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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GRADUATE COLLEGE

INFLUENCE OF THE PROCESS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SELECTION OF ITEMS FOR AN ATTITUDE SCALE

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INFLUENCE OF THE PROCESS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SELECTION OF ITEMS FOR AN ATTITUDE SCALE

APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS

.....

.

																			Page
LIST OF	TABI	LES	٠	٠	•	٠	•	•	٠	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	•	٠	v
Chapter																			
1.	INT	roi	JUC	CTI	[0]	I	•	٠	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1
II.	MET	TOH)		•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	23
III.	RES	SULI	S	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	٠	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	27
IV.	DIS	CUS	sI	ON	I	•	٠	٠	•	٠	•	٠	٠	٠	•	•	•	•	39
v.	SUM	MAR	Υ		•	•	•	٠	•	٠	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	46
REFERENCI	ES	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	49
APPENDIX ATwenty four Statements Used in Present Study to Assess Attitudes Toward Capital																			
APPENDIX	B	Res	po	ns	es	с е,	f	Su tej	ıbj j ec	ec: ti	ts.or	., . 8	La	ti N	tu or		• • •	of nit	ment
		and	E	le	ve	n	St	at	: e #	len	TS	5	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	•	20

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Mean Proportion and Number of Statements Selected from the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment	28
2 Mean Difference between Proportion of Statements Selected from the Latitude of Acceptance and the Latitudes of Rejection and Noncommitment	29
3 Mean Ranges for the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment and Ranges for Items Selected from the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment	33
4 Mean Number of Statements Placed in the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment by Hard Moderates, Soft Moderates, Extreme Subjects and Question- able Ward and Soft Moderates	38
able Hard and Soft Moderates	38

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INFLUENCE OF THE PROCESS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SELECTION OF ITEMS FOR AN ATTITUDE SCALE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to describe trends in the selection of items for the construction of an attitude scale to be presented to the general public. The major hypotheses were designed to investigate the effects of a subject's attitude toward an issue in the selection of statements to be used in the assessment of attitudes of the general public toward that same issue. The issue chosen for the present study was capital punishment.

A modification of procedures of attitude assessment devised by Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965), Sherif and Hovland (1953), and Thurstone (1928) was used in the present study to assess attitudes of subjects toward the issue of capital punishment. Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) have defined attitude scales in terms of latitudes of acceptance, noncommitment and rejection and most acceptable and most objectionable positions. An extension of their procedures

-1-

was used in the present study to investigate fineness of discrimination between items that are placed within latitudes of acceptance, noncommitment and rejection. Of major interest was the influence of discrimination on the selection of statements from the latitudes of acceptance, noncommitment and rejection for the purpose of constructing an attitude scale to be presented to the general public. The question of fineness of discrimination between statements becomes important when one considers the possibility of biasing factors in the construction of attitude scales. Statements may be subject to differential wording or placement along an attitude scale as a result of discriminability of the person constructing the scale. The focus of the present study was on differential selection of statements from latitudes of acceptance or rejection due to the influence of discrimination between statements.

A second purpose of the present study was to learn if subjects select a greater proportion of acceptable or objectionable statements to be included in a scale to measure attitudes of the general public. Studies (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif & Hovland, 1953; Whittaker, 1963; La Fave & Sherif, 1968) have demonstrated that judges' attitudes do influence categorization of statements about controversial issues.

A third major area of interest in the present study was

-2-

related to findings by Hart (1967) concerning subjects who adopt a moderate position on an issue. Hart (1967) found differences in the size of latitudes of rejection of soft and hard moderates, and the present study is partially concerned with verification of these findings.

Need for the Study

A major factor in the development of effective means of attitude assessment is the elimination or reduction of bias on the part of the person constructing the scale. Thurstone (1929, 1931) and others (Hinckley, 1932; Ferguson, 1935; Pintner & Forlano, 1937) considered this factor and assumed that the scale values of statements derived by the method of equal-appearing intervals were independent of the attitudes of judges who rated the statements. Subsequent research (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif & Hovland, 1953; Kelley, Hovland, Schwartz & Abelson, 1955) suggested that judges' attitudes do influence the derivation of scale values. Such bias limits the extent to which any attitude scale is truly representative of the entire range of possible statements about the issue in question. Recognition of these biasing factors force the expansion of attitude scales to include statements representative of the sample of people whose attitudes are being measured, rather than being representative of the person who is measuring the attitude. An analysis of variables which might influence the selection and wording of statements for

-3-

attitude scales should provide information leading to a reduction of bias as a function of the attitude of the person constructing the scale. If statements presented to subjects are not representative of the range of attitudes in the subject population, then the scale may be limited in its effectiveness.

More specifically, bias may result from the tendency for judges to make finer discriminations between acceptable statements than between objectionable statements. Studies (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif & Hovland, 1953) have shown the tendency for high involved subjects to accept a small number of statements and reject a large number of statements. This tendency was ". . . described as a raised threshold of acceptance and a lowered threshold of rejection on the part of highly ego-involved individuals" (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 105). These authors interpreted the findings as an indication that the subject is more discriminating about statements he accepts than about statements he rejects. The present study was designed to learn if discrimination would result in a greater range of scale values of statements selected from the latitude of rejection than from the latitude of acceptance. Such a study is necessary to learn if bias may be introduced into an attitude scale as a result of differential discrimination between acceptable and objectionable statements.

-4-

Theoretical Background

Evidence from studies of perception and judgment support the idea that categorization is one of the fundamental processes of perception and cognition (Bruner, 1957). Judgment or categorization of stimuli results in placement along a range or continuum of similar stimuli. When a single stimulus is " . . . judged against the background or functionally related stimuli, this background for judgment can be called the individual's reference scale for the special item in question" (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 50). Placement of attitudinally related items into categories presupposes the formation of a reference scale for a particular class of stimuli. Reference scales are formed as a consequence of repeated encounters with given stimuli, and once such scales are formed, future judgment of similar stimuli is relative to these scales (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

Reference scales contain outstanding reference points (anchorages) which influence judgment (Sherif & Sherif, 1956). Psychophysical experiments with physical stimuli (weights, lights, tones) have demonstrated shifts in judgment toward or away from anchor points. Of particular relevance to judgmental shifts are assimilation and contrast effects which occur as a function of distance between object or judgment and anchor. An assimilation effect is " . . . a shift in placement of a svimulus toward an anchor value . . .", a contrast effect is a shift " . . . in placement of a stimulus

-5-

away from an anchor value . . . " (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 40).

From information derived from psychophysical and perceptual studies of assimilation and contrast effects comes evidence that psychological reference scales, or psychosocial scales are formed in the same way as psychophysical scales (Sherif & Sherif, 1956; Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965; Sherif & Sherif, 1969). Once psychological reference scales are established, they serve a function similar to physical scales, i.e., provide a basis for comparison of relevant stimulus items. In categorizing social stimuli, however, the individual's attitudes and ego become involved in the judgment of stimuli. "When the individual has a definite attitude about a class of objects, he brings to any specific situation involving it a set of categories already established . . ." (Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965, p. 9).

