

ADAPTATION LEVEL AND SOCIAL JUDGMENT

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## PREFACE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The introduction of a method of constructing attitude scales by objective evaluation of opinion statements (Thurstone and Chave, 1929) has stimulated a great deal of research concerning social judgment. The method proposed by Thurstone is based on the assumption that an individual is able to make judgments of an attitude domain independently of his own position within that domain. This assumption however, has not received consistent support in the research literature (Sherif and Hovland, 1961). From this literature has come four theories which attempt to account for social judgment phenomena. The theories are perceptual vigilance, assimilation-contrast, variable series, and adaptation level. Each theory predicts variation in judgment as a function of the judge's own attitude, but each deals with a somewhat different set of parameters.

Perceptual vigilance, suggested by Hovland and Sherif (1952) is the least complex of the four theories. It holds that a judge who possesses an extreme position in the attitude domain of the opinion statements will tend to judge those statements with which he agrees as lying at his end of the scale, and all statements with which he disagrees as lying at the opposite end of the scale. Thus the statements are perceived by the judge as being in basically two categories, accepted statements comprising one category at the judge's end of the scale and

rejected statements being lumped into the other category at the other end of the scale. According to this theory then, item discriminations are of a qualitative nature depending only on whether the judge agrees or disagrees with a statement and not particularly on its actual position within the attitude domain. A problem with this theory is that it is only applicable in the case of extreme judges and does not allow for neutrality. For this reason, perceptual vigilance has found little use in studies of social judgment.

Hovland, Harvey, and Sherif (1957) later elaborated on the perceptual vigilance hypothesis to arrive at a model of assimilation-contrast. This is a duo-process theory which maintains that the judge will perceive statements which he would accept as being nearer to his own position than they actually are (assimilation), and those statements which the judge would personally reject are judged as being farther from his position than they actually are (contrast). Hence, the judge's own attitude serves as an anchor for his scale of judgment. Statements which fall on the attitude scale near the judge's own position are perceived to be nearer to that position than their actual scale value due to the assimilation of those items toward the judge's position. Statements which are not acceptable to the judge are perceived to be farther from his position than they actually are and the judgments of these items will tend to shift away from the judge's position toward the opposite end of the scale due to contrast effects.

Research dealing with the theory of assimilation-contrast in social judgment has provided contradictory findings. For example, some studies have found both assimilation and contrast effects (Hovland, Harvey, and Sherif, 1957; Manis, 1960; and Prothro, 1957) while others have found

assimilation but not contrast (Dillehay, 1965; Manis, 1961; and Weiss, 1959). There are problems with the assimilation-contrast theory other than the inconsistencies in the research findings. One such problem is that this theory does not explicitly provide for an interaction between item judgment and characteristics of the item series such as that found by Upshaw (1962). That is, assimilation-contrast predicts that as long as the position of the judge relative to the attitude domain represented in the item series is constant the judgments of the individual items should not change. Upshaw however, demonstrated that this is not the case. When the range of attitudes represented by the item series was varied, the judgments of the items also varied. Thus, when the attitudes expressed by statements surrounding a particular item changed, the judgment of that particular item also changed. To explain this occurrence, the variable series model was applied by Upshaw.

The variable series theory, as suggested by Volkmann (1951), expressly provides for the interaction between judge's own position and the characteristics of the item series. Specifically, this model maintains that social judgment is a function of the judge's attitude relative to the range of attitudes expressed in the item series. If the own attitude of the judge lies outside of the range of attitudes represented in the item series the judge will use his own position as the anchor at one end of the scale and the statement farthest from his position will serve as the anchor at the other end. This situation results in wide categories and increased variability in judgments. If the judge's own position lies within the range of attitudes expressed the extreme statements become the anchors, and the item discriminations tend to be more sensitive which results in a narrowing of category boundaries. Thus,



this theory accommodates an interaction such as that found by Upshaw (1962). It may be seen that the nature of the attitude domain represented in the item series is not one of the important variables of this theory since the judgment of the statements is attributed to the relationship between the judge's own position and the range of attitudes expressed in the series. Therefore, it should be expected that substitution of different attitude domains into the item series would not affect the scale placements of the items as long as the relationship between the judge's position and the range of attitudes in the series remained unchanged.

This expectation, however, may be unwarranted since perception of statements representing a given attitude domain, quite conceivably, relies on certain classes of stimuli in addition to the judge's own position within that attitude domain. One such class is derived from the status of the particular attitude domain within the social context within which the individual operates. That is, the collective attitudes of the dominant social groups in the population toward a given domain can be considered as forming a distribution along a continuum of social status. The mean of this distribution takes on the characteristics of a social norm that reflects a representative position of the social structure within which the individual operates. It is suggested that this average attitude or collective social norm serves as an external referent for the scale of judgment. This external referent may be perceived differently by individual subjects due to differences in experientially generated social perspectives, but it is assumed that the variability of the perceptions of the referent will be less than the variability among individual own attitudes and also that most subjects

could, if asked, judge the difference between their own position and the external one. Hence, the referent is psychologically present also there is no reason to believe that it is not independent of the subject's own attitude. Therefore, since different attitude domains may be perceived as occupying different positions on the scale of social status it should not be expected that judgments of different attitude domains will be similar simply because the judge's position within them is similar, particularly when the judge is instructed to disregard his own attitude.

A fourth model, adaptation level (AL), takes these external referents into account. In fact, AL is the only one of the four theories that takes into formal consideration more than two classes of variables. The concept of AL, as developed by Helson (1948), deals with judgment as a function of the pooling of stimulation from a number of sources. These sources of stimulation interact with one another to establish an adaptation level or point of subjective neutrality. This point of subjective neutrality or AL is that stimulus in the series which is perceived by the judge to have neither more nor less of the attribute under consideration and serves as a reference point around which all other judgments are made. Although the number of parameters involved in the establishment of the neutral point is not fixed within the AL framework, three major classes of variables are most frequently considered. Extending AL theory to include social judgment data, the first class of variable contributing to the determination of the AL is the judge's own attitude toward the attitude domain under consideration. This own attitude serves as a background variable against which the opinion statements are evaluated. These statements constitute the second class of

variables in the AL system and also serve as the focal stimuli in the judgment task. The third major class of variables is that of residual factors. In social judgment, the most important constituent of these residual factors is the collective social norm discussed previously which defines the general position of a particular attitude domain within the society, and which acts as an external referent in determining the origin of a scale of judgment. The judge's contact with this collective social norm may be either direct through family and associates, indirect through the various news media, or both. Whatever the case, it is contended by AL theory that the judge can discriminate between his own position regarding the attitude domain and the position of society regarding that domain, and that these two factors, in conjunction with the characteristics of the item series, contribute to the formation of an origin for the scale of judgment.

