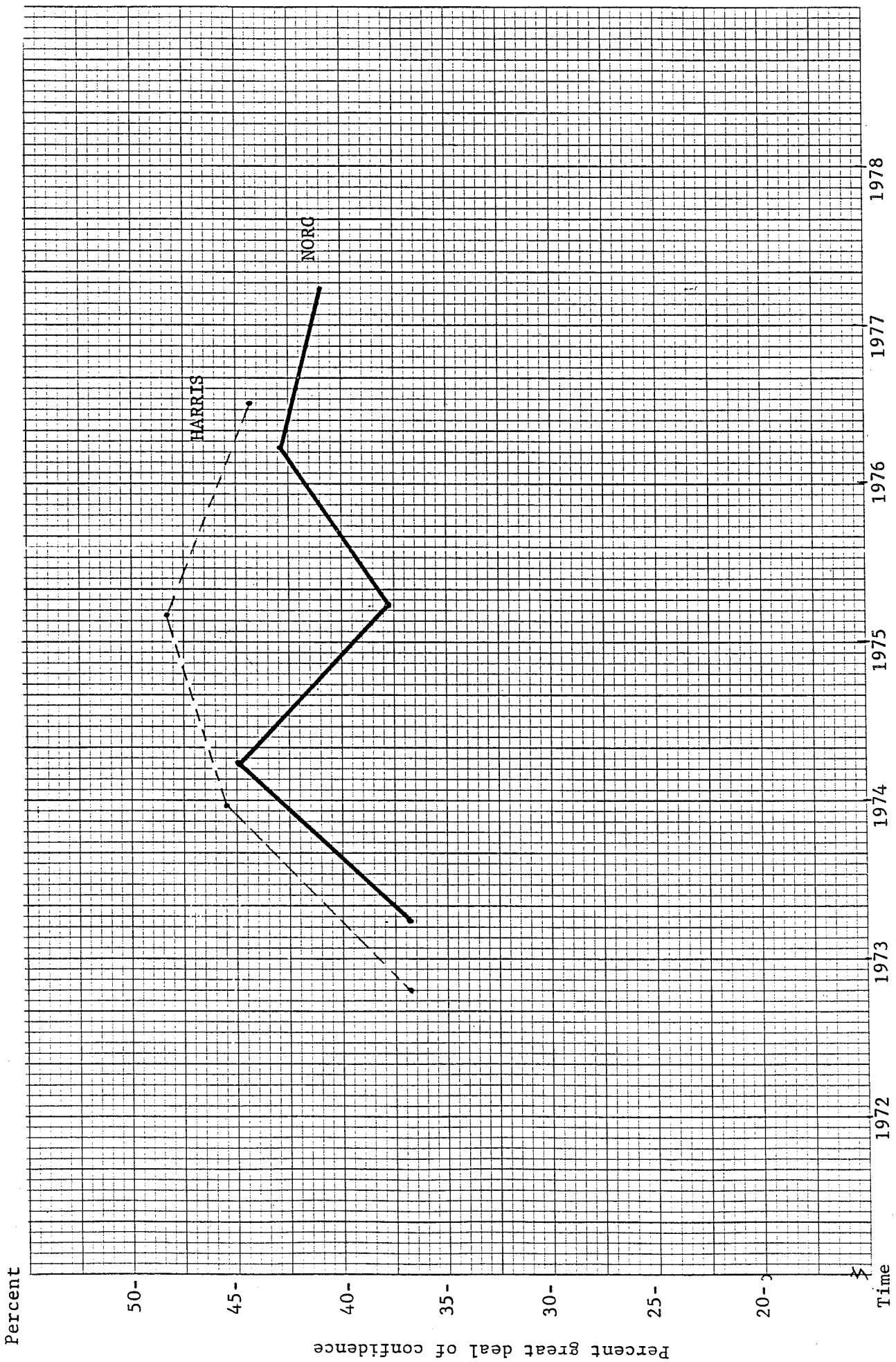

Fig. 2. Scientific community

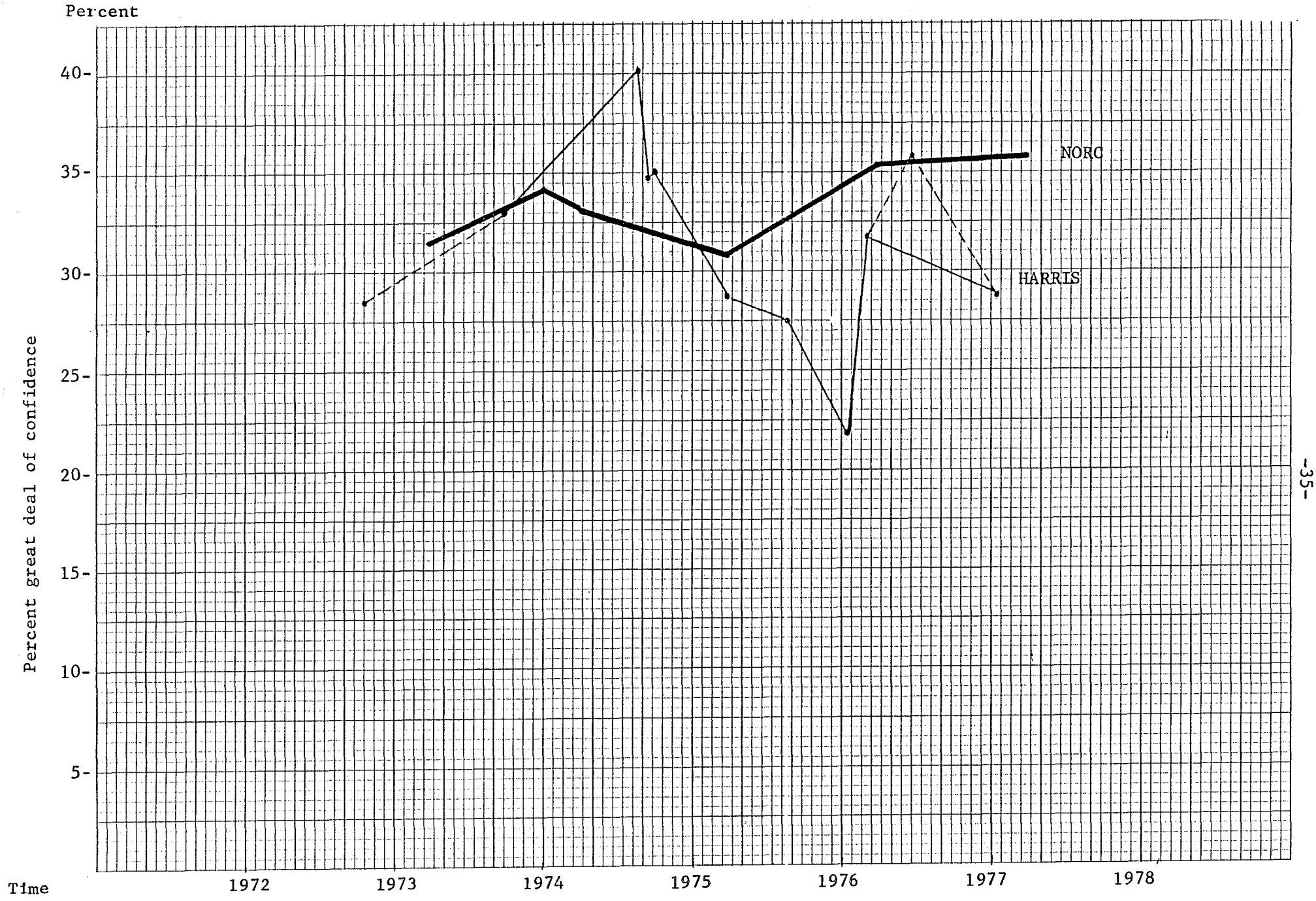

Fig. 3. U.S. Supreme Court

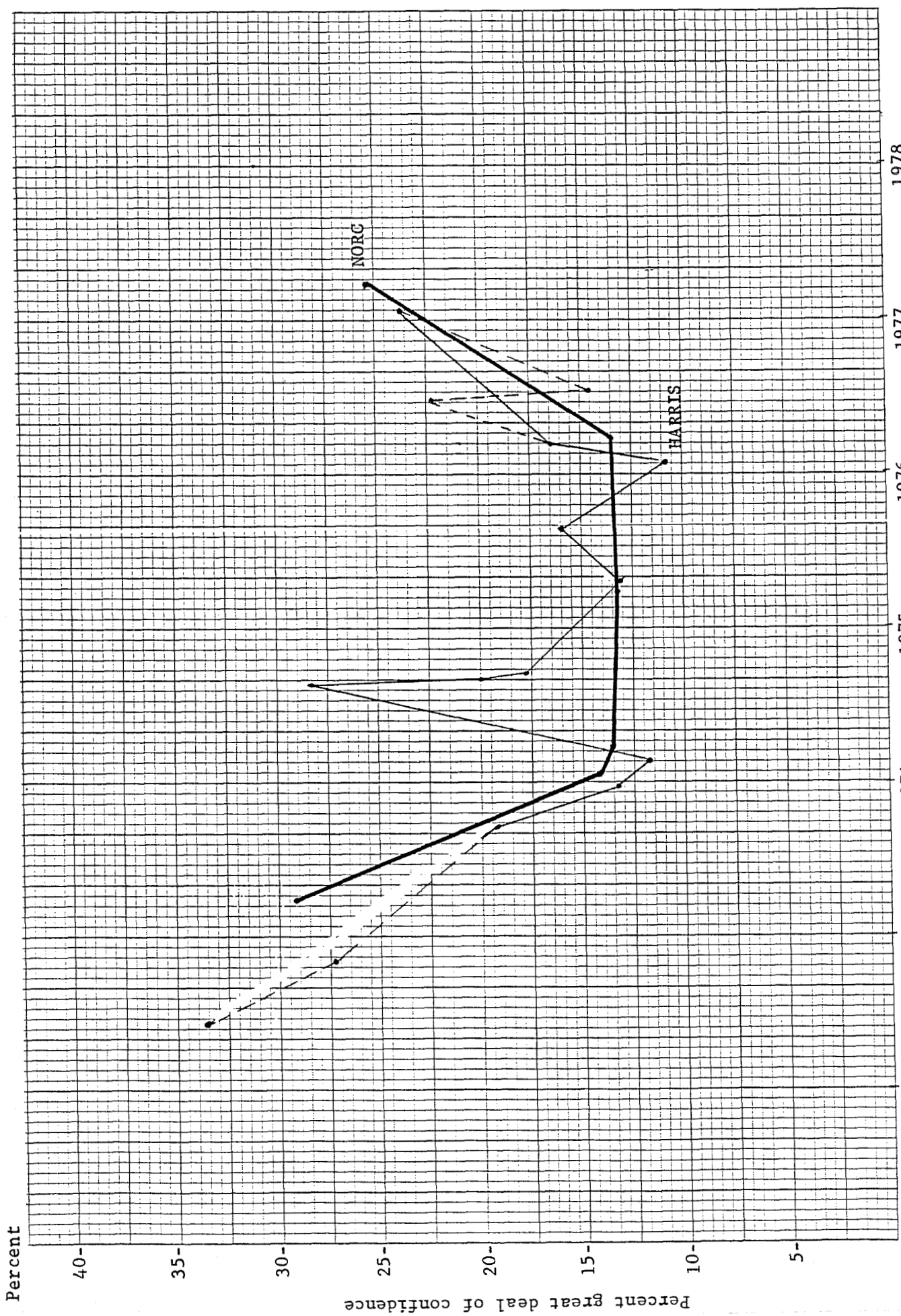

Fig. 4. Executive branch

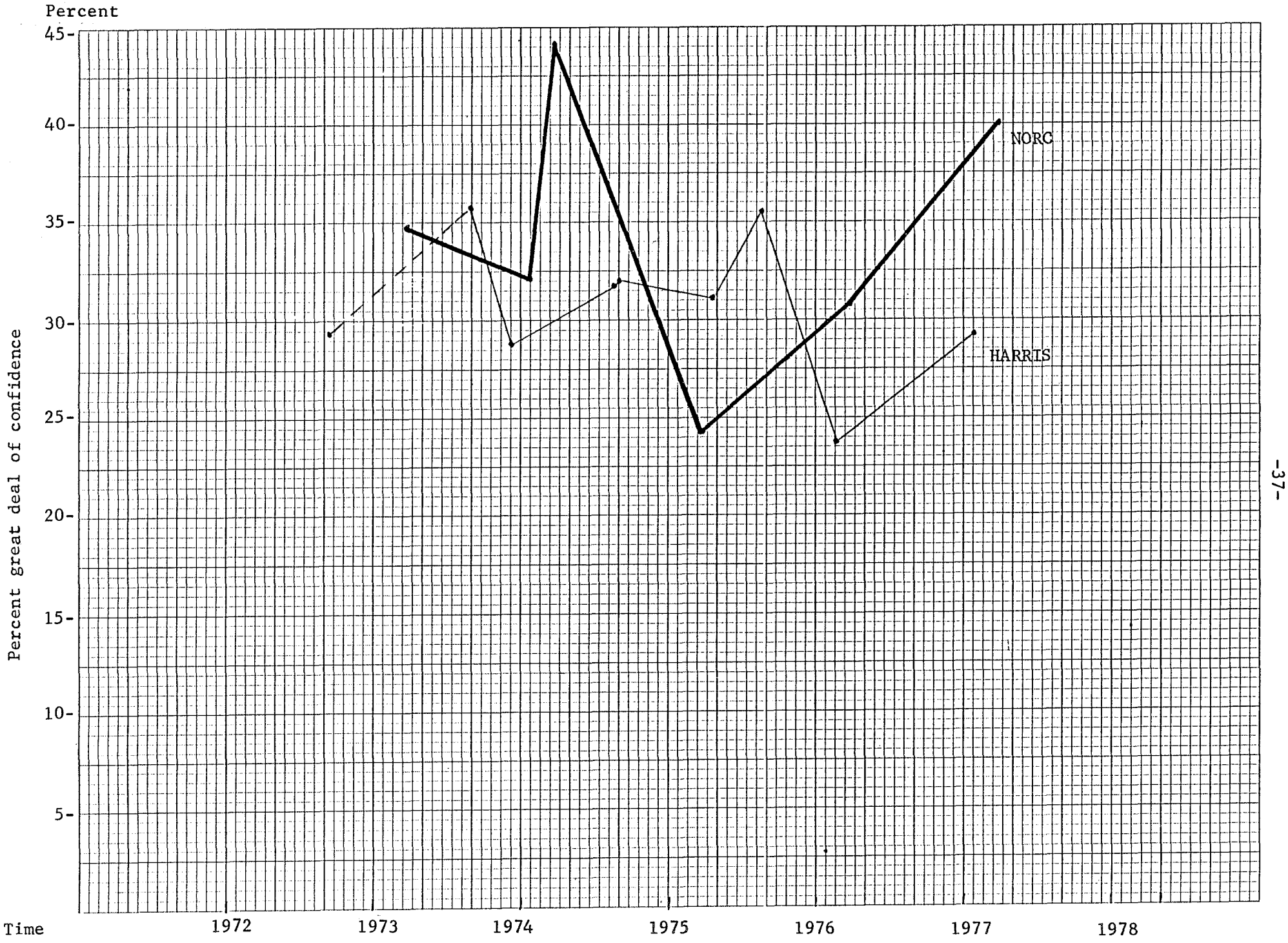

Fig. 5. Organized religion

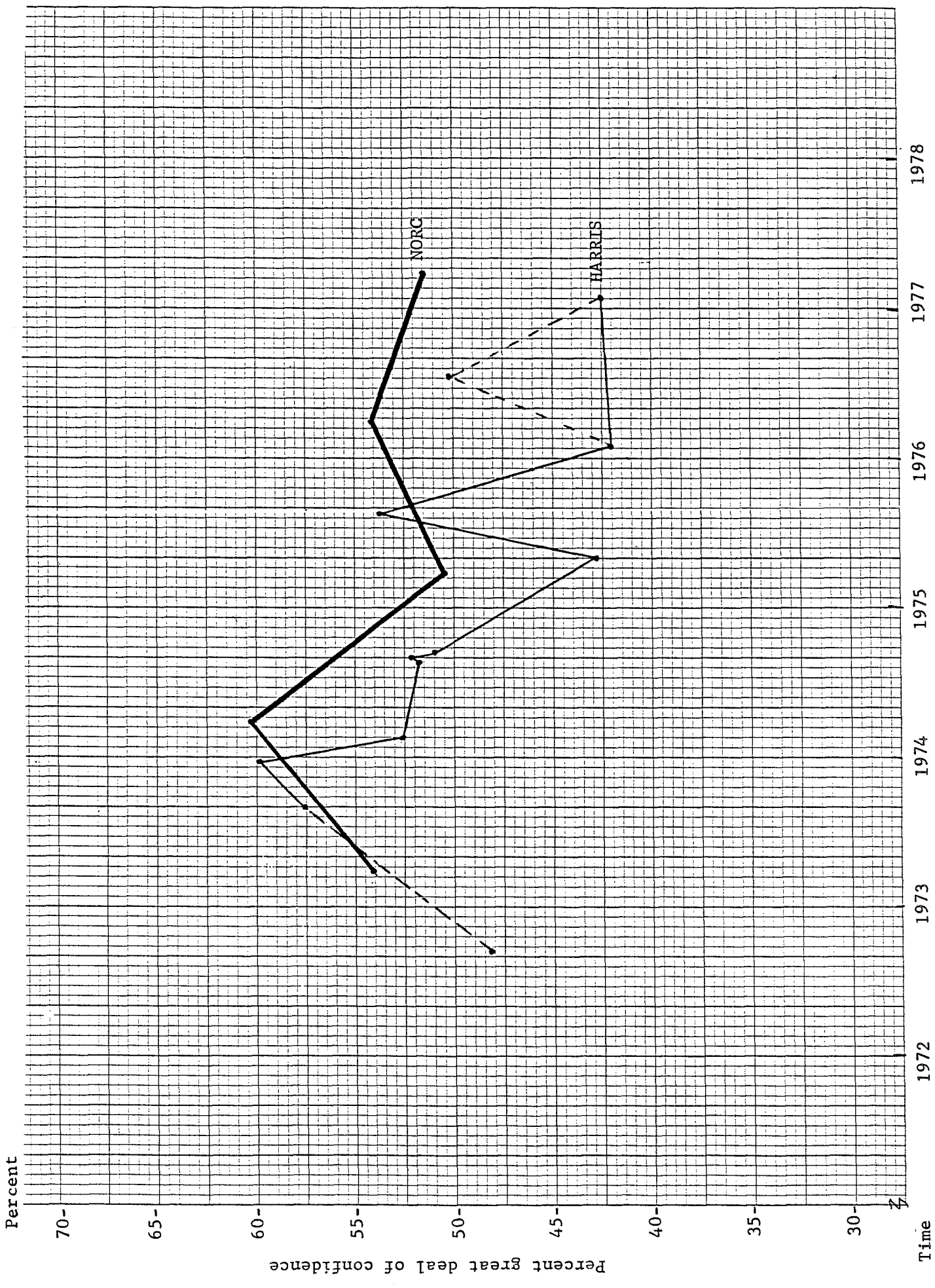

Fig. 6. Medicine

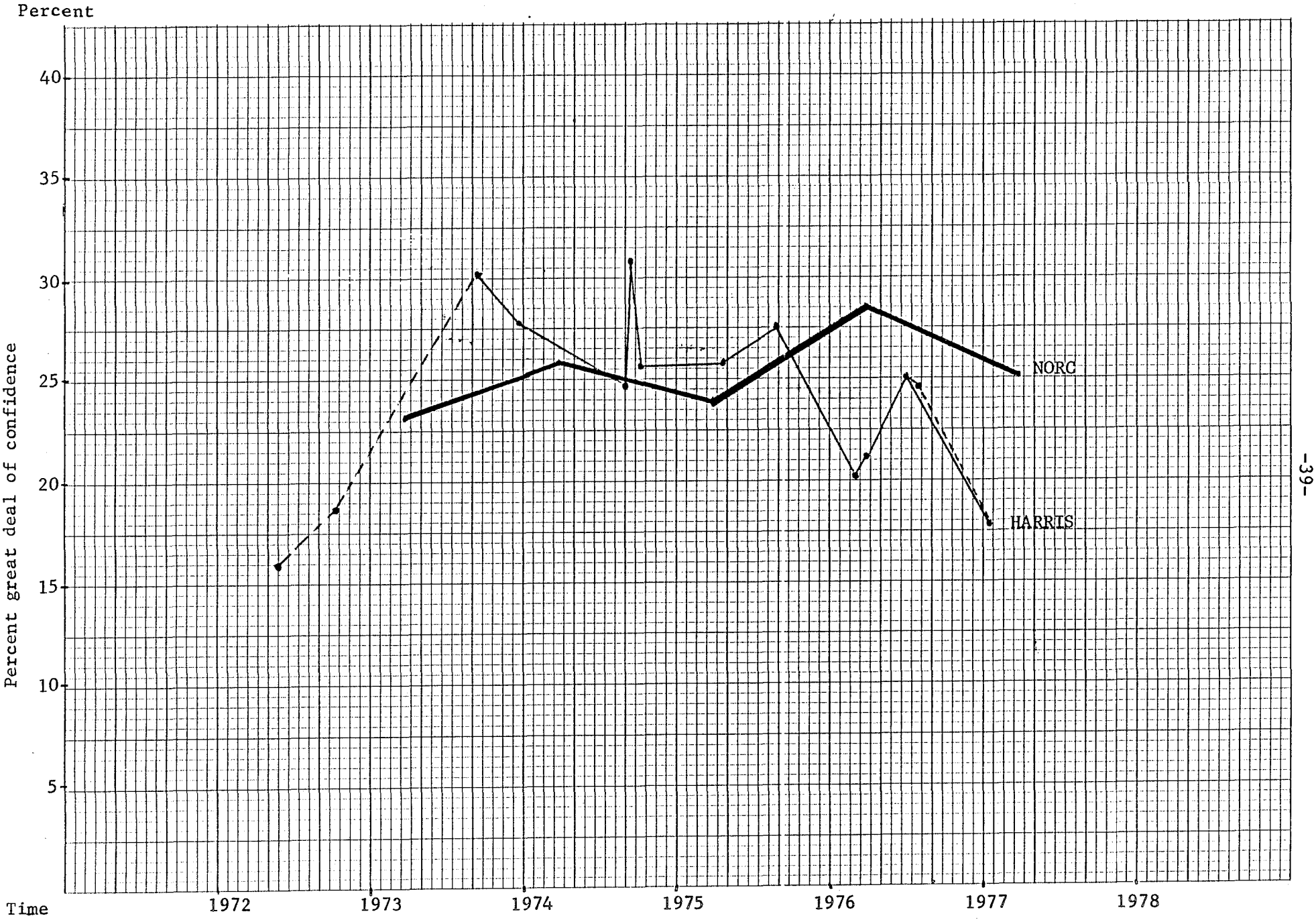
Percent
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
Percent great deal of confidence
NORC
HARRIS
Time
1972
1973
1974
1975
1976
1977
1978