In attempting to define an attitude, Allport (1935) discussed the variety of definitions of attitude, and pointed out common points of agreement between the various definitions. Attitudes involve a specific orientation toward stimulus objects, and vary in intensity (Young, 1931; Bernard, 1930). Allport (1935) summarized by saying that " . . . the essential feature of attitude is a preparation or readiness for response" (p. 8). Additional criteria of attitudes offered by Sherif

-6-

and Sherif (1956, 1969) and Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) emphasize the learned nature of attitudes, and the motivational and emotional characteristics. The bipolar nature of attitudes has been emphasized by many writers (Bogardus, 1931; Thurstone, 1931; Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965), and may be summed up in Allport's (1935) statement:

An attitude characteristically provokes behavior that is . . . favorable or unfavorable, affirmative or negative toward the object . . . with which it is related. This double polarity in the direction of attitudes is often regarded as their most distinctive feature (p. 8).

Scott (1968) discusses properties of attitudes such as salience, overtness, flexibility and consciousness. Salience and overtness refer to the amount of expression of an attitude, flexibility to the "... ease with which an attitude may be modified ..." (p. 207). Consciousness refers to the ready availability of the attitude to the "conscious mind" of the individual. Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) emphasize that attitudes must be inferred from consistencies in individual behavior toward specific stimuli. This characteristic of attitudes has led to the development of numerous techniques to measure attitudes. Before proceeding to a discussion of attempts to measure attitudes, a summary definition of the term attitude is offered from Sherif and Sherif (1969);

An attitude is the individual's set of categories for evaluating a domain of social stimuli (objects, persons, values, groups, ideas, etc.) which he has established as he learns about this domain (in interaction with other persons, as a general rule) and which relate him to subsets within the domain

-7-

with varying degrees of positive or negative effect (motivation-emotion) (pp. 336-337).

The first major attempts to measure attitudes occurred during the 1920s. Bogardus (1924-1925) devised a Social Distance Scale to evaluate attitudes toward various national or ethnic groups. A second major attempt in attitude measurement came from Thurstone (1928, 1929) and Thurstone and Chave (1929). These authors devised a single scale for attitudes which consisted of a number of statements ranging from extremely favorable to extremely unfavorable toward a specific issue. Each statement was assigned a scale value which was derived by the method of equal-appearing intervals. Thurstone employed psychophysical techniques in the construction of attitude scales in order to obtain an objective, quantifiable measure of an individual's attitude (Thurstone, 1931). Such a technique would serve to eliminate bias based on judges' attitudes, a factor which Thurstone and Chave (1929) considered in the following quote:

If the scale is to be regarded as valid, the scale values of the statements should not be affected by the opinions of the people who help to construct it (p. 92).

The method of equal appearing intervals utilized in the construction of the scale assured that it would be " . . . more than a description of the people who construct the scale" (Thurstone & Chave, 1929, p. 92).

Hinckley (1932) tested this assumption by using con-

-8-

trasting groups of pro-Negro and anti-Negro white judges and Negro judges to categorize 114 statements about the social position of the Negro. The judges derived scale values on the issue by the method of equal-appearing intervals. Since the scale values for the three groups were highly correlated (r ranged from .93 to .98) Hinckley concluded that the scale was independent of the attitudes of the judges and the equal-appearing intervals procedure was effective in eliminating bias from construction of the scale. Some subsequent research (Ferguson, 1935; Pintner & Forlano, 1937) supported this conclusion.

Hovland & Sherif (1952) contested this assumption by duplicating the Hinckley study. They used the same 114 statements on the social position of the Negro, as well as contrasting subject groups of pro-Negro and anti-Negro white judges and Negro judges. However, these authors questioned Thurstone's procedure of discarding judges who placed more than 30 percent of the statements in a single category. Hovland and Sherif (1952) concluded that the greater the involvement of the judge (subject) the greater the number of statements placed in a single category and the fewer categories used. When subjects were given a choice as to the number of categories needed, the more involved subjects used fewer categories (Sherif & Hovland, 1953). Such findings led Hovland and Sherif (1952) to suggest the possibility of measuring attitudes by means of an indirect approach which relied " . . . entirely

-9-

on the way (the subject) distributes his judgments" (p.831). In addition, this indirect method of measuring attitudes would allow the subject to establish his "own categories", or use as many or as few categories as needed.

. . . the extension or constriction of the scale he establishes, the number of categories he uses, . . . the direction of concentration of items may all provide useful indices for analysis of the way the individual 'perceives' the issue (Hovland & Sherif, 1952, p. 831).

Subsequent research with the "own categories" procedure (Sherif & Hovland, 1953; La Fave & Sherif, 1968; C. W. Sherif, 1961, 1963; Vaughan, 1961) led Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) to define attitude scales (judgmental categories) in terms of latitudes or acceptance, noncommitment and rejection:

Latitude of acceptance is the position on an issue (or toward an object) that is most acceptable, plus other acceptable positions. Latitude of rejection is the most objectionable position on the same issue plus other objectionable positions. Latitude of noncommitment (consists of) . . . those positions not categorized as either acceptable or objectionable in some degree (p. 24).

Sherif and Hovland (1961) maintain that the judgmental processes involved in reactions to social stimuli can be explained in terms of assimilation-contrast effects. Judgment of stimuli on a given psychosocial scale is relative to the individual's degree of ego-involvement in an issue. Individuals with a great deal of ego-involvement with a given social issue demonstrate a raised threshold of acceptance and lowered threshold of rejection, which results in a constriction of the range of assimilation and expansion of the range of rejection (contrast effect) (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965). Stimuli falling into the latitude of rejection are judged as more discrepant, and are subject to derogation or unfavorable reaction from the individual.

Less commitment to a stand on a given issue results in a greater range of assimilation or expansion of the latitude of acceptance to include neutral statements on the issue (assimilation effect). Studies of attitudes on political and other controversial issues show that the more extreme the stand, the greater the rejection of opposing or even neutral stands on the same issue (Whittaker, 1963; La Fave & Sherif, 1968; Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965).

Research on categorization of statements about controversial issues demonstrated that persons holding extreme stands tend to distribute judgment bimodally about the extremes of the scale (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif \hat{x} Hovland, 1953; Hovland, Harvey & Sherif, 1957; La Fave & Sherif, 1968; Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Differences between own stand and opposite stand are emphasized, and intermediate items are displaced toward the ends of the scale. Therefore, strong commitment on a controversial issue tends to result in a large latitude of rejection relative to the latitudes of acceptance and noncommitment (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965; Sherif & Sherif, 1969).

-11-

In contrast to persons holding extreme stands on an issue, those with moderate stands tended to exhibit greater variability and equality of distribution of statements along an attitude scale (Vaughan, 1961). Regardless of extremity of stand however, " . . . the strongly worded, unequivocal statements of extreme positions . . . " (Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965, p. 139) were accurately and consistently placed in extreme categories by both moderate and extreme judges, thus reflecting the ability of persons to consistently categorize clear-cut statements on an issue. Therefore, in placing verbal items along a scale of a social issue, individuals are capable of discriminating among statements representing different positions of different social groups. Individuals can order these statements along a continuum of favorableness-unfavorableness, particularly if the statements are not ambiguous. If the individual has a strong involvement in the issue, this influences his placement of the item or statement along a continuum. Using his own stand as an anchor in the judgment of social stimuli, the highly involved individual tends to place items on the acceptable side or on the objectionable side of the scale, leaving very few items in the middle range. Conversely, individuals who are moderately involved in the issue tend to distribute items more evenly along the scale, placing a greater number of items in the middle range or in the latitude of noncommitment (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Vaughan, 1961; Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965; Sherif & Sherif, 1969). However, Diab (1965) and Hart (1967) report

-12-

evidence that highly involved moderates tend to reject a greater number of statements than they accept, which suggests that persons highly committed to a moderate or middle of the road position may react in the same way as persons committed to extreme positions. These findings were further investigated in the present study. Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) report that the size of the latitude of rejection or number of statements rejected is the best single indicator of degree of involvement in an issue. "... the number of positions rejected proved to be the most discriminating index of relative ego involvement or commitment" (p. 156). The present study investigated the tendency of persons adopting moderate positions on a scale to place greater or fewer numbers of statements into the latitude of rejection in relation to the degree of "moderateness" displayed. Hart (1967) made a distinction between two types of subjects who chose a moderate position as their most acceptable position. He defined moderate as: " . . . not one of the two most extreme categories on each end of the scale, or the middle or 'neutral' position . . . " (pp. 15-16).