The dynamics of AL theory are not unduly complex. Since the AL is empirically defined as the stimulus value which evokes a neutral response, that stimulus will be judged to occupy the mid-point of the measurement scale and it serves as the reference point for all judgments. If the AL should locate at the upper end of the stimulus series, a greater number of stimuli will be perceived as being of lower value than the neutral stimulus and thus a greater number of stimuli will be placed on the measurement scale below its mid-point. If the AL should occur at the lower end of the stimulus series, the reverse would take place and a greater number of stimuli will be judged above the mid-point of the scale. Thus it can be seen that there is an inverse relationship between the position of the AL and the mean judgment of the stimulus series.

A rapid summary of the above reveals three basic approaches to social judgment: the judge-centered approach of perceptual vigilance and assimilation-contrast which considers the own attitude of the judge relative to the scale position of each item to be the most important factor; the judge x item range approach of variable series which concentrates on the position of the judge relative to the range of attitudes expressed in the item series; and the judge x item series x residual factors approach of adaptation level which encompasses the attitude of the judge, the subject matter of the item series, and the collective social norm which defines the judge's externalized, nonseries referent. As AL theory is the most complete of the four theories presented, it will be used in this study as the primary explanatory model.

These four theoretical models frequently lead to the same predictions, however under certain conditions they generate different predictions (Upshaw, 1962). For instance, perceptual vigilance, assimilation-contrast, and variable series would all predict that as long as judgmental conditions such as own attitude of the judge toward the social group he is judging, the affective content of the stimulus items, and the range of attitudes presented in the item series were held constant, substitution of different social group referents would not influence the judgment of the stimulus items. However, AL theory would predict that statements referring to different social groups would not be judged the same even though the judgmental conditions of own attitude and item content were identical. This prediction is based on the differences in the collective social norms which are associated with all social groups and which serve as external referents for the scale of judgment. The higher the normative status of a group, the

higher the AL of a judge will be toward statements representing that group. Hence, there will be a greater number of items which are perceived to be an unfavorable representation of that group and assigned to the lower end of the judgment scale. Judgments of a social group of lower status would be made relative to a low AL and thus fewer items would be perceived as unfavorable while a greater number of items would be judged to be favorable toward that group. Therefore, holding the composition of the item series and the subjects own attitude position constant, it should be expected that movement of the AL to the upper end of the scale, as would be found in judgments of a high status social group, will yield an increasing number of judgments located at the negative end of the scale when compared with judgments made in reference to a low AL associated with a group of less social esteem. The results of this condition should indicate a lower mean item judgment of the high status group than the low status group.

This prediction of adaptation level, however, should be considered in the light of the judgment set. According to Torgerson (1960), in a judgment situation " ... the task set for the subject is to evaluate the stimuli with respect to some designated attribute .... Since the subject responds to the stimuli on the basis of its relative position among other stimuli, the effect of his own bias is minimized" (P. 48). Torgerson continues with a definition of an endorsement set as one in which " ... the subject is to respond to a stimulus on the basis of the position of the stimulus in relation to the subject's own position with respect to the attribute" (P. 48). Judgment set then, may be thought of as defining a continuum with complete freedom from bias at one end to completely subjective evaluation at the other.

The importance of judgment set for AL theory lies in its influence on the relative contribution of the three classes of variables. Under a strong judgment set the characteristics of the item series would carry the most weight in determining the placement of the items. Under an endorsement set the own attitudes class of variables carries the maximum value. At some intermediate point between a complete judgment set and a complete endorsement set residual factors (collective norms) will carry a maximum, but not necessarily dominant, value. Thus, it should be expected that ratings of items will be less discrepant when judgment of item content is highly stressed than when it is not due to the reduced influence of own attitudes and residual factors.

The purpose of this research is to test the applicability of AL theory to social judgment by simulating the condition delineated earlier in which three attitude domains are represented in opinion statements of identical affective content, and which are judged by subjects having equal positions within the domain they judge. In order to carry this out, it was necessary to select at least three social groups which could be ordered as to position on a scale of social status. The groups selected for this purpose were the Negroes, the Jews, and the Irish. The Negroes, with little doubt, occupied the lowest social position of the three groups. The social positions of the Jews and Irish were somewhat less clear-cut, but it was felt that the Irish held the highest social status with the position of the Jews falling somewhere in between. Manipulation of the judgment set was accomplished through the instructions. One set of instructions emphasized judgment of item content while another did not. Judges who were reasonably equal in attitudes toward the group they judged were selected, and opinion statements

representing the three social groups in items equal in affective content completed the simulation.

The hypotheses deduced from AL theory were:

1. The attitude statements representing the Negro will be assigned the highest mean judgment of the three social groups followed by the Jews and Irish in that order.

2. The differences between the mean judgments of the three social groups will be less under instructions which stress judgment of item content than under instructions which do not. More specifically, it is hypothesized that there will be a significant interaction between social groups and judgment set.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

The social groups represented in the stimulus items were selected intuitively. The opinion items employed were selected from the set of 114 statements constructed by Hinckley (1932) and scaled in equal appearing interval scale values in a recent study by Upshaw (1962). Since many of these items were inappropriate for the design of this study, two criteria of selection were employed. The first of these required each item to be such that the word Negro, Jew, or Irish could be used interchangeably without loss of credibility. The second criterion was that the final group of items selected must cover the entire range of categories based on Upshaw's (1962) scale values determined from his control condition (i.e. subjects who judged the entire group of 114 statements). Forty items were selected on the basis of these two criteria. It was assumed that by inserting different reference groups names the affective content of the items remained unchanged. In a few cases it was necessary to rewrite an item, but the changes made were modest and the relative position of the item within the series should not have been altered noticeably (Appendix A).

Each set of forty statements was presented in random order in a booklet. Under each statement was a scale from 1 to 11 in arabic numerals without adjectival anchors. The randomization procedure consisted of arranging each of the three sets of forty statements into two forms.



For one form, each complete set of items was randomly assigned to positions in five pages with eight items on each page and these pages were then reproduced. The pages were next assembled into booklets with the order of pages randomly determined for each subject. For the second form, this procedure was repeated with a new randomization of the set of items. Thus, there were 240 different orders of presentation for each set of items, and, since this procedure was performed with each set, there were 720 different orders of presentation for the entire collection of 120 statements.

Each booklet of judgment items was accompanied by one or the other of the two instructional conditions used to establish the two levels of set involved in the study. One set of instructions placed emphasis on the necessity of maintaining a judgement set.