Fig. 7. Press

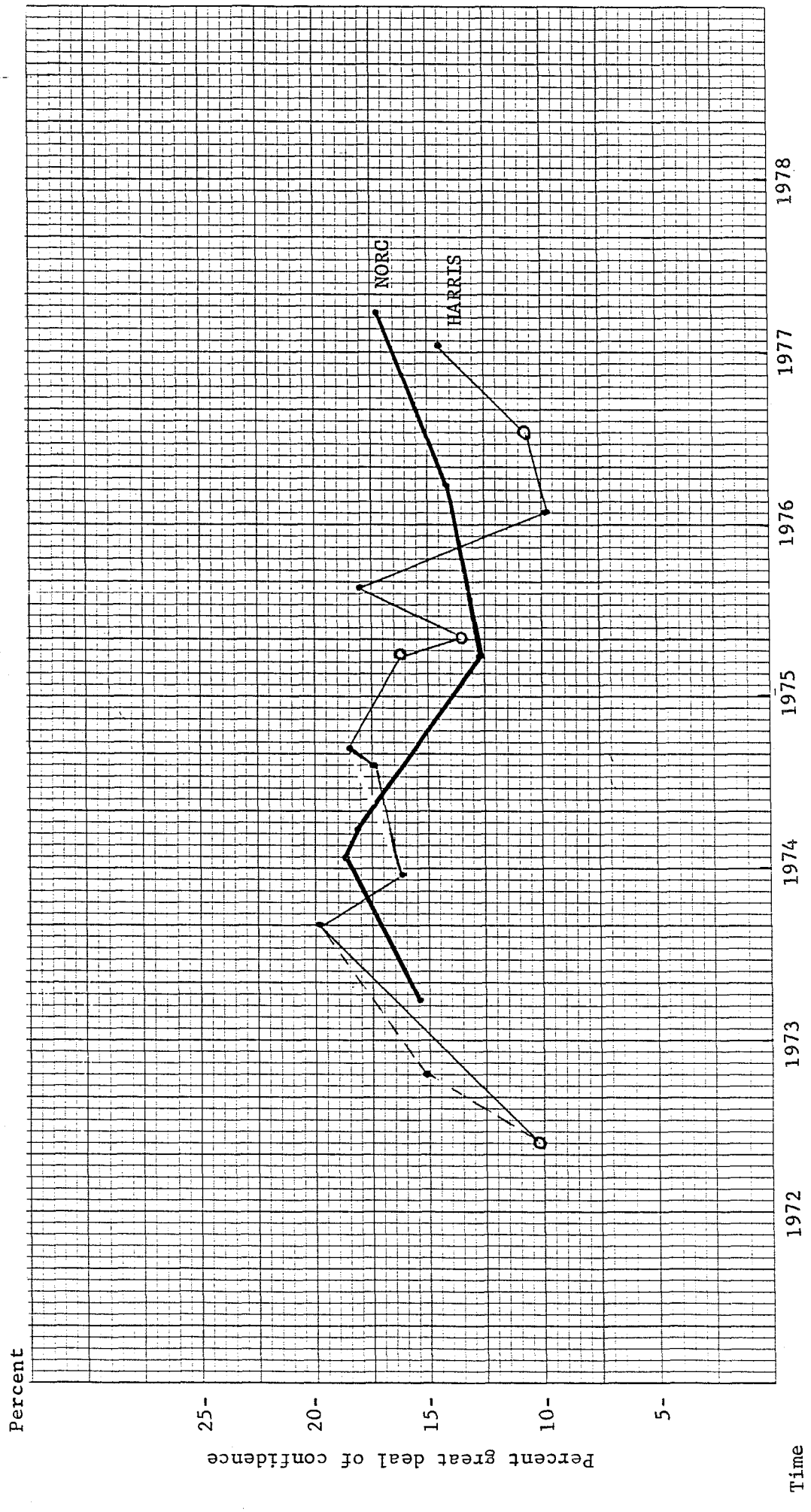

Fig. 8. Organized labor

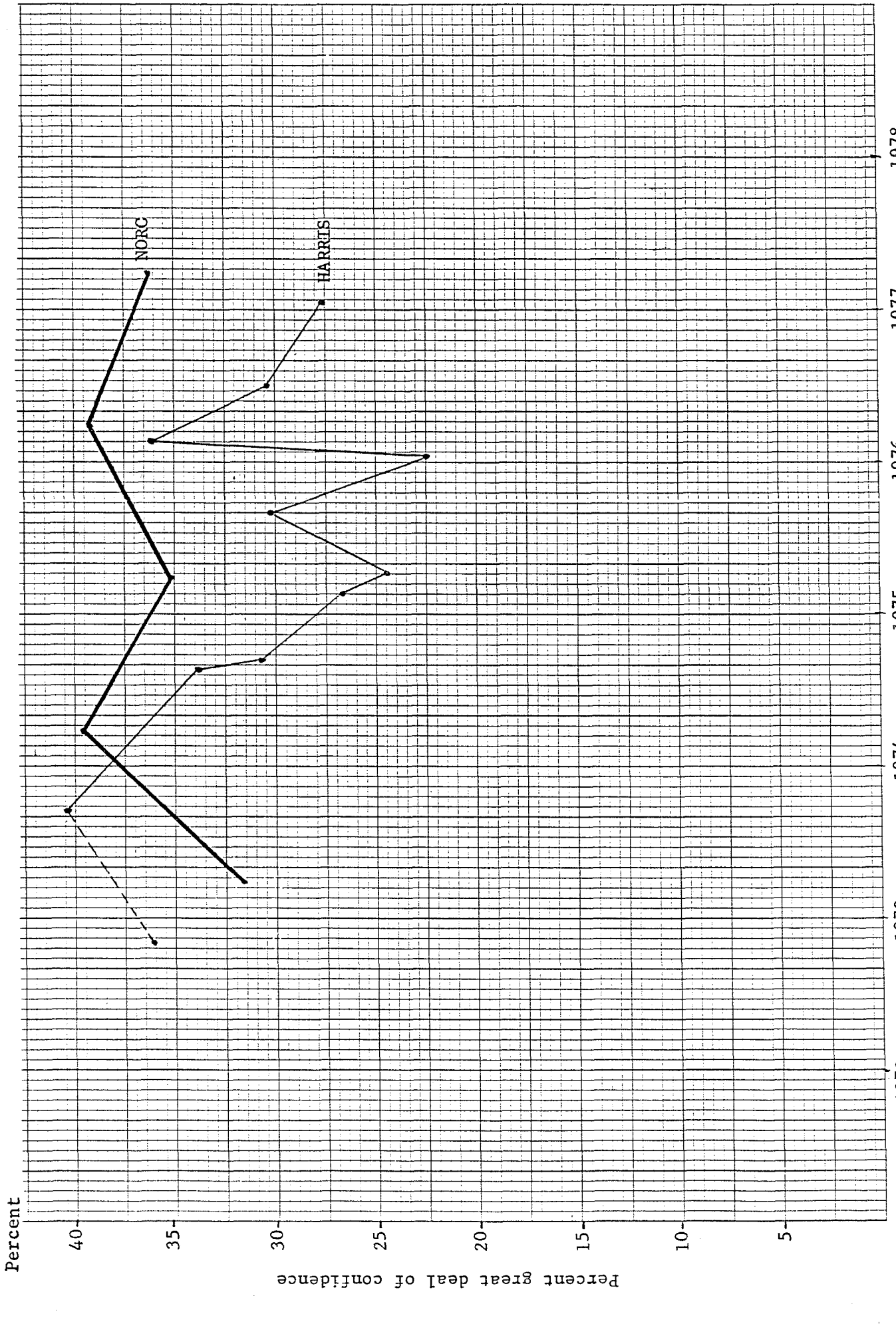

Fig. 9. Military

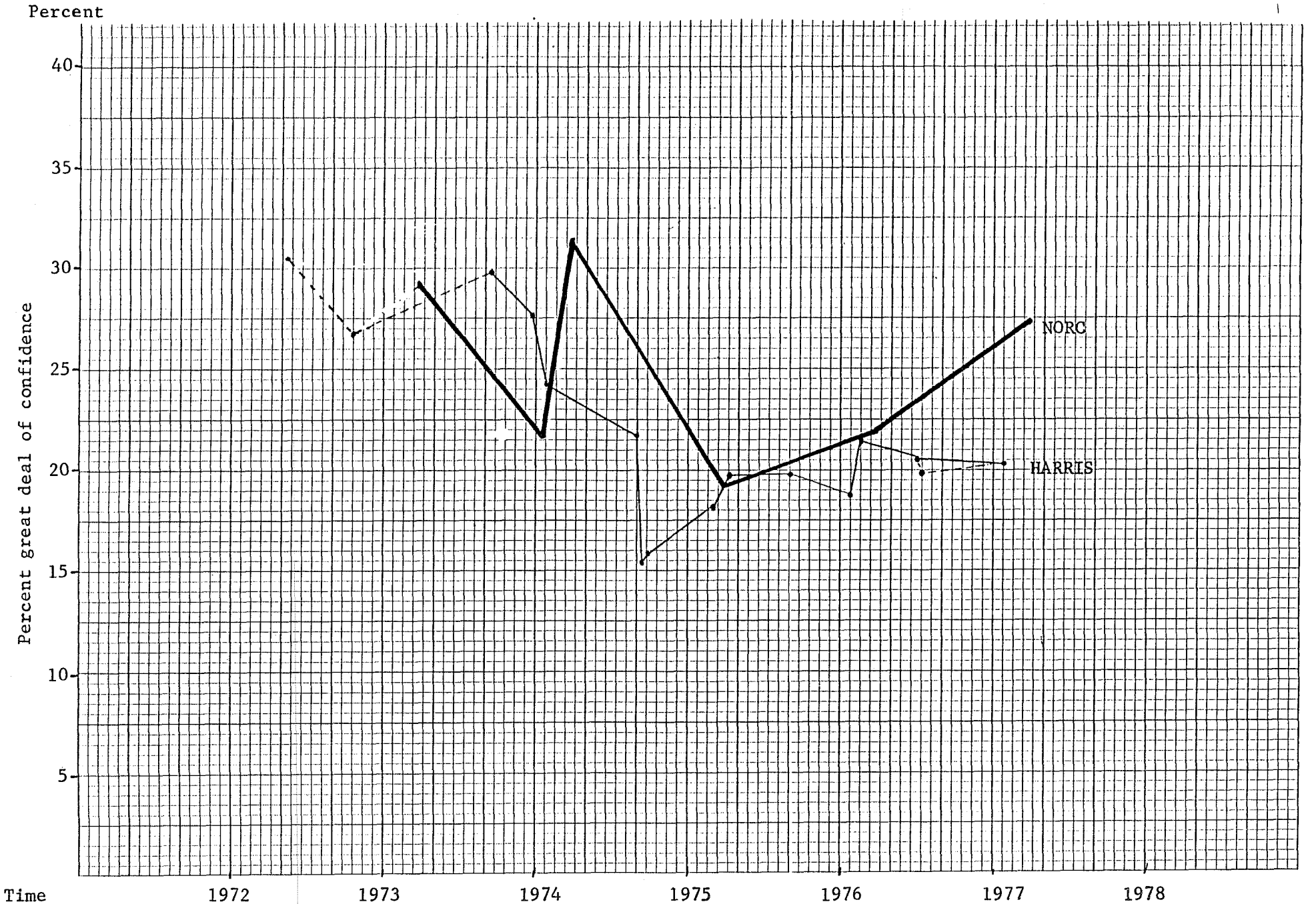

Fig. 10. Major companies

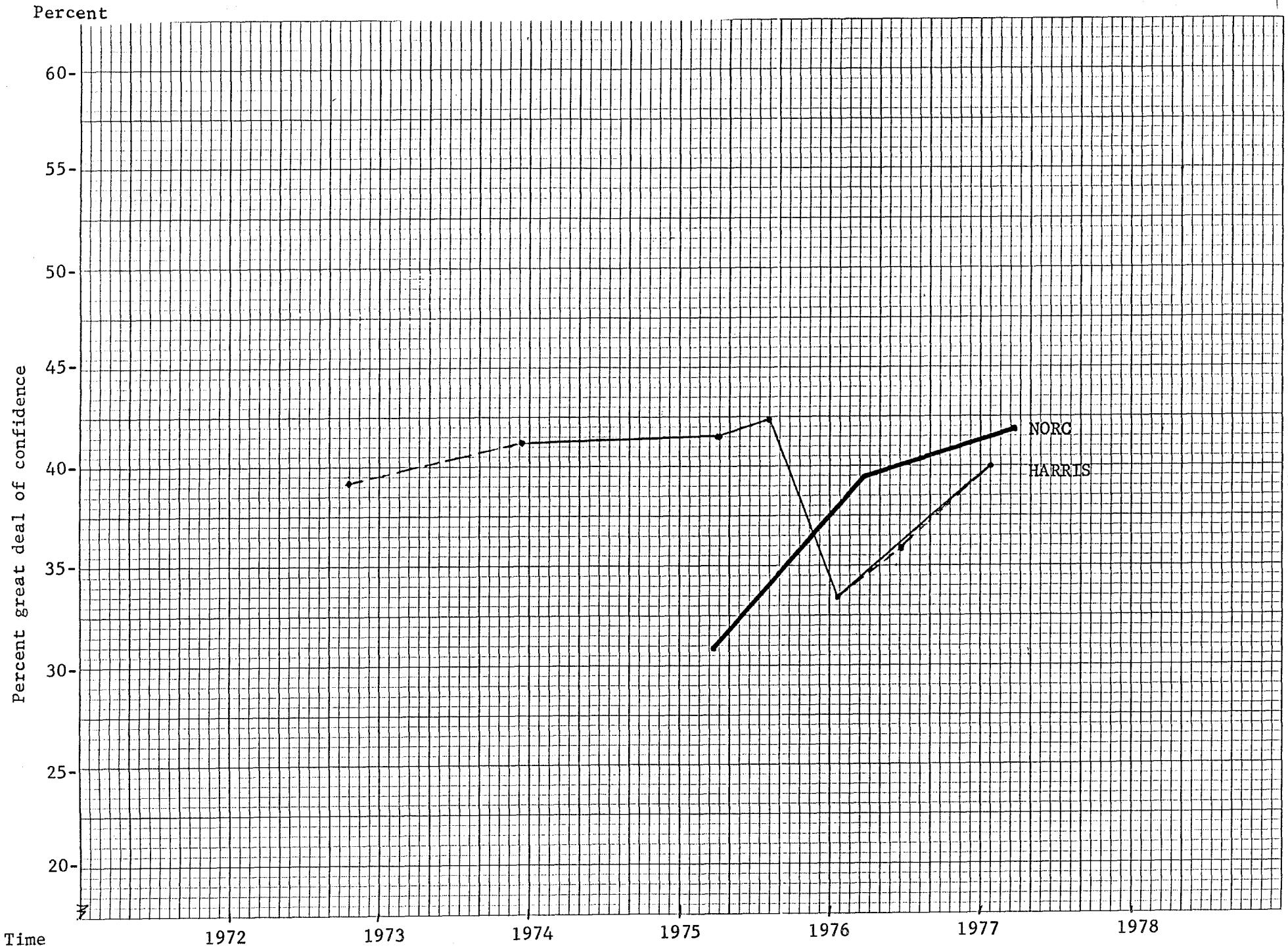

Fig. 11. Banks and financial institutions

Taylor, 1979). With this episodic effect discounted, the Harris and GSS series follow a similar non-linear u-shaped pattern. On their pooled proportions NORC and the Harris standard series do not significantly vary while the Harris variant series shows more confidence than NORC (Harris-NORC = .014). This results from Harris having two surveys before the Watergate disclosures.

On organized religion (Figure 5) NORC shows a non-linear trend with wide annual fluctuations, the Harris standard has a weak linear component decline, and the Harris variant is non-linear. Harris also finds slightly less overall confidence than NORC does.

On medicine (Figure 6) Harris and NORC show linear component declines with no significant differences between their slopes. Each series shows a high degree of variation from this trend however. NORC does, however, record a higher pooled level of confidence than Harris (standard = -.043, variant = -.045).

On the press (Figure 7) NORC is constant, the Harris standard shows a linear decline, and the Harris variant is non-linear. NORC and Harris standards do not significantly differ in their pooled proportions but the Harris variant reports less confidence (Harris-NORC = .026).

On organized labor (Figure 8) NORC and Harris standards both show linear component declines with slopes that do not significantly differ while the Harris variant is non-linear. NORC shows slightly more pooled confidence than the Harris standard (Harris-NORC = .016), but NORC and Harris variants do not differ significantly.

On the military (Figure 9) NORC has a non-linear trend (but with a linear component increase of .0092 per annum of borderline significance) while the Harris series show linear component declines. Both Harris series record much less confidence than NORC does (standard = -.065 and variant = .060).

On major companies (Figure 10) the Harris trends are linear component declines while the NORC trend is non-linear. Both Harris surveys also report significantly less confidence than NORC (standard = -.042; variant = -.029).

On banks (Figure 11) the Harris trends (1975-1977 only) are non-linear while NORC shows a strong linear increase. In their pooled proportions NORC does not significantly vary from either Harris trend.

Summing up these comparisons it appears that on the Congress the executive branch, and labor the NORC and Harris series show minimal divergence with similar trends and approximately the same level of confidence reported. On medicine, banks, and the press there is some correspondence. Medicine has a similar direction to its trend but differences on the level of confidence while banks and the press differ between houses on the trends but show similar levels of confidence. On science, the U.S. Supreme Court, organized religion, the military, and business the houses show both different types of trends and moderate to large differences in their pooled proportions.

There is also some evidence that there is some direction to the differences in confidence. On eight of the ten institutions on which the pooled proportions were compared Harris registered lower mean confidence than NORC. Only on organized labor and financial institutions (for 1975-1977) did NORC register lower confidence than Harris. Across all ten institutions the average net difference was -.023 (Harris-NORC). Looking at this difference further, a similar comparison was made between NORC and Harris surveys done at approximately the same time (from Table 6). This revealed the same eight to two split on institutions as the pooled averages had and showed an average net difference of -.020. Much of

the difference in direction disappeared, however, when Harris 2521 was excluded from the analysis. While 29 (.659) of the 44 comparisons at approximately the same time showed NORC getting more confident responses only 19 (.559) of the 34 comparisons excluding Harris 2521 were more confident on NORC and the net average fell to -.007. The exclusion of all the Harris 2521 comparisons of course overly compensates for its especially strong differences, but does show that much of the directional difference orignates from this source. In sum, there appears to be some tendency for Harris to find less confidence than NORC but with the exception of Harris 2521 this difference is small.