Hart's (1967) distinction was between <u>hard moderates</u> and <u>soft moderates</u>. <u>Hard moderates</u> were defined as:

Subjects that chose a category (in relation to their most acceptable position) toward the extreme end of the scale representing their side of the issue as the category within their latitude of acceptance that is next in acceptableness to their most acceptable position . . . (p. 22).

Soft moderates were defined as:

-13-

Subjects that chose a category (in relation to their most acceptable category) toward the extreme end of the scale representing the side of the issue opposite their own stand . . . (p. 22).

For purposes of the present study, a different procedure was devised for distinguishing between hard and soft moderates.

The attitude scale on the issue of capital punishment devised by Peterson (1931) was chosen as the instrument for attitude assessment for the present study. Each statement in the scale has a scale value derived by the method of equal-appearing intervals. Peterson and Thurstone (1933) utilized the capital punishment scale to assess attitude change in students after exposure to a motion picture " . . . judged as having affective value on the issue in question . . ." (p. xv).

Hart's (1967) distinction between hard and soft moderates was based on the relationship between the subject's most acceptable position, next most acceptable position and latitude of rejection. Hard moderates were those subjects whose latitude of acceptance extended in the direction <u>opposite</u> the latitude of rejection. Soft moderates were those subjects whose latitude of acceptance extended in the direction <u>toward</u> the latitude of rejection.

A similar distinction was made in the present study. Moderates were those subjects who did not choose as most acceptable the two statements at either extreme of the Peterson capital punishment scale, i.e., who did not choose as most acceptable the

-14-

statements with scale values of 0.0, 0.1, or 10.4, 11.0 (See Appendix A). In addition, subjects were <u>not</u> classified as moderate if they chose as most acceptable the middle of the road statement, "It doesn't make any difference to me whether we have capital punishment or not" (scale value 5.5).

In the present study, the distinction between hard and soft moderates was based on the relationship between the subject's most acceptable position, and the mean Peterson scale value for the latitude of acceptance, and the latitude of rejection. Hard moderates in the present study, were those subjects whose mean Peterson scale value (in relation to their most acceptable position) for the latitude of acceptance extended toward the end of the scale representing their side of the issue, i.e., the latitude of acceptance extended in the direction opposite the latitude of rejection. In the present study, soft moderates were those subjects whose mean Peterson scale value (in relation to their most acceptable position) for the latitude of acceptance extended toward the extreme end of the scale representing the side of the issue opposite their own stand, i.e., whose latitude of acceptance extended in the direction toward the latitude of rejection.

Since the distinction between hard and soft moderates in the present study was similar to the distinction made by Hart (1967), both procedures should identify the same subsets of subjects. In both cases, the soft moderates should accept statements which lie in the direction of the latitude of re-

-15-

jection, and hard moderates should accept statements which lie in the direction opposite the latitude of rejection.

In spite of criticisms by Sherif and Hovland of the Thurstone approach to attitude scaling, there is evidence to support the stability of Thurstone's scales over considerable periods of time. Hinckley (1963) reports his follow-up study of attitudes toward social position of the Negro. In this study, he found a correlation of .94 between scale values derived by contrasting groups of pro-Negro and anti-Negro subjects. Hinckley found a comparable correlation of .98 in his study &n 1932 in which he used pro and anti-Negro white subjects to derive scale values for the attitude scale on the social position of the Negro.

Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) agree that the technique of attitude scaling devised by Thurstone (1928) does permit " . . . the ordering of at least certain items in a given universe of discourse . . . as a baseline for comparison . . . ", and that the " . . . methods developed for scaling attitudinal items will continue to be useful for this purpose" (p. 245).

York (1966) utilized Thurstone's method of equal-appearing intervals to derive scale values for the issue of capital punishment to determine the stability of Thurstone scale values over several years. He found a correlation of .98 between the scale values obtained in 1930 by Peterson (1931) and the scale values obtained in 1966.

-16-

Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957), in evaluating the usefulness of the Semantic Differential as a measure of attitudes, report significant correlations between the evaluative dimension of the Semantic Differential and Thurstone's scales of attitudes toward the Church, the Negro and Capital Punishment. As a measuring instrument, the evaluative dimension of the Semantic Differential consists of a number of bipolar adjective scales ranging in value from -3 (unfavorable adjectives, e.g., bad, unfair, etc.) through 0 (neutral) to +3 (favorable adjectives, e.g., good, fair, etc.). The attitude score of a concept such as Negro is obtained by a summation of all evaluative ratings (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957). The three concepts, Church, the Negro and Capital Punishment were rated on several evaluative scales. Correlations between the evaluative dimension of the Semantic Differential and Thurstone scale scores were .74, .82 and .81 respectively (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957, p. 194). Such findings further demonstrate the stability of the Thurstone scales over several years.

Of additional significance to the present study was the observation by Sherif and Hovland (1961; Hovland & Sherif, 1952) that constriction of the latitude of acceptance reflects a tendency for highly involved subjects to make finer discriminations between statements placed in the latitude of acceptance than between statements placed in the latitude of rejection:

. . . individuals who are highly ego-involved in an issue are often quite discriminating in placing items in a category corresponding to their own stand on the

-17-

issue, but lump together all statements differing from their own stand at the end of the scale they reject (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 105).

Thus, with increased involvement in an issue, the individual becomes more discriminating in his acceptance of statements and more indiscriminate in his rejection of statements.

Rokeach (1954, 1960) makes a similar observation in his research on open and closed cognitive systems, contending that persons with more open systems display ". . . relatively little discrepancy in the degree of differentiation between belief and disbelief systems" (Rokeach, 1960, p. 55). On the other hand, persons with closed cognitive systems tend to perceive the world in terms of black or white with a " . . . great discrepancy in the degree of differentiation between belief and disbelief systems" (Rokeach, 1960, p. 56). Persons with open systems are capable of greater differentiation within their disbelief systems. Thus, the more dogmatic or more ego-involved individual is less discriminating between stimuli that are placed within his latitude of rejection or disbelief system. Greater dogmatism results in dedifferentiation of disbelief systems, i.e., other disbelief systems are perceived as similar, a phenomenon reflected in statements such as: "Communism and socialism are the same, Democrats and Republicans are both run by Wall Street . . . " (Rokeach, 1954). p. 199). Further, there will be less knowledge of objects or statements which are rejected as compared to knowledge of objects, statements or events which are accepted as part of the

-18-

belief system. "The greater the dogmatism the greater the discrepancy between degree of knowledge of . . . events . . . stemming from the belief system and any one of the disbelief subsystems" (Rokeach, 1954, p. 198). This lack of knowledge apparently results from a tendency to avoid " . . . contact with stimuli . . . which threaten the validity of the belief system . . ." which comes with increased dogmatism (Rokeach, 1954, p. 200).