The purpose of this study is to construct a scale for measuring attitudes toward the \_\_\_\_\_. On the pages that follow you will find a series of statements that express opinions about the social position of the \_\_\_\_\_. Beneath each statement you will find a scale of eleven categories, and your task is to assign each statement to the category which best indicates the level of social position expressed by the statement. Whether you agree or disagree with a statement should not enter into your judgments. You are only to judge the social position of the \_\_\_\_\_ that is expressed by each statement, and not the extent that you would be willing to endorse the opinion expressed.

Category 1 will contain those statements which place the \_\_\_\_\_ in the lowest social position, and Category 11 will contain those statements that place the \_\_\_\_\_ in the highest social position. In like manner, the categories labeled 2, 3, 4, etc. refer to statements that give the \_\_\_\_\_ higher and higher social position.

Read each statement, then draw a circle around the category number that you judge to best represent the level of social position expressed by the statement. Hence, at the completion of the task you will have, in a sense, arranged all the opinions in eleven steps of the social ladder that is represented by the scale.

Do not try to assign the same number of statements to each category. Use your own judgment as to the position of each statement, and do not be concerned with the number of times you assign statements to any one category.

Please try to bear in mind at all times that you are to judge only the content of each statement. Whether you agree or disagree with a statement should not enter into your judgments. You are only to judge the social position of the \_\_\_\_\_ that is expressed by a statement, and not the extent that you are willing to endorse the opinion expressed.

The other instructions were similar to those employed by Upshaw (1962).

This set mentioned item content but did not emphasize it.

The purpose of this study is to construct a scale for measuring attitudes toward the \_\_\_\_\_. On the pages that follow you will find a series of statements that express opinions about the social position of the \_\_\_\_\_. Beneath each statement you will find a scale of eleven categories, and your task is to assign each statement to the category which best indicates the level of social position, and Category 11 will contain those statements that place the \_\_\_\_\_ in the highest social position. In like manner, the categories labeled 2, 3, 4, etc. refer to statements that give the \_\_\_\_\_ higher and higher social position.

Read each statement, then draw a circle around the category number which you judge to best represent the level of social position expressed by the statement. Hence, at the completion of the task you will have, in a sense, arranged all of the opinions in eleven steps on the social ladder that is represented by the scale.

Do not try to assign the same number of statements to each category. Use your own judgment as to the position of each statement, and do not be concerned about the number of times you assign statements to any one category.

In addition to the statements to be judged were two scales designed to measure the subject's own-attitude toward the group he was judging. The first of these two measures consisted of ten items selected from the Hinckley series on the basis of the same criteria used in selecting the judgment items. The items were ordered on the page with the most positive statement at the top to the most negative statement at the bottom, and the subject's task was to select the one item from the group of ten that most closely resembled his own attitude toward the group represented. The group represented was in every case the group the subject encountered in the judgment series. The second measure of own-attitude was derived from the E scale. The E scale is a

measure of ethnocentrism which is defined as the tendency to be rigid in the acceptance of the culturally "like" and in the rejection of the culturally "unlike" (Adorno et al., 1950). The suggested final form of the E scale used in this study (Appendix B) consists of 20 statements which are endorsed on a six category Likert scale with categories extending from strong agreement to strong disagreement. The items all reflect negative attitudes and are scored such that strong agreement receives a score of six and strong disagreement receives a score of zero. Thus, a total score of 60 indicates a transition from an average tendency to accept cultural differences to one of rejection of these differences.

Subjects: the subjects were selected from 729 volunteers from basic psychology classes at Oklahoma State University. Since one of the controls of this study required that judges be equated on the basis of own-attitudes, the selection of subjects was based on their scores on the two endorsement scales. Uniformity of positive own-attitudes toward the group judged was accomplished by selecting only those subjects who had marked one of the three most positive statements in the self-selection task. To reinforce this criterion and better ensure that the subjects were properly equated in terms of own-attitude, only those who scored 50 or less on the E scale were retained for the final analysis. It was felt that this procedure ensured reasonable equality of attitudes not only within groups but also across groups. A carelessness criterion was employed in order to reduce error variation. This criterion consisted of rejecting subjects who placed statements scaled at one extreme into categories at the opposite extreme six or more times. In this case, the extremes were defined as categories 1, 2, and 3 at the

low end of the scale, and categories 9, 10, and 11 at the high end. Thus, a subject who placed a statement which had a scale value of 3 into category 9 six or more times was rejected on the basis of carelessness. Twelve subjects were eliminated by this criterion.

At the completion of the selection process, 236 subjects remained. Of those who judged the items under the instructions which stressed item content (high judgment set), there were 40 subjects who had judged the Negro items, 43 who had judged the Jewish items, and 39 who had judged the Irish items. Of those making judgments under instructions which did not stress item content (low judgment set), 36 had judged the Negro items, 38 the Jewish items, and 40 the Irish items.

Procedure: The subjects judged the stimulus items in groups of between 5 and 50 subjects each. Each group was assigned a treatment combination in an unsystematic manner. Since the major dependent variable of this study was the item judgments, the judgment task was always presented first to keep it free of any influence from the endorsement task. After the subjects had entered the experimental room, the booklets of judgment items were distributed and the instructions read aloud by the experimenter while the subjects followed on their copies. At the completion of the judgment task, the endorsement scales were distributed. First the instructions for the self-selection task were read aloud and, that task finished, the instructions for the E scale were read and that task completed. At this point, the subjects were dismissed and the booklet of judgment items for each subject was clipped to its corresponding endorsement scales. After each group had gone through this procedure, the endorsement scales were scored and the subjects were selected according to the procedure outlined above.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The dependent variable analyzed in this experiment was mean scale placement. Separate means were computed for the 13 most positive statements, the 14 mid-scale statements, and the 13 most negative statements, thus there were three measures from each subject. An analysis of variance was performed on the data which was organized in a 3 x 2 x 3 factorial arrangement of treatments with repeated measures on the third factor. The factors were social groups (Negroes, Jews, and Irish), judgment set (high and low), and item position (negative, mid-scale, and positive) respectively. The mean scale placements of the items under each treatment combination are presented in Table I, and the means associated with the three sets of main effects are presented in Table II. Due to unplanned unequal group size, an unweighted means solution (Winer, 1962) was employed to yield the analysis of variance presented in Table III. This is not a least squares solution, but should in this instance yield a reasonably close approximation to a least squares solution.