Next, the rank order association of the confidence items within and across houses was studied. Table 10 gives the rank of institutions in question. The differing mixture of institutions on the various surveys hindered comparison but two evaluations were made. First, on nine confidence items (major companies, organized labor, executive branch, Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, organized religion, the press, the military, and medicine) common to all GSSs and six Harris surveys a comparison was made between the intra-house rank order correlations. On GSS the Spearman's rhoes between adjoining years were 1973-1974 = .820, 1974-1975 = .879, 1975-1976 = .996, 1976 - 1977 = .833 (average = .882). On the Harris surveys the comparable figures were 2343-2434 = .783, 2434-7581 = .933, 7585-2521 = .967, and 2521-7690 = .900 (average = .880). This suggests that there are no differences in the variability of institutional rankings between houses. Looking at the interhouse differences revealed the following correlations GSS73-Harris2343 = .795, GSS74-Harris2434 = .767, GSS75-Harris7581 = .854, GSS76-Harris2521 = .900, and GSS77-Harris7690 = .983

TABLE 10

RANK ORDER OF INSTITUTIONS

Rank	Harris 1574	Harris 1702	Harris 2131	Harris 2219	Harris 2236	Harris 2251	Harris 2319	GSS 73	Harris 2343	Harris 2354
1	MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC	FINAN	MEDIC		MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC
2	FINAN	EDUC	EDUC	EDUC	FINAN		FINAN	EDUC	ARMY	SCI
3	ARMY	ARMY	FINAN	FED	SCI		BUS	SCI	CLERG	FINAN
4	EDUC	FINAN	SCI	BUS	ARMY		CLERG	CLERG	JUDGE	CLERG
5	SCI	BUS	ARMY	TV	EDUC		LABOR	ARMY	PRESS	PRESS
6	BUS	SCI	CLERG	LABOR	CLERG			JUDGE	BUS	BUS
7	JUDGE	LEGIS	BUS		JUDGE			BUS	LEGIS	LEGIS
8	LEGIS	CLERG	JUDGE		FED			FED	LABOR	LABOR
9	CLERG	JUDGE	FED		BUS			LEGIS	FED	FED
10	FED	FED	TV		LEGIS			PRESS		
11	PRESS	PRESS	LEGIS		PRESS			TV		
12	TV	TV	PRESS		TV			LABOR		
13	LABOR	LABOR	LABOR		LABOR					

TABLE 10--Continued

Rank	Harris 7585	Harris 2521	Harris 7681	GSS 76	Harris 7684	Harris 2628	Harris 2630	Harris 7690	GSS 77
1	MEDIC	MEDIC	JUDGE	MEDIC	JUDGE	TV	MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC
2	FINAN	FINAN	TV	SCI	FED	EDUC	SCI	FINAN	SCI
3	EDUC	CLERG	FED	FINAN	LEGIS	ARMY	FINAN	EDUC	FINAN
4	TV	ARMY	PRESS	ARMY		PRESS	TV	CLERG	CLERG
5	CLERG	JUDGE	LEGIS	EDUC		BUS	PRESS	JUDGE	EDUC
6	JUDGE	PRESS	BUS	JUDGE		LABOR	BUS	ARMY	ARMY
7	ARMY	BUS		CLERG		LEGIS	FED	TV	JUDGE
8	PRESS	FED		PRESS			LEGIS	FED	FED
9	BUS	LABOR		BUS				BUS	BUS
10	LABOR	LEGIS		TV				PRESS	PRESS
11	FED			LEGIS				LEGIS	LEGIS
12	LEGIS			FED				LABOR	TV
13				LABOR					LABOR

TABLE 10--Continued

Rank	NORC 4179	Harris 7482	GSS 74	Harris 7487	Harris 2430	Harris 2434	Harris 2515	GSS 75	Harris 7581
1	JUDGE	MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC	MEDIC	EDUC	MEDIC	SCI
2	CLERG	TV	EDUC	JUDGE	JUDGE	EDUC	TV	SCI	MEDIC
3	PRESS	BUS	SCI	ARMY	TV	JUDGE	ARMY	ARMY	FINAN
4	LEGIS	FED	CLERG	CLERG	PRESS	CLERG	PRESS	FINAN	CLERG
5	BUS		ARMY	FED	FED	ARMY	BUS	EDUC	JUDGE
6	LABOR		JUDGE	PRESS	LEGIS	TV	LABOR	JUDGE	PRESS
7	FED		BUS	BUS	BUS	PRESS	LEGIS	CLERG	ARMY
8			PRESS	LEGIS		LABOR		PRESS	BUS
9			TV	LABOR		FED		BUS	LEGIS
10			LABOR			LEGIS		TV	LABOR
11			LEGIS			BUS		LEGIS	FED
12			FED					FED	
13								LABOR	

(average = .860). This is marginally smaller than the intra-house surveys and since the time interval was shorter (an average of about three months between houses, eight months for Harris and twelve months for GSS) it should have been higher. To look at the possibility that intersurvey differences in rankings were more variable than intrasurvey differences, a comparison was made between all surveys taken at approximately the same time (see Table 6) and having at least six institutions in common. The four inter-house comparisons had an average rho of .922 while the four intra-house comparisons averaged only .862. This of course suggests (contrary to the previous data) that variability within houses over short time periods is as likely to be as great or greater than variability between houses.[9] In sum, the analysis shows a moderately high constancy in the rank ordering of institutions. This constancy is about the same for both houses and appears to be as strong between houses as it is within houses.