Another line of evidence pertaining to discrimination of stimuli comes from studies of perceptual learning by Gibson and Gibson (1955). These authors reported that "...a stimulus starts out by being indistinguishable from a whole class of items in the stimulus universe tested, and ends by being distinguishable from all of them" (p. 38). In several experiments reported, subjects learned to make finer discriminations between stimuli as a result of increased exposure to the given stimulus universe. Gibson and Gibson (1955) give as an example of the tendency for discrimination to become finer with practice, the comparison between the wine connoisseur and the man whose wine repertoire is limited:

One man, let us say, can identify sherry, champagne, white wine, and red wine. He has four percepts in response to the total possible range of stimulation. Another man can identify a dozen types of sherry, each with many varieties, and numerous blends, and so on for the others. He has four thousand percepts in response to the range of stimulation (p. 35).

It was a basic assumption of the present study that similar effects in terms of discrimination occur in the categorization

-19-

of verbal items onto psychosocial or attitude scales. A study by Ager and Dawes (1965) considered the effect of judges' attitudes on discrimination. The measure of discrimination consisted of the number of errors (failure to agree with a consensus ordering) in paired comparison judgments of attitude statements. Ager and Dawes (1965) found that errors increased as a function of the distance of the statements from the subject's own position on the issue. Proscience raters demonstrated a greater proportion of errors when discriminating between antiscience statements than between proscience statements and vice versa.

White and Harvey (1965) report that authoritarian, dogmatic or concrete subjects used more extreme and more widely dispersed categories in judgment of statements about the church, a finding which reflects " . . . a simple cognitive structure comprised of fewer differentiations and poor integrations" (p. 338).

Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) contend that highly ego-involved subjects " . . . bunch large numbers of items into categories objectionable to them" (p. 239), i.e., into the latitude of rejection, which reflects a tendency to discriminate more finely between items placed within the latitude of acceptance than between items placed within the latitude of rejection.

The present study utilized an extension of the "own categories" procedure (Sherif & Hovland, 1953; Sherif & Sherif,

-20-

1964) and items from the scale of attitude toward capital punishment devised by Peterson (1931) to investigate hypotheses concerning the influence of discrimination in the selection of items for attitude scales.

Hypotheses

- 1(a) When given the opportunity to select items or statements from a larger number for the construction of an attitude scale to measure the general populace, subjects select a greater proportion of statements from their latitude of acceptance than from their latitude of rejection. Thus, the mean proportion of statements drawn from the latitude of acceptance is greater than the mean proportion of statements drawn from the latitude of rejection.
- 1(b) Subjects select a greater number of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection. Thus, the mean number of statements chosen from the latitude of acceptance is greater than the mean number of statements chosen from the latitude of rejection.
- Subjects will not select their most objectionable statement for the construction of an attitude scale.
- 3. The range of Thurstone scale values of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance is smaller than the range of Thurstone scale values selected from the latitude of rejection, thus reflecting a tendency toward finer discrimination between statements within the latitude of acceptance than between statements within the latitude of re-

-21-

jection.

4. Subjects classified as hard moderates place a greater number of statements in their latitude of rejection than soft moderates. Thus, the mean number of statements in the latitude of rejection will be greater for hard moderates than for soft moderates.

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CHAPTER II

METHOD

Pre-test

A pre-test of two of the hypotheses was conducted prior to the 1968 Presidential election. The statements used to assess attitudes toward the Presidential candidates were those used in previous studies by Sherif (1960) (Sherif, Sherif & Nebergall, 1965, p. 28). A sample of 137 subjects participated in the pre-test and results from this study tentatively supported hypotheses 1 and 3.

In order to test these hypotheses more adequately, a pretest was employed using Peterson's (1931) scale of attitudes toward capital punishment. The advantage of the capital punishment scale over the statements about Presidential candidates used in the previous study is that scale values exist for the Peterson scale and there are a larger number of items. A pretest with 15 subjects was conducted and the results from this study tentatively supported hypotheses 1(a), 2 and 3. The sample was not of sufficient size to permit adequate test of hypotheses 1(b) and 4.

-23-

Subjects

Subjects were 150 female undergraduate students obtained from introductory and advanced psychology courses at a liberal arts college during November, 1969. Subjects were asked to provide the following information: age, college major and classification. Subject participation was on a voluntary basis.

Subjects ranged in age from 18 to 25, however, 98 percent of the subject population fell within the ages of 19 to 21. Student classification of the subjects ranged from sophomore to senior with 86 percent of the subject population coming from the sophomore and junior classes. Of the 150 subjects who participated in the present study, 148 were white and 2 were Negro. The majority of the student body are from middle class Protestant families. Due to the school's proximity to Washington, D. C. and various military installations, many of the students come from families in which the father is an employee of a Government agency or a military officer.

Materials

The issue chosen for the present study was capital punishment. The attitude scale on the issue of capital punishment devised by Peterson (1931) (Peterson & Thurstone, 1933) was chosen. The scale contained 24 statements ranging from favorable to unfavorable on the issue of capital punishment (see Appendix A). Using the method of equal appearing intervals, Peterson (1931) derived scale values for each statement. These

-24-

scale values ranged from 0.0 to 11 (Peterson & Thurstone, 1933, pp. 22-23).

Statements were presented to subjects on cards (4 cm. x $10\frac{1}{2}$ cm.). On the back of each card was an identification number which corresponded to the number randomly assigned to that statement by Peterson (1931; Peterson & Thurstone, 1933).

Procedure

The own categories procedure of attitude assessment outlined by Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) was modified to determine subjects' latitudes of acceptance, rejection and noncommitment. Each subject was provided with two sets of 24 cards enclosed in a standard, white envelope (No. 10). Subjects were presented the statements with the following printed instructions which were read aloud:

Here are 24 cards containing statements about capital punishment.

- Step I: Read each statement carefully. Place the statements with which you agree in a stack to your left. Place the statements with which you do not agree on your right. Place all remaining statements in a third stack, in the middle.
- Step II: Place ONE CHECK MARK (V) by each statement that is AC-CEPTABLE to you. Place ONE X MARK (X) by each statement that is OBJECTIONABLE to you.
- Step III: Find the ONE statement that is MOST ACCEPTABLE to you and place TWO CHECK MARKS (\//) on that card. Find the ONE statement that is MOST OBJECTIONABLE to you and place TWO X MARKS (XX) on that card.

Place all 24 cards together and enclose them in the envelope provided.

Subjects were then read the following paragraph before proceeding to Step IV:

I am interested in public opinion about capital punishment and have presented you with a number of statements from various sources. I feel that there may be some statements here which are unnecessary, or are not representative of the issue. Therefore, I would like for you to choose eleven statements which you feel are most representative of American public opinion concerning capital punishment. I have provided you with a second group of 24 cards containing the same 24 statements.

