

INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION OF AUTHORITARIANS
AND NONAUTHORITARIANS

by

THOMAS ARTHUR MEIDINGER

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INTRODUCTION

This is an investigation of the way in which people perceive the social attitudes of other people. Every individual constantly makes judgments about the opinions and attitudes of the people whom he meets in daily life. Some of these judgments are correct and some are incorrect. In order to understand others and to communicate effectively with them, it is necessary to perceive their feelings and attitudes with some degree of accuracy and objectivity.

Very little is known about the dynamics of interpersonal perception. Taft (9) in his summary of the research on the ability to judge others reported that there is sufficient generality in this ability to justify describing some judges as "good" or "poor". He states that judging ability seems to depend on a combination of general intelligence and social intelligence with "intuition" being a possible additional factor. Along with actual judging ability, Taft found that ability to judge accurately depends on possessing adequate norms about general opinion on the topic being judged, and on having sufficient motivation. He concluded:

If the judge is motivated to make correct judgments about his subject and if he feels himself free to be objective, then he has a good chance of achieving his aim, provided, of course, that he has the requisite ability and can use the appropriate judgmental norms.

There is evidence that interpersonal perception is related

to the attractiveness of the person being judged. Davitz (5) found that among children in a summer camp, the highest sociometric choices tend to be perceived as more similar to the self than the lowest sociometric choices, and as more similar to the self than they actually are. Fieldler, et al., (6) also found that in a fraternity group, the subjects perceived the members that they liked best as more similar to themselves than those that they liked least. Halpern (7) in a study on empathy found a high positive relationship between predictive accuracy and actual similarity of the subjects. In other words, attractiveness of the person being judged is positively related to perceived similarity and actual similarity is positively related to accuracy.

One of the personality traits that has been postulated as affecting interpersonal perception is the tendency toward authoritarianism. The concept of the authoritarian or antidemocratic personality was developed by Adorno, et al. (1), in their study of the relationship between prejudice and personality structure. These investigators developed a questionnaire called the Ethnocentrism scale, or E scale, which was designed to measure attitudes of hostility and aggression toward minority groups. The subjects who were found to be very high and very low in the Ethnocentrism scale were given clinical interviews in an attempt to assess their underlying personality needs. According to the authors, "High scorers show more rigidity and avoidance of ambiguity; low scorers tend toward greater flexibility and acceptance of ambiguity." "A rigid, and in most instances, conventionalized set of rules seems thus to determine the conception

the typical high scorer has of his own and of other people's behavior." The high scorers were also found to be "more often given to stereotyping, pre-judgments and ready generalizations."

During the course of this study, the investigators saw a need for a questionnaire which would measure prejudice and other antidemocratic trends without mentioning the names of actual minority groups or social ideologies. Toward this end they developed a questionnaire of 30 items called the F-scale. The scores on the F-scale correlated .75 with scores on the E scale. In addition to being high on the Ethnocentrism scale, the authors reported that those scoring high on the F-scale were characterized by "implicit prefascistic tendencies" and other "authoritarian" traits.

Scodel and Mussen (8) investigated the social perception of authoritarians and nonauthoritarians in an actual social situation. They hypothesized that since authoritarians are "rigid" in their thinking and "intolerant of ambiguity", they, the authoritarians, would judge other members of a peer group to be similar to themselves in attitude. They also hypothesized that since nonauthoritarians are "flexible" and "tolerant of ambiguity", nonauthoritarians would judge other members objectively and accurately. Specifically, Scodel and Mussen predicted that authoritarians would judge nonauthoritarians as being authoritarian, while nonauthoritarians would judge authoritarians accurately, i.e., they would judge them to be authoritarian.

In order to test this hypothesis, they selected subjects from a larger group who had taken the F-scale and arranged them in pairs, one authoritarian with one nonauthoritarian. Each pair

was told to discuss for twenty minutes the subject of radio, television, and movies. After the discussion the two subjects were separated and each was presented with a questionnaire consisting of 28 F-scale items and 30 MMPI items. The subjects were instructed to fill out the questionnaire as they thought the person they had just talked to would fill it out. Thus each subject responded twice to the questionnaire, once as he himself would respond and once as he thought his partner would respond.