For a final comparison of the data an analysis was made of a confidence scale. The nine-item scale was simply the average proportion responding "a great deal of confidence" on major companies, organized religion, the executive branch, organized labor, the press, medicine, the U.S. Supreme Court, Congress, and the military. Figure 12 shows the changes from 1971 to 1977 on the five GSS points (represented by circled dots) and eight Harris points (six adult samples represented by small dots and two electoral participator samples denoted by triangles).

---

[9] In the first case the rankings were on the same list on institutions but over differing periods. In the second case the time periods were much more similar but a differing number and mixture of institutions were ranked between the various surveys. For these and other reasons neither case represents a perfect test of inter- versus intrasurvey variability in rankings.

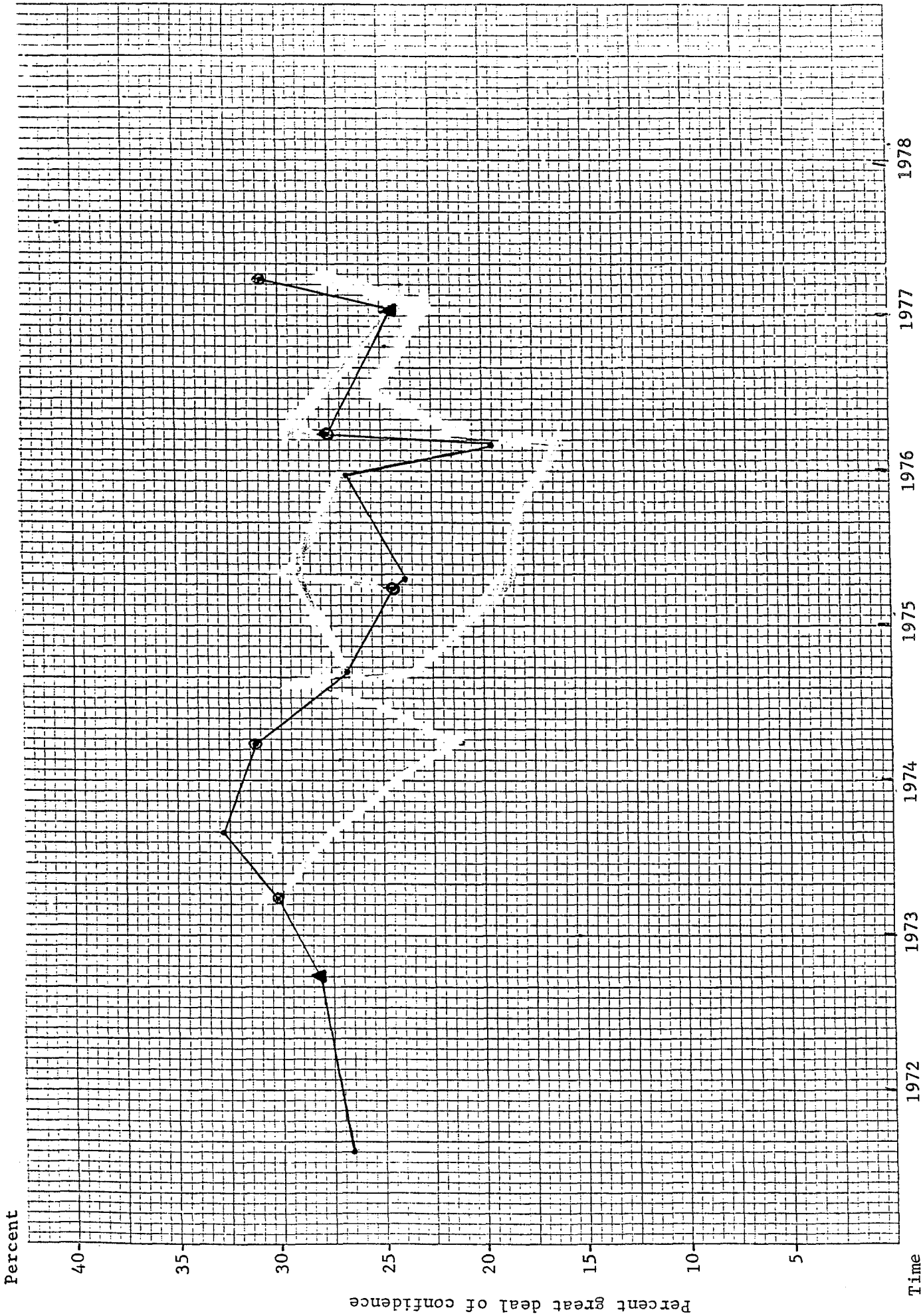

Fig. 12. Nine item confidence scale

At several points the series appear to agree quite closely. For example, GSS 1975 has a confidence score of .245 while Harris 7581 has .238. The biggest difference comes, as noted previously, between Harris 7585 (.267) and GSS 1976 (.276) on one hand and the intervening Harris 2521 (.196). With the exception of this point the combined series would seem to be largely in agreement showing a rise in confidence from 1971 to 1973, a drop in confidence to early 1975 and a recovery generally prevailing to early 1977.

In sum, from the inspection of the differences in marginals and trends it appears that both individual Harris and NORC surveys and the respective house series are often significantly variant. This appears across a number of intersurvey comparisons and trends, but is distinctly highest for the 1976 divergence between Harris 2521 and GSS 1976. The rank order comparisons indicate that differences in distributions and trends do not create larger shifts in rank between houses than within houses. Likewise, the analysis of the confidence scale, which could be expected to average over specific difference on particular institutions, shows a notable degree of compatibility between the Harris and NORC results. It thus appears that there are sufficient particular differences to warrant some puzzling and attempts at explanation, but that the differences are limited in occurance and magnitude.

ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES

From the preceding discussion it appears that there are some large differences between Harris and NORC marginals and trends on the confidence items (as well as some large intra-house differences). Broadly

speaking there are four possible sources for these differences: 1) house effects, 2) survey effects, 3) item effects, or 4) true change. House effects are the result of differences in the standard organization and procedures of the different organizations. This would include matters that in general effect all surveys conducted by an organization such as sample frame, survey method, and general interviewer training and instruction. Survey effects are the result of differences particular to the construction and operation of individual surveys. They would include such matters as the population sampled, the specific interviewer instructions used, the context and placement of the items, and the format and wording of the items. Item effects are caused by the nature and content of the items themselves, how they are understood and interpreted, and whether they are suitable and reliable measures. True changes are actual changes in evaluations in confidence net of artifactual variations from house, survey, or item effects.

House Effects

In considering house effects it was not possible to examine in detail every possible facet of the survey operations of Harris and NORC in order to document how they compared on each phase of operation and to assess the possible ramifications of differences. (For a detailed step-by-step comparison of survey procedures see Bailer and Lamphier, 1977). It was possible, however, to carry out some comparisons between Harris and NORC on the demographic profile of their samples, on the differences between block-quota and full probability sampling, and on the handling of item nonresponse.

On Harris and NORC surveys there were six demographics that were asked and coded in sufficiently similar fashions to permit inter-house comparisons: sex, age, education, family income, marital status, and religion. Comparison was made between GSS 1974, GSS 1975, and GSS 1976 and the five Harris surveys asked at approximately the same times, 7482, 2515, 7581, 2521, and 7681. On each of the demographics examined there appears to be consistant, small-to-moderate level differences in the sample populations. The GSS surveys averaged .454 male to Harris' .500 (d = .046), .393 over 50 years old to .358 (d = .035), .309 college educated to .379 (d = .070), .417 less than $10,000 to .440 (d = -.023), .185 widowed, separated, or divorced to .134 (d = -.051), and .644 Protestant to .610 (d = .034). It is not possible to determine whether these differences come from differences in the sample frame, the method of selecting respondent, nonresponse differentials or other related factors.[10]

It is possible, however, to see what impact these differences might have on the reported confidence levels by standardizing the GSS surveys to match the Harris surveys. Since education both showed the largest disparity and was also related to more confidence items than the other demographics, the GSS surveys were weighted to match the education marginals on the Harris surveys. The impact of this standardization on the inter-house confidence differences was not great. On 15 confidence items that appeared on the Harris and GSS survey indicated above, there were no significant relationships between education and confidence so standardization on education was unrelated to the inter-house differences. On the 18 items that showed a significant relationship

---

[10]These items are of course susceptible to differences due to other reasons beyond sample variation and house effects. For the sake of this comparison it is assumed that there are no significant response effects, etc.

between education and confidence, standardization increased the inter-house differences in 12 cases and decreased them in six instances. The net change over these 18 items was for the inter-house differences to increase by .002 (or .001 over the 34 items). In brief, it appears that differences in the demographic profile of the samples has only negligible effects on confidence.

Next, a comparison of sample type was made. All NORC surveys used a multistage probability design to at least the block level. At that point either a quota or full probability design was employed. In the quota approach interviews must fill quotas for men under 35, men 35 and older, employed women, and unemployed women. These are filled by approaching households according to a fixed pattern and interviewing the first available people who fit the quota requirements. There are no enumeration of households or call backs. In the full probability approach the eligible households have been prelisted and selected households have been randomly chosen. These predesignated households are contacted and their members enumerated. A Kish table is then used to select the respondent. Repeated call backs are made if needed to interview the designated respondent. No substitution of households or household member is allowed. The block quota design was used in GSS 1973, NORC 4179, and GSS 1974. GSS 1975 and GSS 1976 were experimental split ballots, half block quota and half full probability. GSS 1977 was a complete full probability survey.

The Harris surveys all use a multistage block quota design similar to the NORC block quotas except that they quota only on sex rather than using sex, age, and employment status like the NORC quota.

By comparing the split halves on the 1975 and 1976 GSS's it was possible to determine whether sample type influenced confidence. Of the twenty-six comparisons (thirteen confidence items by two years) only one difference was statistically significant at the .05 level (and even this was not significant if clustering was corrected for). This of course only shows that the NORC full probability and block quota designs do not produce different results and does not directly indicate whether the Harris quota type might produce different results from either the NORC full probability or block quota sample approaches. It does, however, provide some basis for believing that sample type is not a likely source for large differences in attitude marginals. (For a more extensive discussion of the differences between full probability and block quota see Stephenson, 1979.)

Last, the impact of differing interviewer training and instruction was partly assessed by looking at the handling of item nonresponse. An inspection of the Harris and NORC series reveal that Harris items had a consistantly higher level of "no opinion" responses than NORC did. Subtracting the average proportion replying "no opinion" on the NORC surveys from those on the standard Harris series revealed the following surpluses on nonresponse:

CON Bus	= 0	CONJUDGE	= .014
CONCLERG	= .028	CONSCI	= .010
CONLABOR	= .016	CONLEGIS	= .009
CONPRESS	= .010	CONARMY	= .022
CONMEDIC	= .012	CONFINAN	= .014
CONFED	= .026		

Average = .015

This results from a house difference in interviewing instructions. NORC interviewers are instructed to probe for response while Harris

interviewers apparently are not (see Smith, 1979; Schuman and Presser, 1978; Converse, 1976-1977 and "About Interviewing," n.d.). Since Harris items pick up more "no opinion" responses than NORC, they naturally pick up less responses in the three substantive evaluation categories. Eliminating "no opinion" responses from the analysis will therefore increase the proportion giving "a great deal" of confidence (and the other two substantive categories as well) more for Harris than for NORC. This will in turn reduce the difference between Harris and NORC whenever the NORC item had shown more confidence than Harris with the "no opinion" category included in the analysis. Since NORC did show more confidence in eight out of eleven instances this means that the exclusion of "no opinion" from analysis reduces the overall, average difference between the houses or, to think of it another way, part of the differences between Harris and NORC are explained by house differences on "no opinion." The reduction is of course not large. For example, on the executive branch, organized religion, and medicine the pooled difference in the proportion with "a great deal" of confidence declines respectively from .009 to .005; .029 to .020; and .043 to .037.

In sum, from the limited range of available information on house effects it was not possible to isolate any major source for interhouse differences. The largest source of differences appears to come from the handling of item nonresponse and this apparently explains some of the differences in marginals.

Survey Effects

Next, considering survey effects, it was possible to examine differences due to: 1) institutional descriptors; 2) external context (i.e., placement in questionnaire, and 3) internal context (ordering

of institutions within the question). No evidence was available to study the impact of the several variations in question wording and format.

In July, 1975 Procter & Gamble conducted a random digit dialing telephone interview with a national adult sample of 364. This sample was split into three subsamples and each were read a confidence question with a different set of institutional descriptors. The question asked:

> I'm going to name several institutions and groups in our country and for each of them I would like you to tell me whether you have a great deal of confidence, a moderate amount of confidence, or no confidence in it. For example, the first is _____. Would you say that you have a great deal of confidence, moderate amount of confidence, or no confidence in _____?

The different institutional descriptors used and the proportion responding "a great deal" are given in Table 11.

On eight of the fifteen groups of institutional descriptors there was statistically significant variation in the proportion reporting a great deal of confidence. The term "Government" enlists more support than either "Politicans" or "Politics," "U.S. President" finds more confidence than "federal Government." "Organized Labor" rates more confidence than "Big Labor," the "U.S. Supreme Court" outranks "Judical System" or "Lawyers," "Established Religion" tops either "Organized Religion" or "Ministers and other Religious Leaders." "The Army, Navy, and Air Force," ranks first "The Military" second and "Military Leaders" third, "Colleges" bests "Educational System" or "Professors" and "Automobile Manufacturers" outscores "Automobile Dealers" or "Automobile Salesmen." In brief by dressing up the different institutions in more or less flattering appellations ("Organized Labor" versus "Big Labor") by focusing

TABLE 11

PROPORTION WITH A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE
BY INSTITUTIONAL DESCRIPTOR

Business leaders	.18
Business	.20
Big business	.12
Politicians	.02
Government	.20
Politics	.04
U.S. Presidency	.30
Executive branch of federal government	.18
Federal government	.16
Big government[a]	.06
Elected government officials	.05
Congress	.07
Organized labor	.21
Big labor	.07
Union leaders	.12
U.S. Supreme Court	.35
Judges[b]	.25
Judicial system	.15
Lawyers	.22
Television news	.31
Television news commentators	.23
Network television news	.25
Newspapers	.19
Newspaper publishers	.13
The press	.13
Doctors	.52
Hospitals	.49
Medicine	.60
Ministers and other religious leaders	.35
Organized religion	.35
Established religion	.50
The military	.48
The Army, Navy, and Air Force	.63
Military leaders	.21
Advertising	.16
Advertising agencies	.10
Advertisers	.08
Educational system	.32
Colleges	.46
Professors	.29
Public opinion polls	.16
Election polls	.20
Public opinion pollsters	.14
Automobile manufacturers	.14
Automobile dealers	.04
Automobile salesmen	.05

[a]Unlike most of the split items these cover fairly different areas.

[b]Both "Judges" and "Lawyers" were asked on the same subsample.

on different parts of an institution ("U.S. Supreme Court" versus "Judicial System"), or in general by using an institutional rather than a generalized personal reference ("Colleges" versus "Professors" or "The Military" versus "Military Leaders"), the confidence levels can be changed significantly.