- Step IV:Read the second group of statements. Select from these 24 statements the ELEVEN statements which best represent the attitudes of the AMERICAN PUBLIC on the issue of capital punishment. Consider that public opinion will range from strongly favorable toward capital punishment to strongly opposed to it.
- Step V:Arrange these <u>eleven</u> statements on a continuum from pro (for) to <u>anti (against)</u> capital punishment.
- Step VI:NUMBER these <u>eleven</u> statements from <u>one</u> (pro) to <u>eleven</u> (anti).
- Step VII: Place all 24 cards together, enclose them with the rubber band provided, and put them in the envelope with the first group of cards.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1(a) predicted that a greater proportion of statements would be selected from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection. A t-test for dependent means (Walker & Lev, 1953) was used to test the null hypothesis of no difference between proportion of statements drawn from the latitude of acceptance and proportion of statements drawn from the latitude of rejection. The mean difference between these proportions (mean difference = .2006) was significant in the predicted direction (t = 6.6681; df = 149; p < .0005). The null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis that subjects select a greater proportion of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection. Table 1 presents a summary of the mean proportion and number of statements selected` from the latitudes of acceptance, rejection and noncommitment.

-27-

Table 1

Mean Proportion and Number of Statements Selected from the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment

		ان هما می بین متحود با ایک وا ^ر این متحود بین و به ماه مربوع ماه می نواند ایک ایک ای موری بی							
	Mean Response								
	Latitude of Acceptance	Latitude of Rejection	Latitude of Noncommitment						
Proportion N = 150	.6063	.4056	.3679						
Number N = 150	3.59	4.55	2.86						

Subjects also selected a greater proportion of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of noncommitment. The mean difference between proportion (mean difference = .2384) of statements drawn from the latitude of acceptance and proportion drawn from the latitude of noncommitmentwas significant (t = 8.147; df = 149; p \langle .0005). Thus, subjects selected a greater proportion of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection and noncommitment. Table 2 presents a summary of the mean differences between proportion of statements drawn from the latitude of acceptance and the latitudes of rejection and noncommitment.

Table 2

Mean Difference between Proportion of Statements Selected from the Latitude of Acceptance and the Latitudes of Rejection and Noncommitment

			Mean Difference	t T	<u>P</u>
LA N	9	LR 150	.2006	6.668	.0005
LA N	-	LNC 150	.2384	8.147	.0005

Hypothesis 1(b) predicted that in selecting items to be used to assess attitudes of the general public, subjects would select a greater number of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection. A two-tailed t-test for dependent means (Walker & Lev, 1953) was used to test the null hypothesis of no difference between mean number of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance and mean number of statements selected from the latitude of rejection. The mean difference (mean difference = -.9666) was significant (t = 3.5566; df = 149; p \angle .001) but not in the predicted direction. Subjects selected a greater number of statement from the latitude of rejection than from the latitude of acceptance. Thus, hypothesis 1(b) was not supported. Table 1 presents a summary of the mean number of statements selected from the latitudes of acceptance, rejection and noncommitment. Inspection of

Table 1 reveals that subjects selected the greatest number of statements from the latitude of rejection (mean = 4.55; SD = 2.43). A greater number of statements was selected from the latitude of acceptance (mean = 3.59; SD = 1.60) than from the latitude of noncommitment (mean = 2.86; SD = 2.41) (t = 2.6995; df = 149; p < .01).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that subjects would not choose the most objectionable statement for the eleven item scale. A sign test (Siegel, 1956) was used to test the null hypothesis of an equal probability of subjects selecting their <u>most objectionable</u> position as not selecting their <u>most objectionable</u> position or statement. Of 150 subjects, 39 did choose the most objectionable statement for the eleven item scale and 111 did <u>not</u> choose the most objectionable statement. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected (z = 5.80; p <.00003) in favor of the alternate hypothesis that subjects would <u>not</u> choose the most objectionable position.

Of additional interest in regard to the second hypothesis was the extent to which subjects did select their most acceptable statement for the eleven item scale. A sign test (Siegel, 1956) was used to test the null hypothesis of an equal probability of subjects selecting the most <u>acceptable</u> statement as not selecting the most <u>acceptable</u> statement. Of 150 subjects, 33 did <u>not</u> choose their most

-30-
acceptable statement for the eleven item scale and 117 <u>did</u> choose the most acceptable statement. This finding was also significant (z = -6.78; p < .00003), thus indicating that subjects tend to select their most acceptable statement and do not select their most objectionable statement.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the mean range of Peterson (1931) scale values of statements selected from the <u>latitude</u> of <u>acceptance</u> would be smaller than the mean range of statements selected from the <u>latitude of rejection</u>. In order to test this hypothesis, the range was determined in the following manner:

<u>Range for the latitude of acceptance</u> (R_{la}) . The range of statements <u>in</u> the latitude of acceptance was determined by subtracting the smallest scale value from the largest scale value in the latitude of acceptance (e.g., 3.4 - 0.0 = 3.4).

<u>Range for the latitude of rejection</u> (R_{1r}) . The range of statements <u>in</u> the latitude of rejection was determined by subtracting the smallest scale value from the largest scale value in the latitude of rejection (e.g., 11.0 - 6.2 = 4.8).

5.2

The same procedure was followed in determining the range for the eleven item scale. Of those statements chosen <u>from</u> the <u>latitude of acceptance</u> (R_a), the smallest scale value was subtracted from the largest scale value (e.g., 2.7 - 0.0 = 2.7).

-31-

Of those items selected from the <u>latitude</u> of rejection (R_r) , the smallest scale value was subtracted from the largest scale value (e.g., 11.0 - 7.9 = 3.1).

In order to test the hypothesis that the range of items selected from the latitude of rejection was greater than the range of items selected from the latitude of acceptance, a final step was performed. The range of statements chosen <u>from</u> the latitude of acceptance (R_a) was subtracted from the range of statements falling <u>within</u> the latitude of acceptance (R_{la}) (e.g., 3.4 - 2.7 = 0.7; or R_{la} - R_a).

The range of statements chosen <u>from</u> the latitude of rejection (R_r) was subtracted from the range of statements falling <u>within</u> the latitude of rejection (R_{lr}) (e.g., 4.8 -3.1 = 1.7; or R_{lr} - R_r).

A t-test for dependent means was used to test the null hypothesis that $(R_{1r} - R_r = R_{1a} - R_a)$; or that there is no difference between the mean range of statements chosen from the latitude of rejection and the mean range of statements chosen from the latitude of acceptance. The null hypothesis was rejected (t = 7.8172; df = 149; p < .0005) in favor of the alternate hypothesis that the mean range of statements chosen from the latitude of rejection was greater than the mean range of statements chosen from the latitude of acceptance. Table 3 presents a summary of the mean ranges of scale values within the latitudes of acceptance (R_{la}) , rejection (R_{lr}) and noncommitment (R_{lnc}) . Table 3 also presents the mean ranges of scale values of items selected from the latitudes of acceptance (R_a) , rejection (R_r) and noncommitment (R_{nc}) . Also included in Table 3 is the result of subtracting the ranges of <u>items selected</u> from the ranges of statements within the latitudes of acceptance, rejection or noncommitment.