The results of the analysis of variance indicates that the effect of varying social groups in the item series was significant at the .01 level. The positions of the mean judgments of the social groups were in the expected order, the Negro statements highest, Jews next, and Irish lowest. Individual comparisons of the means showed all the

TABLE I

MEAN SCALE PLACEMENTS OF ATTITUDE STATEMENTS UNDER  
EACH TREATMENT COMBINATION

	Negro Statements			Jew Statements			Irish Statements		
	Neg	Mid	Pos	Neg	Mid	Pos	Neg	Mid	Pos
Low Judgment Set	2.821	5.665	9.038	2.453	4.695	9.111	2.292	4.300	8.633
High Judgment Set	2.598	5.167	8.540	2.345	4.666	8.667	2.430	4.393	7.842

TABLE II

MAIN EFFECTS OF TREATMENTS ON MEAN SCALE PLACEMENTS  
OF ATTITUDE STATEMENTS

Social Groups (A)			Judgment Set (B)		Item Position (C)		
Negro	Jew	Irish	Low	High	Neg	Mid-scale	Pos
5.638	5.323	4.982	5.445	5.183	2.490	4.810	8.636

TABLE III  
 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MEAN SCALE PLACEMENTS  
 OF ATTITUDE STATEMENTS

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between Subjects	235		
Social Groups (A)	2	25.372	13.894**
Judgment Set (B)	1	12.157	6.658*
Groups x Set (AB)	2	.901	--
Subjects within groups	230	1.826	
Within Subjects	472		
Item Position (C)	2	2267.998	2286.288**
Groups x Items (AC)	4	5.314	5.317**
Set x Items (BC)	2	4.490	4.526*
Groups x Set x Items (ABC)	4	.382	--
C x subjects within groups	460	.992	

\*\* .01

\* .05



differences to be significant at the .01 level. Manipulation of the judgment set was significant at the .05 level with the mean judgments under the high judgment condition lower than the mean judgments under the low judgment set. The variance due to item position, as would be expected, was significant well beyond the .01 level, the negative items lowest and the positive items highest. The expected interaction between social groups and judgment set did not occur. The interaction between social groups and item position (Fig. 1) was significant at the .01 level, and the interaction between item position and judgment set (Fig. 2) was significant at the .05 level. The higher order interaction between the three treatments was not significant.

Analysis of the simple effects (Winer, 1962) in the social groups and item position interaction revealed that the mean scale position of the negative statements referring to the Negroes was significantly higher ( $F = 4.802$ ;  $F_{.99}(1,460) = 3.84$ ) than the mean scale position of the same statements referring to the Jews and Irish which were not significantly different from each other ( $F = .056$ ). The mean scale position of the mid-scale items were found to be significantly different for all social groups. The mid-scale items referring to the Negroes were higher than those referring to Jews ( $F = 21.50$ ), and the mid-scale items referring to the Jews were higher than those referring to the Irish ( $F = 4.444$ ). The mean scale position of the positive statements referring to the Negroes was not significantly different from that of the same statements referring to the Jews ( $F = .396$ ), but the mean scale positions of items referring to both of these groups were significantly greater than the same statements referring to the Irish ( $F = 12.063$  and  $F = 16.865$  respectively).

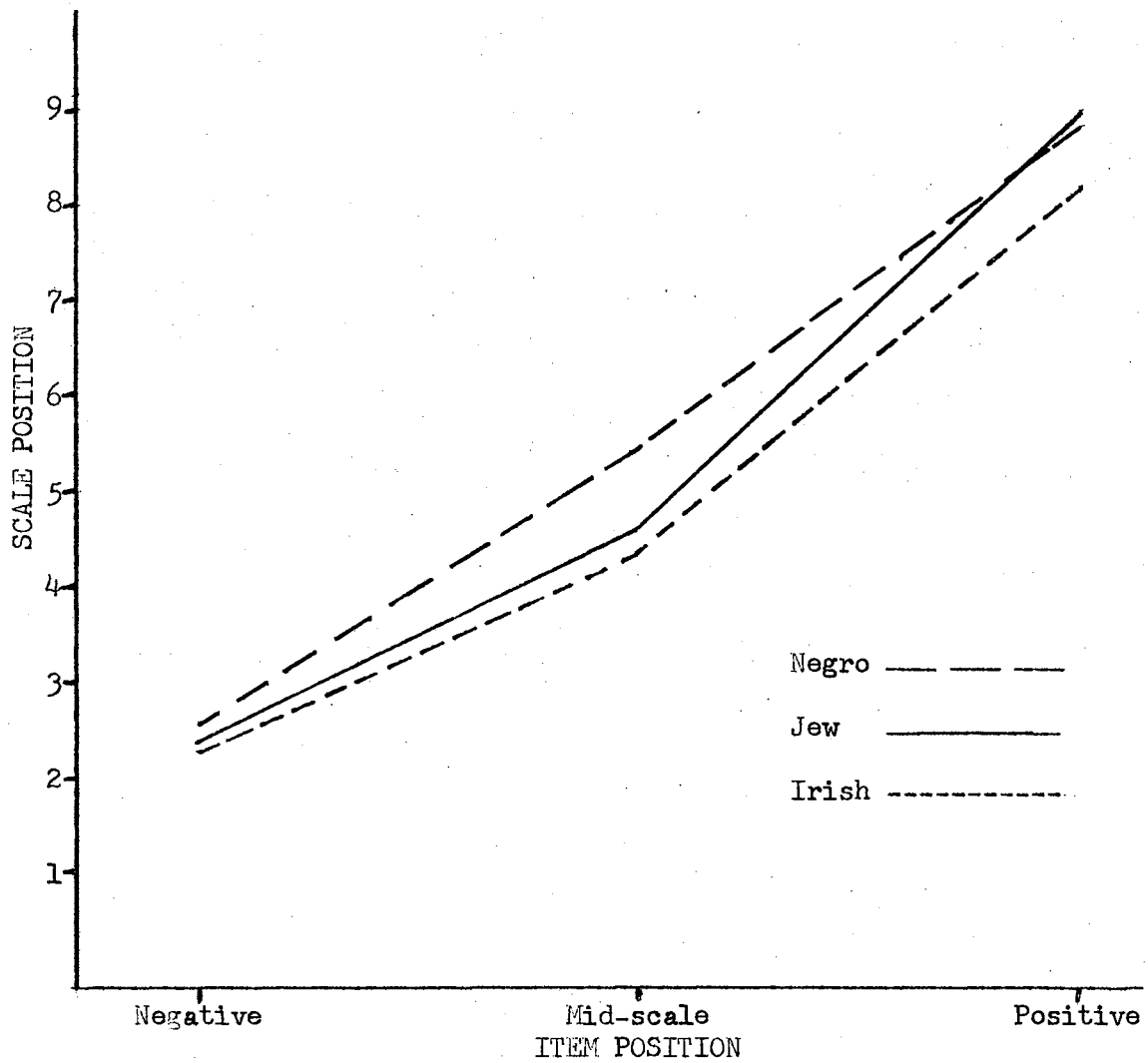


Figure 1. The social groups x item position interaction of the mean scale placement of attitude statements