Scodel and Mussen reported that the mean score of the authoritarian or high group on the questionnaire was 129.26. The mean score of the high group's estimate of the low group was 124.19. There was no significant difference between the mean score of the high group members' own responses and the mean score of their estimates of the lows. The mean score of the lows was 66.52. This score was significantly different from the lows' estimate of the high group, which was 99.81. Nine of the lows judged the highs accurately but none of the highs judged the lows as being low. Scodel and Mussen interpreted these findings as supporting their hypothesis that authoritarians perceive other members of a peer group as being similar to themselves, while nonauthoritarians perceive others more accurately.

Thus the Scodel and Mussen results support an elaborate theory of authoritarianism and its effects upon social behavior. It is a theory which has appeal not only because it fits into a broader theory of personality, but also because it casts the authoritarian, the extreme conservative, in the somewhat invidious role of one whose interpersonal attitudes are characterized by a

rigidity and inflexibility which is derived from his personal conflicts. The nonauthoritarian, on the other hand, is considered to be tolerant, liberal, and objective in his judgments because his lack of elaborate personality defenses makes it possible for him to view the world in a more realistic manner than the authoritarian. Since most psychologists would themselves support the nonauthoritarian view, the confirmation of this theory would not only gratify their scientific interests but would also bolster their self appraisals. Precisely because of this ego-supporting role which the results serve, it is important that they be scrutinized carefully to insure that they provide unequivocal support for the theory.

Reflection on the procedures of the Scodel and Mussen experiment raises some questions about the validity of their conclusions. First of all, their experimental design was not balanced. To test the hypothesis adequately, they should have included pairs of authoritarians judging other authoritarians and pairs of nonauthoritarians judging other nonauthoritarians. Also the topic of discussion--radio, television, and movies--seems at best only slightly related to the attitudes measured by the F-scale. Furthermore, twenty minutes is a very short time in which to observe another person. A longer period of observation might have furnished more clues as to the other person's attitudes which would have led to more accurate estimates of the partner. Finally, Scodel and Mussen determined accuracy of judgment by comparing the total scores of judge and subject without examining the similarity of the pattern of responses between the two. It

is conceivable that the total scores on two questionnaires could be similar but that the responses to individual items of the questionnaire could be very different. That is, the judge might be very inaccurate in his judgment of the 28 individual items but have a total score quite similar to his partner's. In such a case, the total score is a poor indicator of accuracy.

One purpose of this study is to test the hypothesis of Scodel and Mussen in a more balanced experiment with a more appropriate method of analysis. First of all, subjects were paired so that in one-third of the pairs both members would be high scorers on the F-scale, in a second third one member would be high and one low, and in the third set of pairs both members would be low scorers. Secondly, the profile similarity score recommended by Cronbach (4) was used as a more appropriate indicator of similarity of response than would be the total score. This profile similarity score, called a D-score, is obtained first by taking the differences between the judge's response and the subject's response on each item of the questionnaire. These differences are squared, the squares are summed, and the square root is taken to provide a D-score.

In addition, this study was designed to test out the effects of similarity upon accuracy of judgment, and to explore the effects on accuracy of discussing topics relevant and irrelevant to the area in which judgments will be made. To accomplish the latter goal, two different topics of discussion were used in the experimental situation. One set of subjects discussed radio, television, and movies, a topic presumably irrelevant to the F-

scale. Another set of subjects discussed the topic, parent-child relationships. This topic was assumed to be more relevant to the attitudes measured by the F-scale.

The hypotheses tested were:

- (1) The Scodel and Mussen hypothesis that authoritarians differ from nonauthoritarians in their perception of other's F-scale responses
 - (a) in accuracy. High F individuals are expected to be less accurate in their judgments than low F individuals.
 - (b) in perceived similarity. High F individuals are expected to perceive others as more similar to themselves than will low F individuals.
- (2) The accuracy will be greater when the subjects discuss a topic that is relevant to the F-scale than when they discuss a topic irrelevant to the F-scale.
- (3) The more similar the subjects are in F-scale responses, the more accurate they will be in judging each other. This should be especially true if they perceive the other person as similar to themselves.

PROCEDURE

The California F-scale was administered to students in three sections of general psychology class at Kansas State College and to approximately 80 residents in the men's dormitory. The questionnaires in the general psychology classes were unsigned in

order to minimize concern with identification. However, they were attached to sheets on which the students had written their names and free hours so that identification was possible. The dormitory men filled out the questionnaires individually. Their names were written on the questionnaires by the experimenter after the questionnaires were completed.

Students in general psychology were required to participate as part of their course work. The dormitory men were asked to participate, and those who agreed were used as subjects. Of the 80 respondents, only one refused to take part in the experiment proper because of a lack of free time.