External Context

In 1976 the General Social Survey and Harris 2521 fielded about the same time showed large differences in the amount of confidence Americans had in people running a number of national institutions. In general the Harris survey showed a considerably more negative appraisal of the institutional leadership than the GSS revealed. Upon examination of the questionnaires it was found that while the confidence question was the first item on the GSS, the confidence questions on the Harris survey followed shortly after a six-point alienation index. This index consists of four negatively phrased agree-disagree statements about various elite/leadership groups (e.g., "the people running the country," "the rich," "people with power," and "the people in Washington") and two negatively phrased agree/disagree statements about efficacy and participation (see Table 12 for wordings). It was hypothesized that these six negative statements (with four about elite/leaders) might have created a negative context and resulted in lower levels of confidence being registered on the confidence questions.

In order to test that hypothesis, a split ballot context experiment was set up on the 1978 GSS. A randomly preselected half of the sample was asked the alienation questions immediately before the confidence questions and the other half of the sample were asked the confidence

TABLE 12

HARRIS ALIENATION SCALE

Now I want you to read some things some people have told us they have felt from time to time. Do you tend to feel or not . . . (READ LIST)

A. The people running the country don't really care what happens to you.

B. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

C. What you think doesn't count very much anymore.

D. You're left out of things going on around you.

E. Most people with power try to take advantage of people like yourself.

F. The people in Washington, D.C. are out of touch with the rest of the country.

question before the alienation questions. As Table 13 shows the results were underwhelming. Of the 13 institutions involved, only one, confidence in major companies, showed a significant difference between the split ballots. Without the alienation question preceeding the confidence question 26.4 percent reported a great deal of confidence, but with the alienation questions first only 19.0 percent had a great deal of confidence, a loss of 7.4 percent. In no other instance were any of the differences significant. There was, however, a small but general tendency for the confidence questions that followed the alienation questions to show less confidence. Of the 13 items 9 had less confidence while 4 showed more confidence after the alienation questions. The sum difference over all 13 items was 17.7 percent or an average drop of confidence of 1.4 percent per item. In sum, it appears that alienation

TABLE 13

MARGINALS OF CONFIDENCE BY CONTEXT[a]

Item Order	Item	Prob.[b]	Percent Great Deal		Difference (Later-First)
			Alienation Later	Alienation First	
1.	CONBUS	.002	.264	.190	.074
2.	CONCLERG	.687	.329	.309	.020
3.	CONEDUC	.872	.294	.284	.010
4.	CONFED	.918	.126	.133	-.007
5.	CONLABOR	.890	.114	.117	-.003
6.	CONPRESS	.060	.180	.228	-.048
7.	CONMEDIC	.320	.472	.456	.016
8.	CONTV	.236	.141	.139	.002
9.	CONJUDGE	.678	.303	.285	.018
10.	CONSCI	.135	.421	.369	.052
11.	CONLEGIS	.757	.130	.136	-.006
12.	CONARMY	.329	.314	.299	.015
13.	CONFINAN	.382	.351	.317	.034

[a]The marginal differences on the alienation questions by context were also inspected and no significant differences were found.

[b]With "Don't knows" excluded. All differences except major companies also not significant at .05 with "Don't know" included.

did have an impact of confidence, but this was much smaller than anticipated and centered on one item--major companies.

To examine why the alienation had little impact, the marginals of the alienation questions were checked. If people were giving positive (or disagree) responses to the negative alienation statements then, it might be reasonable to posit that the negative connotation of these

questions was being overcome by the positive responses of the public. Table 14 shows that this was not the case. On five of the six questions (and all four of the elite/leadership questions), a clear majority agreed with the negative propositions of the questions. Thus, the negative marginals reenforce rather than weaken the argument that alienation should have a negative effect on confidence.

TABLE 14

ALIENATION MARGINALS (Half Preceding Confidence)

Item	Feel	Not feel	N
A. The people running the country don't really care what happens to you.	.535	.465	729
B. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.	.754	.246	732
C. What you think doesn't count very much anymore.	.576	.424	721
D. You're left out of things going on around you.	.284	.716	733
E. Most people with power try to take advantage of people like yourself.	.562	.438	731
F. The people in Washington D.C. are out of touch with the rest of the country.	.597	.403	710

Next, it was decided to check if the alienation and confidence items were associated with each other. If being negative on alienation and lack of confidence were unrelated then it could be argued that the negative form and responses on the alienation questions would not be transferred to the confidence question. In Table 15, however, we see

TABLE 15

CORRELATION (r) BETWEEN CONFIDENCE AND ALIENATION[a]

(Alienation before confidence)

Institutions	Alienation items					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Banks and financial institutions . . .	-.145	-.167	-.111	-.105	-.202	-.177
Major companies . .	-.176	-.314	-.179	-.186	-.262	-.208
Organized religion.	-.110	(-.060)[b]	-.079	(-.042)	-.095	-.168
Education	-.194	-.147	-.173	-.122	-.166	-.242
Executive branch of the Federal government	-.308	-.181	-.264	-.165	-.273	-.366
Organized labor . .	-.107	(-.029)	-.079	(.009)	(-.049)	-.198
Press	-.082	-.061	-.096	(-.039)	-.106	-.086
Medicine	-.133	-.081	-.071	(-.047)	-.102	-.149
Television	(-.056)	(-.023)	-.063	(.028)	(-.052)	-.117
U.S. Supreme Court.	-.241	-.192	-.260	-.131	-.225	-.298
Scientific community	-.165	-.100	-.191	-.128	-.166	-.145
Congress	-.286	-.166	-.238	-.157	-.257	-.346
Military	-.127	-.100	-.073	-.073	-.073	-.073

[a]Negative signs indicate high alienation associated with low confidence.

[b]Correlations in parentheses not significant at .05 level.

that the items are correlated in the hypothesized direction (high a alienation with low confidence). Of the seventy-eight correlations the sign is negative in seventy-six cases. While many of the associations are insignificant (eleven), there are also a number (eleven) of moderately strong associations of .25 or over. These moderate associations are clustered among the three political institutions (the executive branch of the federal government, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Congress)

and major companies. It appears that alienation and confidence are associated in the expected direction and this would also seem to indicate that a context effect might occur.

In brief, the form of the alienation questions, their marginal distributions, and the association between confidence and alienation all indicate a potential context effect. Our examination of the split-ballot marginals showed little difference (although minimally in the hypothesized direction) except for the confidence in major companies item. The question becomes then, why business and not the others? Looking at the correlation matrix in Table 15 again we see that major companies are one the institutions most strongly associated with the alienation questions. This could be used as an explanation except for the fact that the other institutions with moderately strong associations (the three political institutions) show virtually no marginal differences due to context. It therefore appears that another explanation must be sought. A plausible alternative is that major companies showed the context effect while the others did not because it was the first institution in the confidence question. As the confidence item nearest to the alienation questions, it may have been more influenced than the other items. It would be desirable if this interpretation could be butressed by an association between the item order of the other institutions and their context shifts, but no apparent pattern emerges.

Finally, we extended the search for context effects by examining the correlation matrices between alienation and confidence for both question orders.

In Table 16 the associations between confidence and alientation are given for the split ballot half on which alienation followed confidence.

TABLE 16

CORRELATION (r) BETWEEN CONFIDENCE AND ALIENATION[a]

(Alienation after confidence)

Institution	Alienation items					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Banks and financial institutions . . .	-.084	-.098	-.132	-.102	-.156	-.161
Major companies . .	-.175	-.189	-.168	-.178	-.254	-.118
Organized religion.	-.084	(-.060)[b]	(-.054)	-.078	(-.005)	-.113
Education	-.141	-.076	-.117	(.049)	(-.025)	-.168
Executive branch of Federal government	-.270	-.082	-.269	-.076	-.146	-.275
Organized labor . .	(-.050)	(-.043)	(-.053)	(.038)	(-.007)	-.137
Press	-.090	(-.042)	(-.062)	-.074	(-.052)	-.073
Medicine	-.102	(-.038)	-.116	-.101	-.100	(-.046)
Television	(-.018)	(-.037)	(.001)	(.037)	(-.026)	(-.057)
U.S. Supreme Court.	-.221	(-.058)	-.147	-.112	-.152	-.184
Scientific Community	-.109	-.118	-.135	-.185	-.131	(-.049)
Congress	-.227	-.104	-.241	-.107	-.166	-.289
Military	-.071	(-.038)	(-.040)	(.018)	(-.049)	-.103

[a]Negative signs indicate high alienation associated with low confidence.

[b]Correlations in parentheses not significant at .05 level.

When it is compared to Table 15 we see that the associations are uniformly higher when alienation came first than when it followed the confidence item. In sixty-five instances the association become more negative (this includes the two cases in which positive associations decreased) and in the remaining twelve cases the associations remained the same or increased. Looking at just the four elite/leadership alienation

items the effect is even stronger with forty-seven increasing and five staying stable or decreasing. On the average each of the seventy-eight associations increased by .04 and each of the elite/leadership associations with confidence rose by .05. Making a simple additive scale of alienation and confidence shows that the correlation between the scales is .289 when confidence comes first and .444 when alienation come first. It is therefore apparent that the association between alienation and confidence is influenced by context without knowing what the "true" association would be between alienation and confidence with no context effect operating (e.g., if they were separated by a couple dozen questions on an interview) it is difficult to specify in what way context is working. It is not known whether: 1) the appearance of the alienation questions first strengthens the relationship, or 2) the appearance of the confidence items first weakens the relationship, or 3) both. As a working hypothesis, however, the following scenario is proposed. The alientation questions help to provide a frame of reference by which the confidence of institutions in general, and political institutions in particular are evaluated. Armed with this focused frame people give responses to the confidence items in line with this reference. People variously move confidences up or down according to how this frame influences their perspective. The net result is that marginals are changed little (except on the major companies item), since people are moving confidence both up and down to bring it into line, but the associations between alienation and confidence are raised because of the constraint that alienation exercises.

In sum, in terms of marginal shifts it appears that the alienation questions exercised minimal impact except on major companies where the

proximity or context effect was greatest.[11] As a result, it appears that the appearance of the alienation items prior to the Harris confidence questions in 1976 can not explain the large and general differences between Harris and GSS on confidence at that time. Furthermore since this was conceived as a strong test for an external context effect, it does not appear likely that major ordering effects are influencing confidence marginals on the 1976 surveys. From the comparison of the correlation matrices, however, it is clear that context does exert a general impact--in this case on associations although not on marginals. It seems that the appearance of the alienation items first constrains the confidence rankings and strengthens the relationship between the scales.

An Aside on Harris 2521

If the alienation questions do not explain the large difference between Harris 2521 and GSS 1976, then what does? First, let's reiterate that Harris 2521 differs not only from GSS 1976, but also from Harris 7681 (conducted about a month after Harris 2521) and from the pooled average of Harris items from 1973 to 1977 (see Table 8 and also Figure 12). Harris 2521 varies from Harris 7681 (mean difference -.074) and from the pooled averages (-.061) by almost as much as it differs from GSS 1976 (-.079). Yet showing that Harris 2521 is an outlier does not explain why it is. An inspection of news events during the period in February/ March 1976 does not reveal any apparent explanation for a sharp across the board rise and/or fall in confidence. Examination of the question

---

[11] In Harris 2430, 2434, and 7487 and NORC 4179 where similar alienation scales appeared there also appeared to have been little impact.

wording, format, and order of institutions shows the usual amount of variation from GSS and other Harris versions. These differences undoubtedly account for some variation in responses, but not for the large and unidirectional differences that were observed. Looking at the level of nonresponse (which would have lowered confidence if it has been extraordinarily high) revealed that on eight of ten items nonresponse was above the average for other Harris surveys from 1973 to 1977. The net average difference of .010 on Harris 2515 was however too small to account for much of the difference. Also, since we did not exactly replicate the context of GSS 1976 and Harris 2521 on the 1978 GSS experiment it is possible that a context effect was operating but we misdiagnosed its source. Perhaps the placement of the GSS first on the questionnaire had an impact or perhaps the general context and content on Harris 2521 had an influence. Yet these possibilities do not seem especially viable.

Finally, it was decided to see how responses to other questions on Harris 2521 compared to those on other Harris surveys. Data were available to compare the responses on the six alienation items to those on six other Harris surveys from 1974 to 1977 and on the Harris standard presidential job rating question to ratings immediately before and after. On the six alienation questions the Harris survey showed a deviation from the normal Harris level similar to that detected on confidence. The six items averaged .045 more than on the other surveys and the four political items (excluding rich/poor and being left out) averaged .057 more. This pattern did not show up on the presidential job rating question however. President Ford's rating fell between lower ratings in January and higher ratings in March. Thus Harris 2521 did not uniformly

register low confidence, alienation, and disapproval. This of course opens up more questions than it answers. One might hypothesis that alienation had a major context effect in 1976 rather than in 1978 because alienation was much stronger then. This is plausible, but unprovable. Furthermore the question arises as to why alienation was so high. The Harris alienation data show the alienation scores on Harris 2521 represents a peak with levels dropping back after that point. It is impossible to tell whether this is a real crest of alienation or it is just curiously out of line like the confidence items appear to be. The crest interpretation is somewhat challenged by the typical, even improving, level of presidential popularity, but these two measures are probably not highly correlated. It appears then that the reason for low confidence on Harris 2521 remains a mystery. The high alienation levels are probably related to the low confidence scores but the causal connection is uncertain (e.g., did a real peak in alienation cause it to exert a context effect on confidence? Did the general content of the survey or some other context effect influence both alienation and confidence? Was there a real crisis of leadership that directly influenced both confidence and alienation, but not Ford's job rating?). The bottom line is that the low confidence level on Harris 2521 is not readily explainable, but does deviate from expected levels.

Internal Context

Two indications of possible ordering effects emerge from the data. The GSS has used only two orderings of institutions one for the 1973, 1974, and 1977 surveys and another in 1975 and 1976. (The order also varies in that banking appears in the 1975-1977 surveys but not in 1973-1974. Since this item appears last on the list of institutions it does not influence the other items.) This switch resulted in the following order changes:

	1973-74,77 Place	1975-76 Place	Order Change 1974-75	1976-77
CONBUS	1	5	+4	-4
CONCLERG	2	6	+4	-4
CONEDUC	3	7	+4	-4
CONFED	4	1	-3	+3
CONLABOR	5	2	-3	+3
COMPRESS	6	3	-3	+3
CONMEDIC	7	8	+1	-1
CONTV	8	9	+1	-1
CONJUDGE	9	10	+1	-1
CONSCI	10	11	+1	-1
CONLEGIS	11	12	+1	-1
CONARMY	12	4	-8	+8
CONFINAN	13 (1977 only)	13	--	0

Marginal changes between 1973-74 and 1975-1976, when there were no order changes, were compared to those in 1974-1975 and 1976-1977, when the switches occurred. Items that moved up or down three or four spaces were compared to items that changed only a single position (CONARMY and CONFINAN were not considered). The mean absolute change in marginals between years for the items changing three or four positions were divided by the mean absolute change for items switching only a single position. This shows that in years that a change in order occurred (1974-75 and

	1973-1974	1974-1975	1975-1976	1976-1977
$\pm$ 4/$\pm$ 1	1.41	2.88	2.03	2.57
$\pm$ 3/$\pm$ 1	1.27	0.60	0.72	3.04

1976-77), the ratios varied more from unity than in the years that no ordering changes occurred. This suggests that part of the changes that were observed between 1974-1975 and 1976-1977 were due to the switches in ordering. It further suggests that ordering differences explain some of the difference in marginals between surveys.

Another indication of an ordering effect comes from work in progress by D. Garth Taylor. He has found that the confidence level of institutions is influenced by the confidence levels of the immediately proceeding institution. If the first institution has a favorable ranking it will increase the confidence recorded on the following item or if the first item has low confidence it will decrease the recorded confidence in the second item.