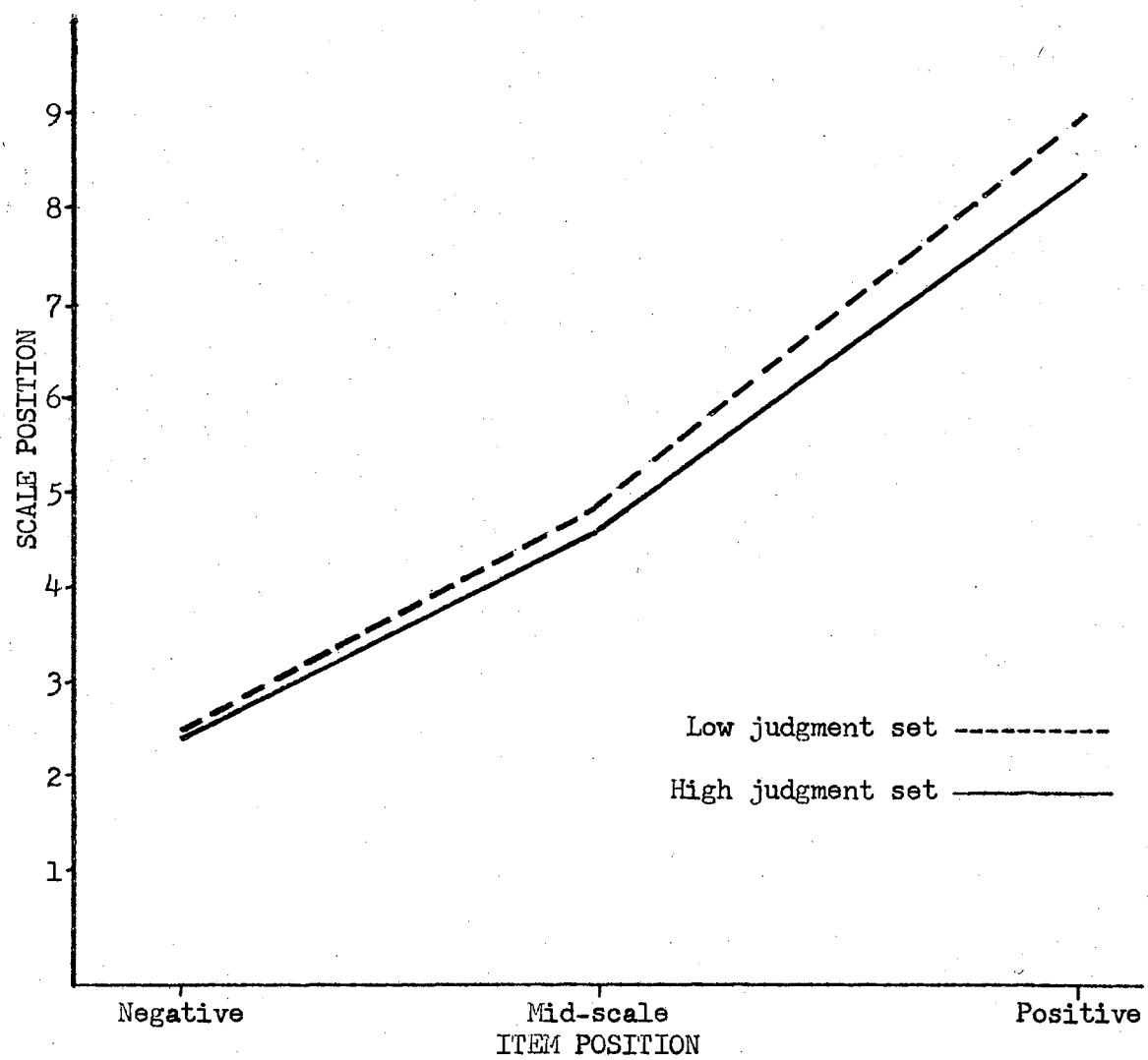


Figure 2. The judgment set x item position interaction of the mean scale placement of attitude statements

Analysis of the simple effects in the interaction between the judgment set and item position showed that none of the differences between levels of judgment at the three levels of item position reached significance at the .05 level. However, the differences increased in such a manner as to lead one to the belief that the significant interaction may have been due to the very small difference between mean scale positions of the negative items, and the relatively large difference between the mean scale positions of the positive items. An explanation of this occurrence will be undertaken in the discussion section.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The major hypothesis that the mean judgments of the three social groups would order themselves inversely to the social status of those groups was confirmed. This indicates that when something favorable was said about a social group of high social status (e.g. the Irish), it was not perceived as being as positive as was the same statement referring to a group of lower status (e.g. the Negro). Adaptation level theory explains this finding as being due to a higher point of subjective neutrality in judgments of the social group of high status which causes a greater number of stimulus items to be seen as unfavorable and thus placed at the low end of the response scale. For judgments of the low status group, the reverse occurs causing a greater number of statements to be placed at the high end of the response scale. Thus it appears that the social status of a group as defined by a collective social norm was serving as an external referent in this experiment, and caused the perceptions of the items representing different social groups to be different. This finding tends to cast a shadow on the perceptual vigilance, assimilation-contrast, and variable series theories of social judgment which do not take into account factors that are external to the judge or item series. The results of this study also tend to discredit Remmers' contention that a generalized attitude scale can be built using statements into which any social group can be substituted. More

specifically, it was shown that even though two attitude statements representing different social groups are equal in affective content, they are not perceived as representing equal attitudes. Since these items would not be endorsed in the same manner a generalized attitude scale of the type suggested by Remmers would not be valid. Thus the demonstration that a collective social norm may serve as an external referent should be taken into consideration by subsequent research in the area of social judgment.

The second hypothesis, that manipulation of the judgment set would interact with the evaluation of the opinion statements, was not confirmed. Specifically, it was expected that the distance between the mean item placement of each group would be less under conditions which stressed judgment of content than under conditions which did not. Although this occurred with the judgments of the mid-scale items, it did not occur with the judgments of the positive or negative statements. What did occur is that at the positive extreme the statements representing Negroes and Jews were rated equally high and items representing the Irish were rated significantly lower. At the negative extreme the position of the Negro and Irish statements maintained their relative positions but the position of the Jewish statements reversed to a point significantly lower than the Negro statements and equal to the Irish statements. It was this relationship that contributed to the unexpected interaction between the social groups and item position that was found. The reason this interaction was not expected is that AL theory predicts the entire scale to shift in a linear fashion with changes in the AL and not at the middle of the scale alone as suggested by these results.