Table 3

Mean Ranges for the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment and Ranges for Items Selected from the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment

	Mean Response		
	Latitude of Acceptance	Latitude of Rejection	Latitude of Noncommitment
Range (R _{1a} ,R _{1r} ,R _{1nc}) N = 150	4.12	8 .84	6.02
Range (R _a ,R _r ,R _{nc}) N = 150	3.10	5.30	3.47
(R _{1a} -R _a),(R _{1r} -R _r), (R _{1nc} -R _{nc}) N = 150	1.02	3.54	2.55

It can be seen from Table 3 that the mean range within the latitude of rejection (mean = 8.84) exceeds the mean range within the latitude of acceptance (mean = 4.12) and within the latitude of noncommitment (mean = 6.02). Also from Table 3, the mean range of statements selected from the latitude of rejection (mean = 5.30) exceeds the mean range of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance (mean = 3.10) and from the latitude of noncommitment (mean = 3.47). The mean difference between the range of scale values of statements selected from the latitude of rejection and the latitude of acceptance ($R_{1r}-R_{r}$) - ($R_{1a}-R_{a}$) was significant (mean difference = 2.52), thus supporting the third hypothesis that the range of statements selected from the latitude of rejection is greater than the range of statements selected from the latitude of

Of additional interest was the difference between the mean range of statements selected from the latitudes of acceptance and noncommitment (mean difference = 1.53). The mean range of statements selected from the latitude of noncommitment was greater than the mean range of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance (t = 6.3625; df = 150; p <.0005). Thus hypothesis 3 predicting a constricted scale value range between statements within and chosen from the latitude of acceptance was supported. The scale value ranges of statements selected from the latitudes of rejection and noncommitment were significantly greater than the range of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that hard moderates would place

-34-

a greater number of statements in the latitude of rejection than soft moderates. In line with Hart's (1967) distinction between moderates and extremely committed subjects, moderates were those subjects who did not choose as most acceptable the two statements at either extreme of the 24 item Thurstone scale, i.e., who did not choose as most acceptable the statements with scale values of 0.0, 0.1 or 10.4, 11.0 or the middle of the road statement, "It doesn't make any difference to me whether we have capital punishment or not" (scale value 5.5).

<u>Hard moderates</u> were those subjects whose mean Peterson (1931) scale value (in relation to their most acceptable position) for the latitude of acceptance extended toward the extreme end of the scale representing their side of the issue. In other words, the latitude of acceptance extended away from the latitude of rejection and most objectionable statement.

<u>Soft moderates</u> were those subjects whose mean Peterson (1931) scale value (in relation to their most acceptable position) for the latitude of acceptance extended toward the extreme end of the scale representing the side of the issue opposite their own stand, i.e., the latitude of acceptance extended toward the most objectionable position.

Of 150 subjects, 52 were clearly defined as hard moderates and 30 were clearly defined as soft moderates. Of the remaining 68 subjects, 27 were classified as not moderate

-35-

because they chose as most acceptable one of the four extreme statements or the middle of the road statement. There was some difficulty in classifying the remaining 41 subjects because of the latitude of rejection. These 41 subjects had a latitude of rejection in which the most objectionable statement and the mean of the latitude of rejection were at opposite ends of the 24 item scale, e.g., MO = 11.0; Mean LR = 1.86. In other words, these subjects rejected statements at both ends of the scale, and did so in such a way that the number of statements rejected was greater at the end of the scale opposite to their most objectionable statement. For this reason, there was some question as to which value was most important, the mean of the latitude of rejection or the most objectionable statement. However, in keeping with the original distinction between hard and soft moderates, these 41 subjects were classified on the basis of the most objectionable position rather than on the basis of the mean of the latitude of rejection. However, analysis of data derived from these subjects was separate from the analysis of the 82 clearly defined hard and soft moderates.

A t-test for independent means (Walker & Lev, 1953) was used to test the null hypothesis of no difference between hard moderates and soft moderates in mean number of statements allotted to the latitude of rejection. Hard moderates placed a greater number of statements (mean = 11.23) in the latitude of rejection than did soft moderates (mean = 9.27).

-36-

The difference between hard and soft moderates in mean number of statements placed in the latitude of rejection was significant in the predicted direction (mean difference = 1.96; t = 2.3657; df = 80; p $\leq .025$).

Hart (1967) reported that soft moderates placed a greater number of statements in the latitude of noncommitment than hard moderates. His findings were confirmed in the present study. Soft moderates placed a greater number of statements (mean = 8.77) in the latitude of noncommitment than hard moderates (mean = 6.38). The difference between soft and hard moderates in mean number of statements placed in the latitude of noncommitment was significant (mean difference = 2.39; t = 2.3206; df = 80; p < .025).

However, when the clearly defined hard and soft moderates were combined with the questionable hard and soft moderates, the difference between hard and soft moderates in number of statements allotted to the latitude of rejection was not significant (meanhm - mean $_{SM} = .56$) (t = .8144; df = 121; p>.10). The two groups of hard moderates placed a greater number of statements in the latitude of rejection (mean = 11.52) than the two groups of soft moderates (mean = 10.96), but the difference between the means was not significant. Table 4 presents a summary of the mean number of statements placed in the latitudes of acceptance, rejection and noncommitment by hard and soft moderates, questionable

-37-

hard and soft moderates, and extreme subjects. Table 4 also presents a summary of the mean number of statements placed in the latitudes of acceptance, rejection and noncommitment by the total group of subjects (N = 150). The mean number of statements allotted to the latitude of rejection (mean = 10.99) was greater for all subjects than the mean number of statements allotted to the latitude of noncommitment (mean = 6.86) and the latitude of acceptance (mean = 6.15).

Table 4

Mean Number of Statements Placed in the Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment by Hard Moderates, Soft Moderates, Extreme Subjects and Questionable Hard and Soft Moderates

	Mean Response		
	Latitude of Acceptance	Latitude of Rejection	Latitude of Noncommitment
Hard Moderates $N = 52$	6.38	11.23	6.38
Soft Moderates N = 30	5.97	9.27	8.77
Extreme Subjects N = 27	6.78	9.74	7 . 48
Hard Moderates (?) N = 13	5.46	12.69	5.85
Soft Moderates (?) N = 28	5.64	12.79	5.57
All Subjects N = 150	6.15	10.99	6.86

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study indicate that an individual's acceptance or rejection of a statement is a significant source of bias in the selection of statements for the construction of an attitude scale to be presented to the general public. In addition, the data from this study suggest that individuals make finer discriminations between acceptable statements than between objectionable statements, thus supporting conclusions from earlier studies regarding the influence of judges' attitudes on the construction of attitude scales (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif & Hovland, 1953). In addition, the data from the present study support findings reported by Hart (1967) in regard to the size of the latitudes of rejection and noncommitment of persons taking a moderate stand on an issue.

The first hypothesis predicted that when given the opportunity to select statements for an attitude scale to be presented to the general public, subjects would select a greater proportion of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection. This hypoth-

-39-

esis was confirmed. Subjects selected a significantly greater proportion of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from their latitudes of rejection or noncommitment. These findings suggest that an attitude scale may be disproportionately weighted with the acceptable statements of the individual constructing the scale. This interpretation was supported by hypothesis 2 which predicted that subjects would not select their most objectionable statement. Seventyfour percent of the subjects did not select their most objectionable statement for the eleven item scale to assess attitudes of the general public on the issue of capital punishment. On the other hand, 78 percent of the subjects did select their most acceptable statement. These findings suggest that in constructing an attitude scale, the individual will not extend the limits of the scale to include his own most objectionable statement, but will include his most acceptable statement.