Among the several possible survey effects that were examined it appears that institutional descriptors can sometimes influence the marginal evaluations (but since this factor was isolated in the preceding analysis of distributions and trends, it does not explain the differences that were still observed). External context was found in an experimental test to have a small marginal impact and a more noteworthy influence on correlations. Internal order showed indications of influencing marginals but it was not possible to specify the precise manner or magnitude of its influence. Other unexamined variations in wording and format may also have contributed to differences in distributions and trends. Thus while no single factor appears to be a major cause of differences, most appear to have some influence on confidence. It appears therefore that the multiple differences in the placement and construction of the confidence question probably added to the variation in responses between surveys to a notable but unspecified degree.

Item Effects

Several experiments designed to analyze the confidence question were conducted in the 1978 GSS. First they examined how respondents interpretated and understood the confidence question. Respondents were

asked how they defined the term "confidence" and what references they had in mind when they evaluated several specific institutions. Second, the association between differences in definitions and references and confidence were examined. Third, through a post interview reevaluation of responses to the confidence questions and a test/retest measure of attitude change the reliability/stability of the confidence items was inspected.

What Does Confidence Mean?

On the 1978 General Social Survey a random sub-sample participated in post-interview debriefing on the confidence questions. They were asked two questions about the meaning of the concept of confidence:

> When we ask about "confidence" in these questions, what does that word mean to you?
>
> Is there a word or phrase that would be more clear than "confidence" but would describe the same idea?

The object of these questions was to see if respondents understood the word confidence and to find out how they defined it. In Table 17 their responses are grouped into twelve major categories. Approximately 95 percent of the respondents were able to give a reasonable definition of confidence. Only 2.2 percent declined to offer a definition--about the level giving a "don't know" reply to a typical attitude item and another 3 percent gave a response that could not be considered a reasonable definition, most commonly consisting of attempts to define confidentiality. Of the 95 percent giving appropriate definitions the overall favorite choice was that confidence in the people running institutions means trusting them. Almost 35 percent mentioned the word "trust" in their response. In addition the closely related terms having "faith" or

TABLE 17

DEFINITIONS OF CONFIDENCE

Key Word of Concept	Proportion Selecting
Trust	.345
Capability	.159
Believe in	.124
Faith	.100
Miscellaneous	.054
Honesty	.043
Common good	.037
Dependability	.034
Approval	.030
Incorrect response	.030
Sure	.022
Don't know, nothing	.022
	1.000

NOTE: 830 responses, 738 cases.

"believing in" the leaders were selected by respectively 10 percent and 12 percent. Also fairly closely related to the idea of "trust" were 4 percent mentioning "honesty," "truthfulness," or some related term, and the 2 percent replying that it meant you could be "sure" or "certain" of the leaders.

Another major emphasis in the definitions was on capability. Almost 16 percent stated that having confidence in the people running

institutions meant thinking that the leaders were competent and had the intellectual and practical abilities needed to carry out their duties.

Also related to this notion, as well as to the trust dimension, were those emphasizing dependability. This 3 percent tended to blend together the trust and capability dimensions and considered these two features to be part of dependability.

A third major distinction was made by the 3 percent that mentioned the common good. They stated that having confidence meant knowing the leaders were acting in the best interest of the country, that they were doing what the common welfare required rather than following either the wishes of special interests or their own personal inclinations. The final major distinction was in sharp contrast to the common good concept. This group (2 percent) stated that having confidence meant that the leadership was doing things that the respondent approved of, that they were carrying out policies that the respondent personally favored.

These different emphasizes were not mutually exclusive, however. Twelve and a half percent of respondents gave multiple responses. For all categories except miscellaneous and dependability, trust was the category most commonly accompanying other choices. For example, of the people mentioning capability 30 percent also mentioned some other concept with 10 percent of them also using the word "trust." Similarly of those chosing the common good 42 percent also included another category with "trust" again leading. Of the four major dimensions only the common good and approval did not overlap at all.

When asked for a substitute term for confidence the majority (58 percent) replied that there was no preferable word and that confidence was fully satisfactory. Those that offered alternatives gave the same list of terms they had mentioned previously with 20 percent naming trust (or 48 percent of those mentioning an alternative), 4 percent faith, 3½ percent believing in, 3 percent dependability, 3 percent honesty, 2 percent capability, 1 percent respect, and 1 percent approval, and 5 percent miscellaneous and incorrect. Compared to the high level giving an acceptable definition to confidence (95 percent), the low level giving an alternative (42 percent) indicates that confidence is a meaningful and perhaps even preferred term for the evaluation of institutional leadership.

In general then confidence means to the vast majority of people trusting or having faith in the leadership, while a secondary group emphasizes competence, and much smaller groups stress the concepts of servicing either the common good or personal interests. In addition a number of people gave definitions covering two or more categories. It thus appears that confidence is a widely and correctly understood term and while it has several different meanings associated with its use in the context of evaluating leaders, the concept of trust and faith are central and that these and the other meanings associated with confidence are close to the concepts included in the political trust/cynicism scale developed by the Center for Political Studies, at the University of Michigan.

In addition, these differences in definition of confidence are not related to the level of confidence. Comparing the mean confidence score (from an additive scale on all thirteen confidence items) to a

series of dummy variables for each definition (trust, faith, believing in, honesty, certitude, dependability, capability, personal approval, common good, or incorrect definition) showed only one significant difference. Those defining confidence as personal approval were more confident than those not expressing this concept. In brief, while differences in definition exist, these differences are unrelated to the confidence level and shifts in the definition of confidence (say from trust to dependability) should have litte impact on the confidence level.

References

As part of 1978 methodological experiments on confidence a randomly selected half of the sample was asked who or what they were thinking about when particular institutions were mentioned. The questions covered the press, medicine, the scientific community, and the military and went as follows:

> Who do you think of when we ask you how much confidence you have in the people running ...? (Do you have any particular people or group in mind?)

Most people were able to come up with an organization, group of people, or individual, but a substantial minority could not offer a reference. On medicine .897 gave a response but .012 gave responses that were irrelevant or misdirected. This gave .885 with a relevant reference group. On the military .863 gave responses, but .011 had irrelevant responses, giving .852 with relevant responses. On the press .817 gave answers, but .023 had irrelevant answers, giving .794 with relevant answers. On the scientific community .657 gave a reference, but .052 gave irrelevant or wrong answers,[12] giving .605 with relevant answers.

---

[12] This includes .023 who thought that scientific community meant their local community (place of residence).

It appears that while most people have some explicit reference in mind a non-trivial minority of from 12-39 percent can offer no relevant reference point for their evaluation of confidence.

Next, we looked at what kind of references were given by those mentioning one. Answers were classified according to several different schemes. On all four institutions answers were classified as personal or impersonal. Personal answers referred to people or groups of people. These were further brokendown into those naming specific persons (e.g., Dr. Salk) and those naming groups of people (e.g., doctors). Impersonal answers referred to organizations or topical subjects (e.g., hospitals or research). They were also subdivided into references to specific institutions (e.g., the Federal Drug Administration) or general groups and topics (e.g., medical schools or heart disease). All four items were also classified as referring to governmental or non-governmental bodies. Finally, each institution was subdivided into various categories relevant to the particular institution.

Table 18 compares the four institutions on the personal/impersonal and government/nongovernment variables. Personal references are highest for medicine (.688) followed by the press (.636), science (.459), and the military (.451). Few specific people are named in any of the areas although including mentions of the president rises the military to .149. Specific references to groups and organizations are more common (except on the press) and on the military accounts for a plurality of references (.433). There are even larger differences among the institutuions on references to the government. As would be expected almost all military answers mentioned the government (.995). The government was also cited frequently for science (.307) and less frequently for medicine (.086)

TABLE 18

COMPARISON OF INSTITUTIONAL REFERENCES BY (A) PERSONAL/IMPERSONAL AND (B) GOVERNMENT/NONGOVERNMENT
(Proportions)

References	Science	Press	Medicine	Military
A.				
Personal				
Specific . . .	.026	.061	.017	.149[a]
General	.433	.575	.671	.302
Impersonal				
Specific . . .	.113	.053	.144	.433
General	.429	.311	.168	.116
N	(506)	(659)	(756)	(861)
B.				
Government . . .	.307	.020	.086	.995

[a]Includes reference to Carter, President Carter, or the President. If these were not counted as specific references to a person, but as general then the distribution would be .036, .415, .433, .116.

and the press (.020). From these comparisons it is clear that people think of various institutions in different lights, emphasizing the impersonal and governmental in regards to the military for example and the personal and non-governmental for medicine.

The institutions were also classified according to various schemes that disclosed some particular dimension within each institution. Table 19 shows that on science a near majority did not think of any substantive area. Space led, however, by a large margin over those areas that were mentioned followed by medicine and more distantly by atomic energy and a wide scattering of other topics (electricity, chemistry, weather, etc.). On the press three dichotomies were examined,

TABLE 19

SELECTED, PARTICULAR INSTITUTIONAL REFERENCES

(Proportions)

References	Marginals	N
A. Science		
1. Field:		
Space	.252	508
Medicine	.152	
Atomic	.028	
Other	.106	
None	.463	
B. Press		
1. Electronic	.236	590
2. Local press	.051	590
3. Bosses (Publichers, editors, etc.)	.176	590
C. Medicine		
1. Doctors	.641	656
2. Research	.235	656
D. Military		
1. Area:		
Armed Forces	.679	723
Civilian government	.308	
Private industry	.006	
Other	.007	

media type (print versus electronic); geographic reference (local versus national or unspecified), and level of control (top management versus others). Most people thought of the press in traditional terms as printed media, but almost one-quarter mentioned radio or television. National or unspecified cites also predominated over local focuses. Selection of the top management were less common, only .176 of all choices and even among personal references only .277. More visible figures such as reporters and commentators were more commonly cited than their employers. On medicine doctors were explicitly mentioned by .641 or about 93 percent of all personal references. Another common reference was to medical research which was referred to by .235. On the military responses were classified as mentioning the armed forces (.679), the civilian government (.308), private industry (.006), or other areas (.007). In brief, it appears that many different types of people, groups, and topics are thought of when people are asked to evaluate confidence in the major institutions.

The query then becomes whether these great differences in references leads to major differences in how much confidence people in the various institutions. For example, do people who mention personal references have more (or less) confidence in the institution than people who make impersonal ones. Or do people who mention say the local press differ in their confidence rankings from those who do not. Table 20 shows the correlations between confidence in the four institutions and each of the reference categories cited above. Of the thirty-seven relationships examined there were significant differences in ten instances. The basic pattern is that: 1) most differences were small, reference was not

TABLE 20

CORRELATION BETWEEN CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS AND REFERENCE CATEGORIES[a]

(Pearson's r)[b]

References	Science	Press	Medicine	Military
Personal, specific . .	NS	.064	NS	.099
Personal, general . .	NS	NS	.122	.033
Impersonal, specific .	NS	NS	-.070	.069
Impersonal, general .	.108	NS	NS	NS
Government	NS	NS	NS	NS
Science:				
Space	.077	--	--	--
Medicine	NS	--	--	--
Atomic	NS	--	--	--
Other	NS	--	--	--
None	.074	--	--	--
Press:				
Electronic	--	NS	--	--
Local	--	NS	--	--
Bosses	--	NS	--	--
Medicine:				
Doctors	--	--	NS	--
Research	--	--	.180	--
Military:				
Armed forces	--	--	--	NS
Civilian	--	--	--	NS
Private industry . . .	--	--	--	NS
None, don't know . . .	.143	NS	NS	NS

NOTE: NS = not statistically at .05 level, not adjusted for multistage sampling.

[a]All reference categories are coded as dichotomies.

[b]Positive sign indicates that people mentioning the aspect were more confident.

a major indicator of confidence level, and 2) specific or general personal references tended to associate with more confident ratings.[13] Among the particular results it was found that referring to space or no field was associated with confidence in scinece and that referring to medical research was associated with confidence in medicine. The others showed no association. Overall it appears that one's frame of reference can influence one's confidence in an institution, but such an influence does not appear on many items and even when it does appear it is usually small.

Reliability/Stability

Next, an examination was made of the reliability/stability of the confidence items. As part of the post interview evaluation of the confidence questions respondents were handed back the questionnaire opened to the confidence question and asked to check over and change any answers they wanted to:

115. Now I am going to ask you a different kind of question. We would like you to help us understand more about the answers that people give. We would also like you to help us understand what people really mean.
TURN TO CONFIDENCE ITEM (PAGE 23), FOLD BACK QUESTIONNAIRE AND HAND QUESTIONNAIRE AND GREEN PENCIL TO R.
You might read over these questions to make sure that I marked the answers as you told me. Or maybe you would like to change your answers because you have had more time to think about questions.
GIVE RESPONDENT TIME TO READ QUESTIONS AND THINK ABOUT THEM.
IF MADE CHANGES (GO TO B)
IF MADE NO CHANGES (ASK A)

A. IF MADE NO CHANGES: Are you sure that we have the answer you meant?
Yes (Go to next question)
No (Ask B)

---

[13] The difference in confidence ratings due to what a person refers to is similar to the differences due to varying the instututional descriptors.

115. Continued.

B. IF MADE CHANGES: Did you have a second thought about the answers, didn't I get your answers right, or what?

.
.
.
.

122. Now that we talked a little more, would you like to change any of your answers to these questions or add anything to what I have already written down?

They were encouraged to reevaluate their responses and at three points (115, 115A, and 122) they were asked if they wished to change their answers. Despite this encouragement only from .011 to .022 of respondents changed their answers on any of the institutions (average = .016). Of all changes .056 were from, "Don't know" to a substantive evaluation, .069 were from a substantive evaluation to "Don't know," .494 were in an upward direction, and .381 were in a downward direction. When asked why they had changed responses the overwhelming majority (.92) said that they had changed their evaluation because they had had second thoughts or changed their mind, only .08 mentioned a misunderstanding, miscoding, or dissatisfaction with response categories. It thus appears that the vast majority of respondents gave a confidence rating that they were not willing to change even when encouraged to do so and that the changes that did occur represented mostly the vascillations of fence sitters rather than major problems with the measurement instrument.

In a further test of reliability/stability, about one month after the initial interview a one in five subsample was reinterviewed on the telephone and reasked several questions including the confidence items.[14] An average of .633 of respondents gave the same substantive

---

[14] Details on the test/retest analysis alluded to here appears in Tom W. Smith and C. Bruce Stephenson, "An Analysis of Test/Retest Experiments on the 1972, 1973, 1974, and 1978 General Social Surveys," GSS Technical Report No. 14 (forthcoming).

response both times. Dichotomizing responses into a great deal versus some and hardly any and a great deal and some versus hardly any and averaging the results over both collapses and all thirteen items gave an average agreement level of .805. This was slightly lower than comparably dichotomized attitude items on test/retest studies with the 1972, 1973, and 1974 GSSs. These studies had average agreement levels of .846, .858, and .826. (Because of different intervals between test and retest, the 1972 rate would have been lower and the 1973 and 1974 rates higher had they had the same interval as in 1978.) It appears that the confidence items are subject to slightly more short term change than attitude item in general. Unfortunately this simple test/retest data do not permit distinction between changes due to true alternations in attitudes (instability) and changes due to inadequacies in the measurement instrument (unreliability). Some other evidence (the low proportions changing answering during post interview debriefing, the indications that the questions were understood by respondents, and frequently large short term flucuations in cross-sectional marginals) suggests that much of the change is due to instability. Thus the greater than average proportion changing responses on confidence as compared to other attitude items may indicate that confidence is more subject to real short term flucations (instability) rather than to noise due to weaknesses in the measurement instrument.