However, the finding that the Irish and Negro statements retained their significantly large differences at both extremes and that the position of the Jewish statements reversed at the extremes, suggests that end effects may be the cause of the interaction. That is, as the judge's AL moved toward one extreme, the statements he judged to lie at the opposite extreme tended to pile up in the end categories there because the response scale did not have a sufficient range of categories to accommodate them. In other words, if a judge perceived a statement to be extremely negative he may assign it to the extreme category at that end, but when he encounters a statement which he believes to be even more negative than the first he is forced to assign those statements equal positions on the response continuum even though they occupy different positions in his judgment scale. This piling up of responses is what is referred to as an "end effect."

If these end effects are in fact operating in this experiment it is a simple matter to explain the interaction between social groups and item position. The end effects at the negative extreme caused the mean judgments of the negative items representing the Irish to be spuriously high and thus equal to the mean judgments of those items referring to the Jews, but, since there was enough room at the positive extreme due to the relatively high AL of the Irish statements, the position of the positive statements fell in the expected order, the Irish lower than the Jews. The end effects at the positive extreme held the mean judgment of the positive statements representing the Negro down to a position equal to that of the positive Jew statements, and, since there was ample room at the negative end due to the low AL of the Negro items, the expected relationship was again found, the Negroes being higher

than the Jews. Thus it is possible that the subject's entire scale of judgment underwent a linear transformation as predicted by AL theory, but due to end effects, uniform shifts of item placements were impossible resulting in the interaction between item position and social judgment.

A hypothesis other than end effects which might also account for the item position interaction found is that the end points are serving as anchors for the scale of judgment. This proposition however, gains little support from the findings of significant differences at the end points. That is, the end anchors hypothesis holds that, if the ends of the response scale had been serving as anchors, the significant differences in the mean judgments of the different social groups at those positions would not have occurred. An implication of the rejection of this hypothesis is that if the ends of the scale are not acting as anchors, one may be led to suspect that the greater distance found between the mean judgments of the mid-scale items was not due to their greater ambiguity as suggested by Edwards (1946), but was due to their greater freedom of movement on the response scale.

Although the influence of the social groups on the item judgments was fairly clear, the significant effect of varying the instructions was not. In most cases, the placements of the items were lower under the high judgment set than under the low judgment set. An unpublished study by Rambo (1967) which employed essentially the same items and used identical instructions also found that increased stress on judgment of item content lowered the mean scale placement of those items relative to the lower judgmental condition. An explanation of this occurrence is not readily available. The interaction between judgment set



and item position is also difficult to explain. The finding that none of the simple effects were significant in this interaction may suggest that a type one error has been made. That is, rejecting the null hypothesis when it should not be. There is a remote possibility that end effects could have caused this interaction if it is real.

A test of the end effects hypothesis could be performed by replicating this study using an own-categories method of item judgment with a fixed mid-point. It would be expected, according to AL theory, that the total number of categories used for the judgment of each group would be equal, but the number of categories falling below the mid-point of the judgment scale would be greatest for the Irish statements, next for the Jewish statements, and least for the Negro statements. Manipulation of the judgment set should then cause these differences to decrease. Since there are no restrictions on the extent of categories available, there should be no interactions between the items and the social groups or judgment set.

In conclusion, the AL theory seems to fit the major findings of this study quite well as long as the assumption is made that end effects are operating, but until the proposed research is carried out and its hypotheses confirmed or denied, one may only speculate on the validity of this assumption. Further research is also necessary before an explanation of the judgment set phenomenon can be obtained.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to measure the influence of an external referent on judgments of attitude statements. The explanatory model used was Helson's adaptation level theory. This theory holds that judgments of attitude statements are a function of three classes of variables: the judge's own attitude, the affective content of the individual items, and residual factors which, for this experiment, was considered to be an external, nonseries referent consisting of a collective social norm defining the social status of the social group represented in the item series. Other theories of social judgment take into account the first two classes of variables mentioned, but do not take into formal consideration the third class, residual factors. The test of AL theory required the first two variables (judge's own attitude and item content) to be held constant and allow only the residual factor (collective social norm) to vary.

Three social groups, the Negroes, Jews, and Irish, were selected to be represented in the attitude statements. These social groups were selected because they could be ordered along a scale of social status. Judge's own attitude was held constant by using only subjects who possessed a positive attitude toward the group they judged. Affective content of the items was controlled by selecting the statements from the Hinckley series and inserting the appropriate social group. Thus

the items differed only in the social group they represented.

The hypotheses deduced from AL theory were a) the mean judgment of the Negro statements would be highest followed by the Jew and Irish in that order; and b) the influence of the residual factors will decrease when judgment of item content is emphasized relative to its influence when judgment of content is not emphasized causing an interaction between social groups and judgment set.

The results clearly supported the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis however, did not receive a strong confirmation since the expected interaction between social groups and judgment set did not occur. The manipulation of judgment set was found to have significant effects, but its explanation could not be drawn from the data present. A significant interaction between item position and social groups suggested that end effects may have been operating which caused the second hypothesis to be disconfirmed.

It was concluded that the collective social norm associated with a social group does serve as an external referent for judgments of attitude statements representing that group, and that this should be taken into account in further research in the area of social judgment.

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APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

## JUDGMENT STATEMENTS

1. The Negro should have freedom but never be treated on an equal basis with the white man.
2. You cannot condemn all Negroes because of the behavior of some of them.
3. I would welcome a Negro family moving into my neighborhood.
4. The Negro is by no means fit for social equality with the most common white.
5. It is possible for the Negro and white races to be brothers in faith without becoming brothers-in-law.
6. The Negro should not be condemned forever to a lower place than the white man, but a different place.
7. I see no reason why a Negro should not be allowed to marry a white person if both parties desire it.
8. The Negro should be allowed to associate with the white man only in the necessary business relationships.
9. The Negro should be given the same educational advantages as the white man.
10. So great is the social range between the highly educated Negro and the "nigger," that the race as a whole cannot be assigned to any one notch in the social scale.
11. The Negro should not be simply the doormat of American civilization.
12. Negroes should not be allowed to mingle with whites in any way.
13. The Negro must possess a much deeper moral nature than the white man, since he has progressed in the face of far greater obstacles.
14. Whether you welcome the existence of the educated and prosperous Negroes or not, they are here and must be given social recognition.
15. The Negro should not be allowed to attend the same school as white children.
16. The inability of the Negroes to develop outstanding leaders dooms them to a low place in society.