Hypothesis 1(b) predicted that subjects would select a greater number of statements from their latitude of acceptance than from their latitude of rejection. This prediction was not supported by the data. On the average, subjects allotted eleven statements to their latitude of rejection and selected 5 from the latitude of rejection; subjects allotted six statements to the latitude of acceptance and selected four statements from the latitude of acceptance. Therefore, subjects selected a greater proportion of statements from the

-40-

latitude of acceptance but a greater number of statements from the latitude of rejection. Therefore, hypothesis 1(b) was not supported by the data. However, these findings are consistent with the contention by Sherif and Hovland (1961) that a large latitude of rejection and small latitude of acceptance reflect a raised threshold of acceptance or increased discrimination in regard to acceptable statements. Thus, the tendency for subjects to select a greater number of statements from the latitude of rejection than from the latitude of acceptance suggests that subjects are more discriminating about items selected from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that finer discrimination in regard to acceptable statements would be reflected in a greater range of Peterson (1931) scale values of statements selected from the latitude of rejection than from the latitude of acceptance. The data from the present study confirmed this hypothesis and revealed that the mean range of scale values within the latitude of rejection was greater than within the latitude of acceptance, and further, that the mean range of scale values of statements selected from the latitude of rejection was significantly greater than the mean range of scale values selected from the latitude of acceptance. In addition, the mean range of scale values of statements selected from the latitude of noncommitment was significantly greater than the mean range of scale values of statements selected from

-41-

the latitude of acceptance. These findings lend support to the interpretation offered by Sherif and Hovland (1961) to explain the tendency for the size of the latitude of rejection to increase with increased involvement in an issue. It is the contention of these authors that persons are more discriminating about statements they accept than about statements they reject. Such discrimination is reflected in a constriction of the latitude of acceptance and expansion of the latitude of rejection. The finding in the present study that the range of scale values of statements selected from the latitudes of rejection and noncommitment was greater than the range of scale values of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance lends support to the interpretation by Sherif and Hovland (1961). Thus the constriction of the range of scale values in the latitude of acceptance implies that the subject is more discriminating about acceptable items than about items that are objectionable or neutral.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that subjects classified as hard moderates would allot a greater number of statements to the latitude of rejection than soft moderates. This prediction was based on a study by Hart (1967) which indicated that hard moderates display a greater latitude of rejection and smaller latitude of noncommitment than soft moderates. Hart's (1967) results were confirmed in the present study. Subjects who were clearly defined as hard moderates placed significantly more statements in their latitude of rejection than soft

-42-

moderates, while the mean number of statements placed in the latitude of noncommitment was significantly greater for soft moderates than for hard moderates, thus reflecting a tendency for soft moderates to be less involved than hard moderates. Hart (1967) also reported that his subjects accepted a greater number of statements than they rejected. His findings regarding the mean number of statements in the latitude of acceptance relative to the latitude of rejection were not confirmed in the present study. Data from the present study revealed that subjects placed a greater number of statements in the latitude of rejection than in the latitudes of acceptance or noncommitment. The discrepancy between results of the present study in regard to the size of the latitude of acceptance and results of Hart's (1967) could be due to the composition of the samples involved in both studies, or could be due to differences in the issues chosen for the studies. Further research might clarify the discrepancy.

The results of the present study can be extended to the problem of experimenter bias in research. The findings that subjects select a greater proportion of acceptable statements and make finer discriminations between acceptable statements indicate that a similar bias could occur in the selection of data. The experimenter might select data that would validate his hypothesis or overlook or fail to report data that would invalidate his hypothesis. Such bias could also determine the type of research done, in that if an experimenter should be

-43-

particularly hostile or antagonistic toward a specific theoretical approach, he might overlook or reject significant aspects of that theory or research which might be relevant to his own position.

Sherif (1963) has stressed the need for an inter-disciplinary approach in the social sciences to avoid the pitfalls of ethnocentrism. Other psychologists (Orne, 1962; Rosenthal, Persinger, Vikan-Kline & Fode, 1963; Rosenthal, 1964; Rosenthal, Kohn, Greenfield & Carota, 1966) have considered the problem of experimenter bias in influencing the results of psychological research and have stressed the need for controls of such bias.

This is not to say that research in social science is hopelessly biased in terms of the "limited perspective" of the experimenter. If generalizations from the present study are permitted, the results would indicate that there is a tendency for a subject (or possibly an experimenter) to include information or evidence that is objectionable or contradictory to an hypothesis, as demonstrated by the tendency for subjects to include a greater number of statements from the latitude of rejection than from the latitudes of noncommitment and acceptance. However, there is also a definite tendency to exclude information that is extremely objectionable, as evidenced by the tendency for subjects to exclude their most objectionable position (or the most objectionable information).

-44-

In addition, if one can generalize from the present data, the tendency for subjects to make finer discriminations among acceptable statements indicates that a great deal may be gained from the tendency of the researcher to make fine discriminations in his data. He may notice things and generate ideas and information which might go undetected by a person unfamiliar with the research topic. However, because of a tendency to make less fine discriminations about objectionable information, the experimenter might overlook or reject information which might invalidate his hypothesis.

In regard to the findings on hard and soft moderate subjects, this information would be of relevance to social scientists involved in the problem of attitude or opinion change. The tendency for soft moderates to reject fewer statements indicates less involvement in the issue, and therefore greater susceptibility to attitude change in the face of propaganda. However, hard moderates, by their rejection of a greater number of statements, indicate greater commitment to their position and less susceptibility to communications advocating opinion or attitude change. Further research is needed to determine the most effective means of bringing about attitude change in moderate subjects.

-45-

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of the present study was to describe trends in the selection of items for the construction of an attitude scale to be presented to the general public. Of major interest was the influence of the process of discrimination in the selection of these items or statements. The issue chosen was capital punishment and procedures of attitude assessment devised by Thurstone (1928), Sherif and Hovland (1952), and Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) were modified to assess attitudes of subjects toward the issue of capital punishment.

The subjects were 150 undergraduate students at a small liberal arts college. Subjects were to indicate their acceptable and objectionable positions in a 24 item Thurstone scale on the issue of capital punishment (Peterson, 1931) and then to select from these statements the eleven statements which would best assess attitudes of the American public on the issue of capital punishment.

The data from the present study supported the major hypothesis and indicated that subjects select a greater pro-

-46-

portion of statements from the latitude of acceptance than from the latitude of rejection (p < .0005) and from the latitude of noncommitment (p < .0005). The results of the present study also indicate that in selecting statements for an attitude scale, subjects will not select their most objectionable statement and will select their most acceptable statement. Of 150 subjects, 111 did not choose their most objectionable statement and 117 did choose their most acceptable statement for the eleven item scale.

The data for the present study supported the third hypothesis which predicted a constricted range of scale values of acceptable statements as a measure of discrimination. The mean scale value range of statements selected from the latitude of rejection was significantly greater than the mean scale value range of statements selected from the latitude of acceptance (p < .0005). The mean scale value range of statement was also significantly greater than the mean scale value range of the latitude of noncommitment was also significantly greater than the mean scale value range of the latitude of acceptance (p < .0005).