Stability, Crystalization, and Conceptual Level

One reason for instability is that opinions are not crystalized, that is that many people do not have a firm opinion on the matter in question and their opinion represents only a leaning or simply nothing more than an almost random response to question. Such uncrystalized

opinions are of course susceptible to change either as the issue crystalizes and people take up a firmer position which may or may not be the same as their uncrystalized responses or as response effects or transitory real world stimuli influence the still uncrystalized opinions. Opinion can be uncrystalized for several reasons, such as lack of factual information, the newness of the issue, crosscutting pressures, low salience or abstractness. The confidence questions do not appear to be especially troubled by the matters of information, newness, or crosscutting pressures. On saliency the little information available suggests that the items are typical. "Don't knows" are an indicator of uncrystalized opinion in general and low salience in particular (among other things which naturally makes them a far from perfect measure of salience). The levels on the confidence questions on the GSS surveys range from .013 on medicine to .100 on the scientific community and average .036 for the thirteen institutions. This average is typical for attitude items on the GSSs although the .100 giving "Don't know" on the scientific community is distinctly higher than both most attitude items and other confidence items. Also, on a measure of indirect salience on the 1978 GSS two confidence items were included. The question asked:

> How often would you say that you and your friends think about the topics we've been discussing during the interview? Would you say that you and your friends think about (READ EACH ITME AA-E) very often, sometimes, or almost never?
>
> a. women's rights
> b. the people running organized labor
> c. satisfaction with their present financial situation
> d. laws about abortions
> e. the scientific community

The most salient topic was personal finances (very often + sometimes = .798) followed by women's rights (.673), organized labor (.609), abortions

(.522), and the scientific community (.465). This shows organized labor, probably a confidence item with middling salience, ranks about average and the scientific community, probably the confidence item with the lowest salience--as the "Don't knows" also indicate, to rank fifth. In brief the confidence items do not appear to suffer more from lack of salience than other typical attitude items do.

The confidence items do, however, probably have a higher degree of abstraction than many other attitude items. This can make it harder for items to become crystalized and as a result make changes in responses easier and more common. While people will to a certain extent form conscious opinions on such matters as preferred presidential choice, position on capital punishment, or support for wage and price controls they are probably less likely to have previously formulated positions on confidence in the Congress, the press, the scientific community, or other institutions.

Of course to a greater or lesser extent people have some predispositions about different institutions (e.g., "Congress is run by a bunch of crooks," "Doctors perform miracles," or "Big business and big labor don't care about the average citizen."), but these do not represent a consciously preformulated opinion in the way that a candidate choice or position on a specific public issue does. For many opinion and political questions the respondent immediately identifies the question as one he has thought about (e.g., "If the presidential election were being held today, which candidate would you vote for--Humphrey, the Democrat, Nixon, the Republican, or Wallace, the candidate of the American Independent Party?" or "Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?") and gives a response that reflects his preconceived position. On confidence, however, while respondents have

certain predispositions about institutions they do not have preexisting opinions that closely correspond to the query "would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?" In other words the respondent can not simply call up a conscious previously formulated response and clearly (almost mechanically) use this to answer the question but must take a series of partly relevant predispositions and use these to respond to the structure of the confidence evaluation being offered by the question.

The distinction between questions on which respondents have preexisting opinions that clearly supply answers to survey questions and those that do not is of course not absolute but a matter of degree. Still it seems that the confidence question lean towards the later group and are more likely to suffer from instability due to the respondent summarizing and coding his predispositions than in the former case.

This does not, however, reflect on the technical adequacy of the confidence as a measure instrument. It is not a function of the question being vague, ambiguous, or having inappropriate response categories, but a reflection of the abstract concept that one is attempting to measure. Attitudes about confidence are not usually consciously preformulated in a summary and coherent fashion and cannot be simply or automatically plugged into any scale of responses. In essence, the nature of the topic of confidence in institutions probably helps to keep many attitudes uncrystalized and thus makes them more susceptible than average to changes.

In brief, it was found that there was variation in how confidence was defined and in the references cited, but that these differences in focus had only weak and scattered influence on confidence ratings.

The confidence items were found, however, to have a fairly high level of changability acorss short time periods. While definitive evidence is lacking this appears to be more due to instability in attitudes rather than the unreliability of the item. This instability in turn seems in part due to the conceptual nature of the question and the problem of coding such attitudes.

True Change

No big single effect contributing to intersurvey differences seems to prevail, but several effects seem to be contributing to the variation in distributions and trends. Another major cause for the observed differences is probably true change. The confidence items (or at least some of them) appear to be susceptible to episodic change. That is, episodes or events in the real world can cause rapid and sizable changes in the distribution of confidence.[15] For example, on confidence in the executive branch of the federal government Harris differs from NORC in part because it catches points before the Watergate disclosures and at Nixon's resignation that are missed by the NORC series. Also the drop in confidence from .283 after Nixon's resignation but before his pardon by Ford to .200 and .177 after Ford's pardoning of Nixon clearly shows the impact of an event (the pardon) on confidence (down 10 percent). The episodic nature of the confidence items probably comes mainly from the fact that they evaluate the performance of particular leaders and groups (e.g., the President, the military, and organized labor) and this performance is subject to occasionally abrupt and well

[15]For other items of a similar episodic nature see Smith, 1978; Mueller, 1973; Kennell, 1978; and Stimson, 1976.

publicized changes (e.g., the Nixon pardon or the Camp David accords). While many attitude items are not likely to be greatly influenced by a dramatic event, the confidence items are open to such episodic influence. This of course is not an artifact but merely reflects a basic attribute of the measure. In addition, the uncrystalized state on many evaluations probably makes the item susceptible to even more changes due to changes in events than would otherwise be the case. In sum, while the confidence items may detect general consistencies and/or trends in the level of public confidence of particular institutions they will almost certainly also catch many short term episodic changes to events and conditions.

Based on the preceeding analysis it appears that there is no single prime cause for the differences in distributions and trends between the Harris and NORC series. Many small effects do appear to be at work, however. These include the handling of item nonresponse, institutional descriptors, and external and especially internal context and ordering. These and possibly other unexamined effects create or magnify differences between surveys. In addition confidence is susceptible to sizable short term shifts in marginals. The combination of the various response effects with the intrinsic instability of the measure makes a naturally bouncy item even bouncier.

CONFIDENCE AS A SOCIAL INDICATORS

When one thinks of social indicators one usually thinks of such demographics as the percent with a college education, per capital income, fertility rate, or per student educational expenditures. One then follows trends in these indicators to measure such specific changes as the educational upgrading of the labor force or such more general

changes as the quality of life. More adventuresomely one thinks of attitudinal social indicators such as the percent for capital punishment, the mean amount of anomia, level of political cynicism, or confidence in institutions. Again as in the case of the demographics the usual objective is to map the general trends in these measure or (as a typically less preferred alternative) to document stability.

This approach creates several problems. Many demographic indicators are subject to relatively little year-to-year fluctuation because the attribute they measure are not given to major variation over a wide range of "normal" conditions (e.g., barring some event like a world war). In addition they are usually calculated with such care and from such large samples (e.g., the CPS) or from records of the total universe of events (vital statistics), that they are technically highly reliable and subject to a minimun of random variation. The attitudinal social indicators suffer by comparison in several ways. First, they have typically not been developed and tested as well as the methods used to measure the demographics and they usually rely on sample bases that allow considerably more random variation than in the case of the demographic indicators. Second, less is known about how various response effects such as context or real world attributes such as seasons influence the attitudes. Third, the attitudinal social indicators are subject to much greater real short term fluctuations than most demographics. Some of the fluctuation is due to the shift of uncrystalized attitudes and some to alternations of firmly held attitudes. (The distinction is one of degree but worth making since little and unimportant changes in the real world can shift uncrystalized attitudes but firmly held and organized attitudes are moved only by larger and more notable events.)

Most of the time the greater sample variation, lesser development of the measurement instrument and of possible response effects, and greater propensity for short term fluctuations does not create problems. And indeed substantively clear and technically adequate series exist measuring such matters as race relations, willingness to vote for a woman for president, political cynicism, and many other matters.

In other instances such as with confidence, ones good fortune runs out and problems in the form of significant differences in marginals and divergent trends between houses occur.[16] It has been shown that some of the variations are explained by a number of small but cumulatively important effects. Also, some are due to some especially large and not fully explainable differences between particular surveys. Additionally, much of the short term differences and perhaps most of the differences in trends are due to the real fluctuating nature of confidence. Thus when we compared the Harris and NORC trends we were not finding different trends so much as different points of bounce. Except for the extra variation created by the factors mentioned above (which of course complicates the interpretation of real trends and creates some major outliers), much of the inter- and intra-survey changes in the trends are true fluctuations and not mostly artifactual abberations.[17]

---

[16] A general comparison of marginals from different houses revealed much smaller differences than were typical on confidence, Smith, 1979.

[17] Davis' analysis (1978) of trends in GSS items found that confidence had three of the ten most variable items. Executive branch was the most variable of all items, organized religion was third, and education was fifth. Thus confidence is highly variable even within the GSS series.

The problem is thus two fold. First, the many differences in survey procedures format, wording, placement, and order add noise that hampers the accurate and consistent measurement of the real level of confidence and increases artificially the variation of responses. For results of greater reliability and precision such differences have to either be eliminated from the confidence series, isolated, or adjusted for. The second problem is that confidence is not like a demographic social indicator nor can it be expected to act like one. The fundamental nature of the concept that is being measured leads to uncrystalized and therefore unstable opinions and its episodic nature further contributes to short term fluctuations. If one takes into consideration these two considerations (and their limitations) one can use the confidence items as measures of the fluctuating state of trust in major institutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailer, Barbara and C. Michael Lamphier

1977 "Development of Survey Methods to Assess Survey Practices: A Report of the American Statistical Association Pilot Project on the Assessment of Survey Practices and Data Quality in Surveys of Human Population." Washington, D.C.: American Statistical Association.

Converse, Jean M.

1976-1977 "Predicting No Opinion in the Polls," Public Opinion Quarterly, 40: 515-530.

Davis, James A.

1978 "Trends in NORC General Social Survey items, 1972-1977," GSS Technical Report No. 9, Chicago: NORC.

Davis, James A., Tom W. Smith, and C. Bruce Stephenson

1978 General Social Surveys, 1972-1978: Cumulative Codebook. Chicago: NORC.

Harris instruction memorandum

No date "About Interviewing," supplied by Louis Harris Data Center, University of North Carolina.

Kernell, Samuel

1978 "Explaining Presidential Popularity. . ." American Political Science Review, LXXIX.

Ladd, Everett Carll, Jr.

1976-1977 "The Polls: The Question of Confidence," Public Opinion Quarterly, 40: 544-552.

Lipset, Seymour Martin

1976 "The Wavering Polls," The Public Interest, 43: 70-89.

Mueller, John E.

1973 War, Presidents, and Public Opinion. New York, John Wiley and Sons.

Proctor and Gamble

1975 "Highlights: Research Pilot Study - Public Opinion Polls," Unpublished paper.

1975 "Research Exploration - Public Opinion Polls," Unpublished paper.

Santi, Lawrence

1978 "Confidence in Selected Institutions in 1975: An Attempt at Replication Across Two National Surveys," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Society, Spokane, Washington.

Schuman, Howard and Stanley Presser

1978 "The Assignment of 'No Opinion' in Attitude Surveys," in Sociological Methodology, 1979, edited by Karl F. Schuessler. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Smith, Tom W.

1979 "In Search of House Effects: A Comparison of Responses to Various Questions by Different Survey Organizations," Public Opinion Quarterly, 42: 443-463.

1978 "America's Most Important Problem: A Trend Analysis, 1946-1976," Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, Chicago.

Smith, Tom W. and D. Garth Taylor

1979 "Public Opinion and Public Regard for the Federal Government," in Carol Weiss and Allen Barton, eds., Bureucratic Maladies and Remedies. Beverley Hills: Sage, forthcoming.

Stimson, James A.

1976 Public Support for American Presidents: A Cynical Model, Public Opinion Quarterly, XL.

Taylor, D. Garth

1976 "Procedures for Evaluating Trends in Qualitative Indicators," in James A. Davis, ed., Studies in Social Change Since 1948. NORC Report No. 127a. Chicago: NORC.

Turner, Charles F. and Elissa Krauss

1978 "Fallible Indicators of the Subject State of the Nation," American Psychologist, 33: 456-470.

TABLE A1

MAJOR COMPANIES

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	46.6	31.7	4.4	1.6	15.8	1,026
Harris 2219	30.5	43.0	13.9	0.0	12.6	3,151
Harris 2236	26.8	44.3	16.2	4.3	8.5	1,596
Harris 2319	33.8	47.1	12.0	2.6	4.5	2,991
GSS73	29.3	53.3	10.8	0.0	6.7	1,500
Harris 2343	29.8	43.7	19.7	0.0	6.8	1,592
Harris 2354	27.6	52.0	16.1	0.0	4.3	1,482
NORC 4179	21.8	52.1	20.1	0.0	6.0	1,484
Harris 7482	24.1	51.4	19.6	0.0	4.8	1,476
GSS74	31.4	50.6	14.5	0.0	3.6	1,483
Harris 7487	21.7	52.2	20.8	0.0	5.4	1,518
Harris 2430	15.2	50.0	31.2	0.0	3.6	612
Harris 2434	15.9	48.4	32.5	0.0	3.2	1,522
GSS75	19.3	54.0	21.2	0.0	5.5	1,483
Harris 2515	18.1	48.0	28.0	0.0	5.9	1,836
Harris 7581	19.7	49.7	25.4	0.0	5.1	1,578
Harris 7585	19.7	48.2	25.2	0.0	7.0	1,491
Harris 2521	16.3	55.0	24.6	0.0	4.1	1,495
Harris 7681	21.5	52.4	21.9	0.0	4.2	1,519
GSS76	22.0	51.2	21.7	0.0	5.0	1,491
Harris 2628	20.5	50.1	23.2	0.0	6.2	1,801
Harris 2630	19.9	47.8	23.9	0.0	8.5	1,538
Harris 7690	20.4	51.2	23.0	0.0	5.4	1,519
GSS77	27.2	56.5	12.3	0.0	4.0	1,526
GSS78	21.6	57.9	16.0	0.0	4.4	1,529

TABLE A2

ORGANIZED RELIGION

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	39.6	26.6	9.1	6.2	18.6	1,024
Hallis 2236	29.4	39.5	14.9	6.8	9.4	1,596
Harris 2319	33.2	38.2	14.7	7.1	6.7	2,986
GSS73	34.8	45.8	15.9	0.0	3.5	1,495
Harris 2343	35.6	35.2	22.6	0.0	6.6	1,592
Harris 2354	28.9	41.8	22.1	0.0	7.2	1,481
NORC 4179	32.1	44.2	19.1	0.0	4.7	1,485
GSS74	44.3	42.8	10.8	0.0	2.1	1,481
Harris 7487	31.8	38.2	23.8	0.0	6.2	1,518
Harris 2434	32.0	40.0	22.2	0.0	5.9	1,521
GSS75	24.4	47.9	21.3	0.0	6.4	1,485
Harris 7581	32.2	39.0	20.2	0.0	8.5	1,576
Harris 7585	35.5	38.1	19.7	0.0	6.6	1,489
Harris 2521	23.7	42.4	24.4	0.0	9.4	1,494
GSS76	30.7	44.7	18.3	0.0	6.3	1,491
Harris 7690	29.3	40.9	22.3	0.0	7.5	1,519
GSS77	40.0	45.1	11.6	0.0	3.3	1,526
GSS78	30.7	47.3	18.2	0.0	3.8	1,526