17. Nearly 40 years of devoted and enthusiastic effort to elevate and educate the Negro lie stretched out behind us in a dead level of failure.
18. After you have educated the Negro to the level of the white man, there will still be an impassible gulf between them.
19. I believe that the Negro is entitled to the same social privileges as the white man.
20. The Negro should have the advantage of all social benefits of the white man but be limited to his own race in the practice thereof.
21. Although handicapped by a slight intellectual inferiority, the Negro has gained a firmer hold on the higher spiritual realities than the white man.
22. I would be willing to tolerate contact with the black man so long as there is no attempt at, or suggestion of, equality.
23. Give the Negro a high position in society and he will show himself equal to it.
24. I would not patronize a hotel that accomodates Negroes.
25. The Negro, a human being in every sense of the word, should be given equality of rating with the other races.
26. I think of the colored race as occupying a somewhat lower position socially than the white races.
27. No Negro should hold an office of trust, honor, or profit.
28. Inherently, the Negro and the white man are equal.
29. There are some Negroes with whom I would esteem it a privilege to travel, but I would not spend an hour with most members of the Negro race.
30. In this day of rush and hurry, the Negro has met the problems of society in a much calmer manner than the white man.
31. The Negro is perfectly capable of taking care of himself, if the white man would only let him alone.
32. The Negro and the white man should be given the same privileges, but separated in the enjoyment of these privileges.
33. Our judgments of social level are based on economic standing, and the Negroes are farther down in the scale than any other group.
34. The Negro is fully capable of social equality with the white man, but he should not be so recognized until he is better trained.



35. I think the Negroes should make up a rather clearly defined working class in America.
36. In a thousand years the Negro might become the equal of the white man, then his social position should be equal.
37. As long as the Negro continues his struggle to overcome ignorance and sin, we should assist by giving him every privilege, as far as possible, which we ourselves enjoy.
38. The Negro has clearly shown his inferiority and whites should continue to exercise their power of leadership over him.
39. About ten percent of the Negroes in the United States have traits which would place them on a level with the average white man.
40. No person with the slightest trace of Negro blood should associate with whites.
41. I see no reason why a Jew should not marry a white person if both parties desire it.
42. Our judgments of social level are based on economic standing, and the Jews are farther down in the scale than any other group.
43. I would be willing to tolerate contact with the Jew so long as there is no attempt at, or suggestion of, equality.
44. The Jew should not be allowed to attend the same school as gentile children.
45. The Jew must possess a much deeper moral nature than the gentile, since he has progressed in the face of far greater obstacles.
46. The Jew should not be condemned forever to a lower place than the gentile, but a different place.
47. The Jew should have the advantage of all social benefits of the gentile but be limited to his own group in the practice thereof.
48. The Jew should have freedom but never be treated on an equal basis with the gentile.
49. Nearly 40 years of devoted and enthusiastic effort to elevate and educate the Jew lie stretched out behind us in a dead level of failure.
50. As long as the Jew continues his struggle to overcome ignorance and sin, we should assist by giving him every privilege, as far as possible, which we ourselves enjoy.
51. The Jew is by no means fit for social equality with the most common gentile.

52. I believe that the Jew is entitled to the same social privileges as the gentile.
53. I would welcome a Jewish family moving into my neighborhood.
54. So great is the social range between the highly educated Jew and the "kike," that the group as a whole cannot be assigned to any one notch in the social scale.
55. Give the Jew a high position in society and he will show himself equal to it.
56. Although handicapped by a slight intellectual inferiority, the Jew has gained a firmer hold on the higher spiritual realities than the gentile.
57. Whether you welcome the existence of educated and prosperous Jews or not, they are here and must be given social recognition.
58. Jews should not be allowed to mingle with gentiles in any way.
59. The Jew and the gentile should be given the same privileges, but separated in the enjoyment of these privileges.
60. I think the Jews should make up a rather clearly defined working class in America.
61. The Jew, a human being in every sense of the word, should be given equality of rating with the other groups.
62. About ten percent of the Jews in the United States have traits which would place them on a level with the average gentile.
63. In this day of rush and hurry, the Jew has met the problems of society in a much calmer manner than the gentile.
64. No Jew should be allowed to hold an office of trust, honor, or profit.
65. The Jew should be given the same educational advantages as the gentile.
66. There are some Jews with whom I would esteem it a privilege to travel, but I would not spend an hour with most members of the Jewish group.
67. The Jew is perfectly capable of taking care of himself, if the gentile would only let him alone.
68. The Jew should be allowed to associate with the gentile only in the necessary business relationships.
69. You cannot condemn all Jews because of the behavior of some of them.

70. The Jew is fully capable of social equality with the gentile, but he should not be so recognized until he is better trained.
71. Inherently, the Jew and the gentile are equal.
72. The Jew should not be simply the doormat of American civilization.
73. After you have educated the Jew to the level of the gentile, there will still be an impassible gulf between them.
74. I think of the Jewish as occupying a somewhat lower position socially than the gentile.
75. It is possible for the Jews and gentiles to be brothers in faith without becoming brothers-in-law.
76. No person with the slightest trace of Jewish blood should associate with gentiles.
77. The inability of the Jews to develop outstanding leaders dooms them to a low place in society.
78. The Jew has clearly shown his inferiority and gentiles should continue to exercise their power of leadership over him.
79. In a thousand years the Jew might become the equal of the gentile, then his social position should be equal.
80. I would not patronize a hotel that accomodates Jews.
81. In this day of rush and hurry, the Irishman has met the problems of society in a much calmer manner than other people.
82. Whether you welcome the existence of educated and prosperous Irishmen or not, they are here and must be given social recognition.
83. No Irishman should hold an office of trust, honor, or profit.
84. The Irish should not be allowed to attend the same school as other children.
85. The Irish should be allowed to associate with other groups only in the necessary business relationships.
86. I would be willing to tolerate contact with the Irish so long as there is no attempt at, or suggestion of, equality.
87. The Irishman must possess a much deeper moral nature than other people, since he has progrssed in the face of far greater obstacles.
88. In a thousand years the Irishman might become the equal of other people, then his social position should be equal.

89. The inability of the Irish to develop outstanding leaders dooms them to a low place in society.
90. The Irishman should not be simply the doormat of American civilization.
91. The Irish are by no means fit for social equality with the most common members of other nationality groups.
92. No person with the slightest trace of Irish blood should associate with other groups.
93. The Irish should have freedom but never be treated on an equal basis with other groups.
94. The Irish should be given the same educational advantages as other people.
95. You cannot condemn all Irishmen because of the behavior of some of them.
96. I would not patronize a hotel that accomodates the Irish.
97. The Irishman should not be simply the doormat of American civilization.
98. The Irishman has clearly shown his inferiority and other groups should continue to exercise their power of leadership over him.
99. Inherently, the Irish and other nationality groups are equal.
100. Whether you welcome the existence of educated and prosperous Irishmen or not, they are here and must be given social recognition.
101. No person with the slightest trace of Irish blood should associate with other groups.
102. In a thousand years the Irishman might become the equal of other people, then his social position should be equal.
103. After you have educated the Irishman to the level of other people, there will still be an impassible gulf between them.
104. No Irishman should hold an office of trust, honor, or profit.
105. The Irishman is perfectly capable of taking care of himself, if other people would only let him alone.
106. After you have educated the Irishman to the level of other people, there will still be an impassible gulf between them.
107. Irishmen should not be allowed to mingle with other people in any way.