Of additional interest in the present study was the verification of findings by Hart (1967) regarding moderate subjects. In the present study, moderates were classified on the basis of the mean scale value of the latitude of acceptance in relation to the most acceptable and most objectionable statements. Subjects were classified as soft

-47-

moderates if the mean scale value for the latitude of acceptance (in relation to the most acceptable position) extended toward the extreme end of the scale representing the side of the issue opposite their own stand. Subjects were classified as hard moderates if the mean scale value for the latitude of acceptance (in relation to the most acceptable position) extended away from the most objectionable position. Results indicated that hard moderates place a greater number of statements in the latitude of rejection than soft moderates (p < .025), and that soft moderates place a greater than hard moderates (p < .025).

In summary, data from the present study support conclusions from earlier studies regarding the influence of judges' attitudes on the construction of attitude scales (Hovland & Sherif, 1952; Sherif & Hovland, 1953) and indicate that individuals are more discriminating about items that are acceptable than about items that are objectionable. The data also support findings reported by Hart (1967) in regard to the number of statements placed in the latitudes of rejection and noncommitment by persons taking soft and hard moderate stands on an issue.

-48-

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APPENDIX A

Twenty-four Statements Used in Present Study to Assess Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment

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Peterson (1931) scale for assessing attitudes toward capital punishment (Peterson & Thurstone, 1933, pp. 22-23). Scale Stmt. Value No. Statement 7.2 1. Capital punishment may be wrong but it is the best preventative to crime. 0.0 2. Capital punishment is absolutely never justified. 6.2 3. I think capital punishment is necessary but I wish it were not. 4. Any person, man or woman, young or old, who com-mits murder, should pay with his own life. 10.4 2.4 5. Capital punishment cannot be regarded as a same method of dealing with crime. 6.2 6. Capital punishment is wrong but it is necessary in our imperfect civilization. 11.0 7. Every criminal should be executed. 2.7 8. Capital punishment has never been effective in preventing crime. 5.4 9. I don't believe in capital punishment but I'm not sure it isn't necessary. 10. We must have capital punishment for some crimes. 8.5 3.9 *11. I think physical punishment would be more effective than capital punishment. 0.0 12. I do not believe in capital punishment under any circumstances. 3.0 13. Capital punishment is not necessary in modern civilization. 1.5 We can't call ourselves civilized as long as we 14 have capital punishment. 3.4 15. Life imprisonment is more effective than capital punishment. 0.9 16. Execution of criminals is a disgrace to civilized society. 9.6 17. Capital punishment is just and necessary. 5.8 18. I do not believe in capital punishment but it is not practically advisable to abolish it. 0.6 19. Capital punishment is the most hideous practice of our time. 9.4 20. Capital punishment gives the criminal what he deserves. 2.0 21. The state cannot teach the sacredness of human life by destroying it.

Scale Value	Stmt. No.	Statement
5.5	22. It	doesn't make any difference to me whether we
7.9	23. Car med	pital punishment is justified only for pre-
9.1	24. Car it	vital punishment should be used more often than is.

* Statement number 11 was worded by Peterson as follows: I think the return of the whipping post would be more effective than capital punishment.

APPENDIX B

Responses of Subjects, Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment and Eleven Statements

APPENDIX B

Latitude of Acceptance

	ويتوجد ويويا عريدا كميهوي المعيرين الأعريبات	
Columns	1,2,3:	Subject identification
Columns	5,6:	Most acceptable statement
Columns	8 -:	Statements designated as also acceptable
		*Reference should be made to Appendix A to convert statement number to scale value or to identify a statement.

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-59-

-61-

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APPENDIX B

Latitude of Rejection

Columns	1,2,3:	Subject identification
Columns	5,6:	Most objectionable statement
Columns	8 -:	Statements designated as also objectionable

-65-

S MO Latitude of Rejection

-66-
-67-

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-70-

APPENDIX B

Latitude of Noncommitment

Columns	1,2,3:	Subject identification
Columns	5 -:	Statements not designated as acceptable or objectionable

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-76-

-77-

APPENDIX B

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Eleven Statements Selected as Representative of American Public Opinion

Columns	1,2,3:	Subject identification		
Columns	5 -:	Statements selected to of the general public	assess	attitudes

-79-

S Eleven Statements

-80-

S Eleven Statements

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020	5 07	7 04	06	23	22	2 15	5 16	5 21	. 14	19	12
027	7 20) 17	/ 10	01	18	3 22	23	15	16	14	19
028	3 07	/ 17	04	03	10) 24	21	. 12	22	23	18
029	04	17	20	10	03	22	01	09	18	21	12
030	03	10	01	20	80	14	06	18	11	09	15
031	. 17	10	23	18	06	12	14	21	08	05	16
032	: 17	20	23	10	01	06	09	08	15	21	12
033	24	17	10	23	09	22	13	14	05	21	19
034	17	07	20	15	11	22	09	21	12	05	02
035	07	17	04	20	10	18	13	19	16	12	02
036	20	10	23	04	03	01	22	06	18	09	21
037	20	10	06	23	03	18	09	08	15	21	14
038	07	04	20	10	03	23	13	05	08	12	15
039	17	20	06	01	18	10	03	09	15	08	16
040	17	10	03	01	20	22	09	15	19	16	02
041	17	10	03	06	22	15	16	14	21	12	02
042	17	20	15	03	23	22	09	21	14	12	02
043	20	22	03	18	09	15	05	0 8	21	02	12
044	04	07	20	24	06	22	11	08	13	05	14
045	04	24	20	10	01	22	15	11	21	16	19
046	17	20	10	01	18	16	13	03	23	02	21
047	04	24	10	23	01	11	15	80	14	21	02
048	19	16	02	21	15	11	10	01	17	20	07
049	07	17	10	23	01	03	18	09	12	21	19
050	24	10	01	23	22	09	18	08	05	12	02

-81-

S Eleven Statements

S Eleven Statements

-83-

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S Eleven Statements

101	. 20) 10	01	. 23	03	06	5 18	09	15	5 13	21	
102	06	5 18	03	09	22	15	6 08	05	14	21	16	
103	20	10	23	03	09	18	13	15	21	14	12	
104	07	04	06	03	10	18	09	15	05	21	12	
105	17	20	10	01	23	18	06	22	03	09	15	
106	17	10	23	06	03	15	13	05	08	21	14	
107	20	10	01	03	18	09	05	13	15	08	21	
108	18	09	13	08	15	21	05	14	19	12	02	
109	17	10	23	01	18	06	22	03	09	15	08	
110	17	20	24	23	10	01	07	18	09	13	08	
111	04	20	10	03	22	09	18	06	01	14	02	
112	23	06	01	03	18	08	15	05	21	16	12	
113	24	10	23	01	06	18	03	09	22	13	08	
114	20	10	23	03	18	09	15	80	05	13	19	
115	07	20	04	03	18	09	15	13	21	05	16	
116	04	17	24	20	23	06	01	10	03	18	09	
117	23	03	06	09	22	15	13	05	21	14	16	
118	23	01	06	03	18	22	09	15	13	80	21	
119	17	23	01	06	03	09	15	21	14	16	12	
120	20	24	10	23	01	03	18	22	15	13	08	
121	20	10	01	23	03	18	09	14	15	16	21	
122	24	23	10	06	01	09	18	03	22	11	15	
123	04	10	01	23	03	15	13	05	08	21	14	
124	17	20	23	24	10	03	01	06	09	22	18	
125	20	23	10	18	06	22	03	09	80	05	14	

-84-

S Eleven Statements





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