TABLE A3

EDUCATION

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	55.5	29.1	4.9	1.4	9.1	1,021
Harris 2219	31.0	38.0	14.2	0.0	16.8	3,146
Harris 2236	33.4	46.3	13.1	3.1	4.1	1,593
GSS73	37.0	53.4	8.2	0.0	1.4	1,495
Harris 2343	44.2	37.5	14.4	0.0	3.8	1,594
Harris 2354	45.5	40.5	10.4	0.0	3.5	1,480
GSS74	49.1	41.4	8.2	0.0	1.4	1,480
Harris 7481	39.1	44.8	12.4	0.0	3.7	1,515
Harris 2434	39.3	44.3	13.7	0.0	2.6	1,520
Harris 2515	36.2	43.6	15.1	0.0	5.1	1,833
GSS75	30.9	54.6	12.8	0.0	1.7	1,488
Harris 7581	36.1	42.6	17.3	0.0	3.9	1,574
Harris 7585	36.6	39.7	17.4	0.0	6.3	1,480
Harris 2521	27.9	51.8	17.1	0.0	3.3	1,493
GSS76	37.5	45.1	15.4	0.0	2.0	1,489
Harris 2628	31.7	46.1	17.0	0.0	5.2	1,797
Harris 7690	37.0	46.6	11.6	0.0	4.8	1,513
GSS77	40.6	49.6	8.8	0.0	0.9	1,526
GSS78	28.5	55.0	15.1	0.0	1.4	1,528

TABLE A4

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	37.2	38.7	9.0	3.1	12.0	1,025
Harris 2219	33.6	41.1	18.2	0.0	7.1	3,154
Harris 2236	27.2	47.0	14.9	3.2	7.7	1,589
GSS73	29.3	50.4	18.4	0.0	1.9	1,498
Harris 2343	19.4	39.7	34.3	0.0	6.7	1,590
Harris 2354	13.4	42.2	41.3	0.0	3.1	1,478
NORC 4179	14.2	48.9	33.0	0.0	3.8	1,483
Harris 7482	11.7	40.9	44.4	0.0	3.0	1,471
GSS74	13.6	42.5	41.7	0.0	2.2	1,482
Harris 7487	28.3	51.9	13.7	0.0	6.1	1,517
Harris 2430	20.0	55.2	20.6	0.0	4.3	611
Harris 2434	17.7	55.0	22.9	0.0	4.4	1,520
GSS75	13.3	54.6	29.5	0.0	2.6	1,488
Harris 7581	13.1	49.2	32.9	0.0	4.8	1,572
Harris 7585	16.0	48.2	28.7	0.0	7.0	1,478
Harris 2521	10.8	55.3	26.6	0.0	7.3	1,488
Harris 7681	16.5	54.8	23.7	0.0	5.1	1,517
GSS76	13.5	58.5	25.0	0.0	3.0	1,494
Harris 7684	22.3	51.0	23.4	0.0	3.2	1,438
Harris 2630	14.5	50.5	24.9	0.0	10.1	1,540
Harris 7690	23.3	55.6	14.2	0.0	6.9	1,515
GSS77	27.9	54.4	14.5	0.0	3.1	1,525
GSS78	12.5	59.4	24.9	0.0	3.2	1,528

TABLE A5

ORGANIZED LABOR

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	19.6	38.2	18.4	10.3	13.5	1,021
Harris 2219	10.3	34.3	38.9	0.0	16.6	3,151
Harris 2236	15.3	43.7	24.1	8.7	8.1	1,587
Harris 2319	22.9	44.2	19.0	8.3	5.6	2,993
GSS73	15.5	54.6	25.7	0.0	4.1	1,495
Harris 2343	19.8	40.2	32.7	0.0	7.3	1,591
Harris 2354	16.2	49.8	28.2	0.0	5.7	1,480
NORC 4179	18.7	49.7	27.4	0.0	4.2	1,484
GSS74	18.2	53.5	25.5	0.0	2.8	1,481
Harris 7487	17.4	52.3	24.1	0.0	6.2	1,508
Harris 2434	18.5	46.4	30.9	0.0	4.3	1,520
Harris 2515	16.3	40.8	33.6	0.0	9.3	1,826
GSS75	10.1	54.2	29.3	0.0	6.4	1,488
Harris 7581	13.5	40.7	37.2	0.0	8.6	1,571
Harris 7585	18.0	39.5	34.5	0.0	7.9	1,485
Harris 2521	9.9	46.5	35.7	0.0	7.8	1,489
GSS76	11.6	47.5	33.0	0.0	7.9	1,494
Harris 2628	10.6	38.1	42.5	0.0	8.8	1,797
Harris 7690	14.5	43.1	35.9	0.0	6.5	1,519
GSS77	14.8	49.7	31.7	0.0	3.9	1,524
GSS78	11.0	46.3	37.6	0.0	5.1	1,528

TABLE A6

PRESS

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	26.5	45.8	12.8	5.6	9.4	1,027
Harris 2219	16.5	49.2	22.0	0.0	12.3	3,147
Harris 2236	18.4	50.4	21.0	5.5	4.8	1,594
GSS73	23.1	60.7	14.7	0.0	1.5	1,500
Harris 2343	30.3	45.0	21.5	0.0	3.2	1,592
Harris 2354	27.8	53.1	16.7	0.0	2.4	1,481
NORC4179	25.1	51.1	21.3	0.0	2.6	1,481
GSS74	25.9	55.4	17.5	0.0	1.2	1,481
Harris 7487	24.8	48.2	23.4	0.0	3.7	1,514
Harris 2430	30.9	45.8	21.6	0.0	1.6	611
Harris 2434	25.6	48.2	24.7	0.0	1.6	1,521
GSS75	23.9	55.5	17.9	0.0	2.8	1,484
Harris 7581	25.9	52.5	19.3	0.0	2.2	1,577
Harris 7585	27.5	47.0	20.8	0.0	4.7	1,482
Harris 2521	20.1	50.3	25.4	0.0	4.2	1,490
Harris 7681	21.3	52.0	24.6	0.0	2.0	1,518
GSS76	28.5	52.1	17.7	0.0	1.8	1,490
Harris 2628	25.0	51.9	19.6	0.0	3.4	1,798
Harris 2630	24.7	51.6	18.8	0.0	5.0	1,541
Harris 7690	17.8	55.1	23.3	0.0	3.8	1,515
GSS77	25.1	57.3	15.5	0.0	2.2	1,526
GSS78	20.1	58.4	19.7	0.0	1.8	1,528

TABLE A7

MEDICINE

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	60.5	27.3	4.1	1.1	7.0	1,023
Harris 2236	48.2	36.1	8.8	2.8	4.1	1,591
Harris 2319	62.9	26.8	6.4	2.0	1.9	2,991
GSS73	54.1	39.2	5.7	0.0	0.9	1,496
Harris 2343	57.6	30.8	9.6	0.0	2.0	1,591
Harris 2354	59.9	33.3	5.5	0.0	1.3	1,482
Harris 7482	52.6	35.9	9.8	0.0	1.6	1,472
GSS74	60.4	33.7	4.5	0.0	1.5	1,482
Harris 7487	49.3	40.1	7.6	0.0	3.0	1,512
Harris 2430	49.7	35.1	12.9	0.0	2.3	612
Harris 2434	48.5	38.1	11.7	0.0	1.7	1,518
GSS75	50.5	40.1	7.9	0.0	1.5	1,487
Harris 7581	42.8	41.7	11.5	0.0	4.1	1,576
Harris 7585	53.7	32.4	10.3	0.0	3.6	1,480
Harris 2521	42.0	43.0	11.7	0.0	3.4	1,492
GSS76	54.1	35.3	9.2	0.0	1.3	1,492
Harris 2630	50.1	34.3	9.7	0.0	5.9	1,543
Harris 7690	42.5	44.3	11,0	0.0	2.2	1,516
GSS77	51.5	41.2	6.2	0.0	1.1	1,526
GSS78	46.0	44.0	9.2	0.0	0.8	1,527

TABLE A8

TELEVISION

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	20.3	43.8	18.8	7.4	9.7	1,019
Harris 2219	15.7	43.9	21.3	0.0	19.1	3,143
Harris 2236	17.9	51.4	21.9	4.5	4.3	1,594
GSS73	18.6	58.5	21.8	0.0	1.1	1,497
Harris 2343	40.3	43.5	14.1	0.0	2.1	1,593
Harris 2354	36.6	50.2	11.7	0.0	1.6	1,481
Harris 7482	34.2	46.8	17.3	0.0	1.7	1,474
GSS74	23.4	58.1	17.3	0.0	1.1	1,481
Harris 2430	36.2	47.9	15.0	0.0	1.0	608
Harris 2434	32.3	50.0	16.5	0.0	1.2	1,519
Harris 2515	33.6	49.2	14.8	0.0	2.3	1,835
GSS75	17.8	57.4	22.4	0.0	2.4	1,486
Harris 7585	36.6	45.2	14.1	0.0	4.1	1,478
Harris 2521	27.9	51.8	17.1	0.0	3.3	1,493
Harris 7681	28.3	53.7	16.0	0.0	2.0	1,515
GSS76	18.7	52.3	27.2	0.0	1.7	1,490
Harris 2628	32.6	51.4	13.3	0.0	2.7	1,801
Harris 2630	34.5	45.6	15.4	0.0	4.5	1,541
Harris 7690	27.6	54.2	15.9	0.0	2.4	1,517
GSS77	17.4	55.9	25.1	0.0	1.5	1,525
GSS78	13.8	53.4	31.0	0.0	1.8	1,526

TABLE A9

U.S. SUPREME COURT

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	39.5	29.0	12.9	7.8	10.7	961
Harris 2236	28.5	42.3	15.6	5.8	7.7	1,594
GSS73	31.5	49.8	15.4	0.0	3.3	1,497
Harris 2343	33.3	40.0	20.2	0.0	6.5	1,591
NORC4179	34.1	44.0	16.0	0.0	5.8	1,485
GSS74	33.2	47.9	14.4	0.0	4.5	1,482
Harris 7487	40.1	41.3	13.5	0.0	5.1	1,515
Harris 2430	34.8	44.9	15.6	0.0	4.8	610
Harris 2434	35.0	44.0	16.7	0.0	4.3	1,521
GSS75	30.8	46.3	18.6	0.0	4.3	1,485
Harris 7581	28.7	43.8	21.5	0.0	6.0	1,575
Harris 7585	27.5	41.8	21.2	0.0	9.4	1,482
Harris 2521	21.9	47.5	22.4	0.0	8.1	1,489
Harris 7681	31.6	43.3	20.9	0.0	4.3	1,519
GSS76	35.4	43.6	5.4	0.0	5.6	1,491
Harris 7684	37.9	39.8	18.5	0.0	3.8	1,435
Harris 7690	28.6	47.7	17.9	0.0	5.8	1,516
GSS77	35.7	49.4	10.8	0.0	4.1	1,522
GSS78	28.1	52.8	14.6	0.0	4.5	1,527

TABLE A10

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	45.1	27.9	5.3	1.5	20.3	951
Harris 2236	36.8	38.8	5.8	1.4	17.2	1,589
GSS73	36.9	47.1	6.5	0.0	9.5	1,495
Harris 2354	45.5	36.6	5.7	0.0	12.3	1,480
GSS74	45.0	37.7	6.7	0.0	10.6	1,481
GSS75	37.7	45.2	6.5	0.0	10.7	1,487
Harris 7581	47.9	34.6	7.8	0.0	9.7	1,572
GSS76	42.9	38.0	7.5	0.0	11.6	1,486
Harris 2630	44.4	37.9	7.9	0.0	9.8	1,538
GSS77	41.0	45.7	5.5	0.0	7.8	1,522
GSS78	36.2	48.3	7.3	0.0	8.3	1,527

TABLE A11

CONGRESS

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	40.9	41.5	6.9	2.1	8.6	1,021
Harris 2236	21.0	56.8	14.0	2.3	6.0	1,591
GSS73	23.5	59.0	14.9	0.0	2.6	1,497
Harris 2343	29.7	48.6	16.2	0.0	5.5	1,590
Harris 2354	17.1	55.6	24.0	0.0	3.3	1,479
NORC4179	22.7	57.5	15.6	0.0	4.2	1,485
GSS74	17.1	59.0	20.9	0.0	3.0	1,481
Harris 7487	17.8	58.0	20.6	0.0	3.6	1,515
Harris 2430	16.2	63.2	19.0	0.0	1.6	611
Harris 2434	16.4	60.2	21.1	0.0	2.4	1,519
Harris 2515	12.4	49.2	34.5	0.0	3.9	1,837
GSS75	13.3	58.6	25.2	0.0	2.9	1,487
Harris 7581	13.6	51.7	30.4	0.0	4.3	1,576
Harris 7585	12.1	49.0	32.5	0.0	6.4	1,488
Harris 2521	8.8	52.2	33.3	0.0	5.6	1,491
Harris 7681	17.9	55.1	23.9	0.0	3.1	1,516
GSS76	13.7	58.2	25.5	0.0	2.6	1,494
Harris 7684	16.7	54.7	25.9	0.0	2.7	1,434
Harris 2628	9.5	48.8	36.9	0.0	4.8	1,801
Harris 2630	12.7	53.4	27.9	0.0	6.0	1,539
Harris 7690	16.5	54.4	25.0	0.0	4.0	1,518
GSS77	19.1	60.9	17.1	0.0	2.9	1,523
GSS78	12.9	63.1	20.9	0.0	3.1	1,527

TABLE A12

MILITARY

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	55.5	29.2	3.4	1.7	10.1	1,016
Harris 2236	36.1	41.2	11.9	5.1	5.8	1,594
GSS73	31.7	49.5	16.1	0.0	2.7	1,498
Harris 2343	40.5	35.2	18.4	0.0	5.9	1,592
GSS74	39.6	44.4	13.4	0.0	2.6	1,483
Harris 7487	33.9	44.0	16.8	0.0	5.3	1,517
Harris 2434	30.7	43.6	21.4	0.0	4.3	1,522
Harris 2515	26.7	41.0	25.9	0.0	6.4	1,836
GSS75	35.2	45.8	14.3	0.0	4.6	1,487
Harris 7581	24.5	44.3	24.5	0.0	6.7	1,575
Harris 7585	30.3	41.9	20.9	0.0	6.9	1,480
Harris 2521	22.5	49.7	21.2	0.0	6.8	1,491
Harris 7681	36.2	44.1	15.3	0.0	4.3	1,520
GSS76	39.2	41.3	13.3	0.0	6.2	1,491
Harris 2628	30.4	40.0	22.5	0.0	7.1	1,800
Harris 7690	27.6	49.0	16.9	0.0	6.5	1,517
GSS77	36.3	50.3	10.3	0.0	3.1	1,526
GSS78	29.5	54.0	12.8	0.0	3.7	1,528

TABLE A13

BANKS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

(Percent)

Survey	Confidence					
	A great deal	Some	Hardly any	None	Don't know	Total
Harris 1702	54.3	31.5	3.8	1.4	9.1	1,023
Harris 2219	59.1	26.2	3.0	0.0	11.7	3,147
Harris 2236	39.1	44.3	8.0	2.8	5.8	1,590
Harris 2354	41.2	44.9	9.6	0.0	4.3	1,476
GSS75	31.9	54.0	11.1	0.0	3.0	1,488
Harris 7581	41.5	44.0	11.3	0.0	3.2	1,574
Harris 7585	42.3	42.3	10.4	0.0	4.9	1,481
Harris 2521	33.5	52.5	10.6	0.0	3.4	1,491
GSS76	39.5	48.1	10.0	0.0	2.4	1,492
Harris 2630	36.0	44.7	12.7	0.0	6.5	1,538
Harris 7690	40.0	46.8	10.0	0.0	6.5	1,513
GSS77	41.9	47.4	8.8	0.0	1.8	1,526
GSS78	32.9	54.0	11.7	0.0	1.4	1,528