108. It is possible for the Irish and other people to be brothers in faith without becoming brothers-in-law.
109. The Irish and other people should be given the same privileges, but separated in the enjoyment of these privileges.
110. I would welcome an Irish family moving into my neighborhood.
111. The Irish should not be condemned forever to a lower place than other people, but to a different place.
112. I see no reason why an Irishman should not be allowed to marry a person of another group if both parties desire it.
113. I think of the Irish as occupying a somewhat lower position socially than other nationality groups.
114. Inherently, the Irish and other nationality groups are equal.
115. The Irish should have the advantage of all social benefits of other people, but be limited to his own group in the practice thereof.
116. Although handicapped by a slight intellectual inferiority, the Irishman has gained a firmer hold on the higher spiritual realities than other people.
117. The Irishman is fully capable of social equality with other people, but he should not be so recognized until he is better trained.
118. There are some Irishmen with whom I would esteem it a privilege to travel, but I would not spend an hour with most members of the Irish group.
119. The Irishman, a human being in every sense of the word, should be given equality of rating with the other groups.
120. The Irishman has clearly shown his inferiority and other groups should continue to exercise their power of leadership over him.

APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B

## ENDORSEMENT SCALES

The following 10 statements represent attitudes toward the Negroes. The items are arranged in order from most favorable at the top to most unfavorable at the bottom. Put an X in the space beside the one statement that most closely represents your own attitude toward the Negroes. Mark only one statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The record of the Negro in the recent war places him on a level with any United States citizen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our refusal to acceptal the Negro is not based on any fact in nature but rather on prejudice, and should be overcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In all my dealings with the Negro, he has been agreeable and courteous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The rich spiritual life of the Negro compensates adequately for the defects in his nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People tend to exaggerate the differences between the Negroes and whites.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The difference between the Negroes and whites is not one of mere degree, but of kind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In all social affairs implying equality, the Negroes and whites must be kept apart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The social place of the Negro is slightly below that of the illiterate white man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Negro should be considered in the lowest class of society among human beings.

The following 10 statements represent attitudes toward the Irish. The items are arranged in order from most favorable at the top to most unfavorable at the bottom. Put an X in the space beside the one statement that most closely represents your own attitude toward the Irish. Mark only one statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The record of the Irishman in the recent war places him on a level with any United States citizen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our refusal to accept the Irish is not based on any fact in nature but rather on prejudice, and should be overcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In all my dealings with the Irishman, he has been agreeable and courteous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The rich spiritual life of the Irishman compensates adequately for the defects in his nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People tend to exaggerate the differences between the Irish and other groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am not at all interested in how the Irish rate socially.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The difference between the Irish and other people is not one of mere degree, but of kind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In all social affairs implying equality, the Irish and other people must be kept apart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The social place of the Irishman is lightly below the illiterate of other nationality groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Irish should be considered in the lowest class of society among human beings.



The following 10 statements represent attitudes toward the Jews. The items are arranged in order from most favorable at the top to most unfavorable at the bottom. Put an X in the space beside the one statement that most closely represents your own attitude toward the Jews. Mark only one statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The record of the Jew in the recent war places him on a level with any United States citizen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our refusal to accept the Jew is not based on any fact in nature but rather on prejudice, and should be overcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In all my dealings with the Jew, he has been agreeable and courteous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The rich spiritual life of the Jew compensates adequately for the defects in his nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People tend to exaggerate the differences between the Jews and gentiles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am not at all interested in how the Jews rate socially.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The difference between the Jews and gentiles is not one of mere degree, but of kind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In all social affairs implying equality, the Jews and gentiles must be kept apart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The social place of the Jews is slightly below that of the illiterate gentile.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Jew should be considered in the lowest class of society among human beings.

S T O P

Do Not Continue Until Instructed To Do So

The following statements refer to opinions regarding a number of social groups and issues, about which some people agree and others disagree. Please mark each statement in the left-hand margin according to your agreement or disagreement, as follows:

+1: slight support, agreement      -1: slight opposition, disagreement  
 +2: moderate support, agreement    -2: moderate opposition, disagreement  
 +3: strong support, agreement      -3: strong opposition, disagreement

- \_\_\_ 1. I can hardly imagine myself marrying a Jew.
- \_\_\_ 2. Now that a new world organization is set up, America must be sure that she loses none of her independence and complete power as a sovereign nation.
- \_\_\_ 3. It would be a mistake ever to have Negroes for foremen and leaders over whites.
- \_\_\_ 4. One trouble with Jewish businessmen is that they stick together and prevent other people from having a fair chance in competition.
- \_\_\_ 5. It is only natural and right for each person to think that his family is better than any other.
- \_\_\_ 6. Most Negroes would become overbearing and disagreeable if not kept in their place.
- \_\_\_ 7. The best guarantee of our national security is for America to have the biggest army and navy in the world and the secret of the Atom bomb.
- \_\_\_ 8. The trouble with letting Jews into a nice neighborhood is that they gradually give it a typical Jewish atmosphere.
- \_\_\_ 9. To end prejudice against the Jews, the first step is for the Jews to try sincerely to get rid of their harmful and irritating faults.
- \_\_\_ 10. Manual labor and unskilled jobs seem to fit the Negro mentality and ability better than more skilled or responsible work.
- \_\_\_ 11. The worst danger to real Americanism during the last 50 years has come from foreign ideas and agitators.
- \_\_\_ 12. Negroes have their rights, but it is best to keep them in their own districts and schools and to prevent too much contact with whites.

- \_\_\_ 13. Filipinos are all right in their place, but they carry it too far when they dress lavishly and go around with white girls.
- \_\_\_ 14. There is something different and strange about Jews; it's hard to tell what they are thinking and planning, and what makes them tick.
- \_\_\_ 15. Certain religious sects who refuse to salute the flag should be forced to conform to such a patriotic action, or else be abolished.
- \_\_\_ 16. Negro musicians may sometimes be as good as white musicians, but it is a mistake to have mixed Negro-white bands.
- \_\_\_ 17. The people who raise all the talk about putting Negroes on the same level as whites are mostly radical agitators trying to stir up conflicts.
- \_\_\_ 18. America may not be perfect, but the American Way has brought us about as close as human beings can get to a perfect society.
- \_\_\_ 19. There may be a few exceptions, but in general Jews are pretty much alike.
- \_\_\_ 20. Beatniks prove that when people of their type have too much money and freedom, they just take advantage and cause trouble.

VITA

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