Subjects for the experiment were selected on the basis of their total score on the F-scale. Analysis of the frequency distribution of total scores revealed that the men, with a median score of 108, tended to make somewhat higher scores than the women, who had a median score of 104. Since few women were available as subjects, the two distributions were kept separate, and the men and women were selected as subjects with reference to the median for their own sex, rather than the total median. Sixty men and 30 women who scored above their respective medians made up the high F group, and 60 men and 30 women who scored below made up the low F group. Since pairs of subjects were used, an individual was chosen as a subject only if he shared free time with someone else. Criteria used in pairing subjects are described below.

Three sets of groups were used in the experiment. In one set both members of each pair were high on the F-scale, in a

second set both members of each pair were low on the F-scale, and in the third set one of the members of each pair was high on the F-scale and the other member was low. Subjects discussed one of two topics: radio, television, and movies, or parent-child relationships. Consequently there were six experimental groups in all. Each group contained 10 pairs of men and 5 pairs of women.

Subjects were paired who lived at different residences or who were widely separated in the dormitory to insure that the members of the pair would not be well acquainted with each other. Subjects were also paired according to the free hours that they had available. After the pairs were selected they were randomly assigned to discuss either radio, television, and movies, or parent-child relationships.

Two experimenters met each pair in the experimental room. One gave the instructions, set an automatic time clock, and then left the room. The other experimenter stayed in the room during the discussion to insure that the subjects discussed only the assigned topic.

The instructions to the pairs assigned to discuss radio, television, and movies were:

This is an experiment designed to investigate how two people go about getting acquainted when they meet for the first time. We would like you to discuss for twenty minutes a topic which we will set. The topic we want you to discuss is anything in the general area of radio, television, and movies. That is, you may discuss anything you like or dislike about radio, television, and movies, such as your favorite actors or favorite programs. You will not be evaluated on anything that you say so please talk as freely as possible. After twenty minutes we will stop the discussion and then analyze what went on here.

The instructions to the pairs discussing parent-child relationships were:

This is an experiment designed to investigate how two people go about getting acquainted when they meet for the first time. We would like for you to discuss for twenty minutes a topic which we will set. We want you to discuss the relationships between parents and children. That is, you may discuss anything in the general area of parent-child relationships. This can include how children should be trained, what responsibilities the parents have, and so on. We mean this in the broadest sense so children include infants or grade school children or high school students or adults. As long as a child and his parents are alive what should the relations between them be like? You will not be evaluated on what you say so please talk as freely as possible. After twenty minutes we will stop the discussion and analyze what went on here.

At the end of twenty minutes the time clock's alarm rang and the experimenter stopped the discussion. The two subjects were separated and each was instructed to fill out the F-scale as he thought the other person would fill it out. Thus each subject responded twice to the F-scale, once before the experiment as he himself would respond, and once after the discussion as he thought his partner would respond.

The subjects were asked not to discuss the experiment outside of the experimental situation.

RESULTS

1. Relation between F-scale score and interpersonal perception.

The first hypothesis tested Scodel and Mussen's findings regarding the relationship between F-scale scores and interper-

sonal perception. As a measure of accuracy, D-scores were computed between each subject's estimate of the partner and the partner's actual response to the F-scale. A frequency distribution of these D-scores was divided into quartiles. Quartile 1 contained the highest D-scores or the least accurate estimates and quartile 4 contained the lowest D-scores or the most accurate estimates.

Table 1. Relation between accuracy and F-scale position.

		Accuracy				
		Least Q ₁	: Q ₂	: Q ₃	: Most Q ₄	: Total
F-scale	Low	22	24	21	23	90
position	High	23	21	24	22	90
	Total	45	45	45	45	180
		$\chi^2 = .444$		$p > .05$		

As shown in Table 1, there was no significant relationship between accuracy and F-scale position.

As was mentioned above, Scodel and Mussen used as their measure of accuracy the difference between the mean of the total scores attributed by subjects to their partners and the mean of the partners' actual scores. In order to make the present results more comparable to theirs, a similar analysis was performed. As is shown in Table 2, the mean of the scores attributed by low F subjects to low F partners did not differ significantly from the mean of the scores attributed by other low F subjects to high F partners. Similarly, the mean of the scores attributed by high

Table 2. Comparison between own F-scale means and estimated F-scale means.

	Own F-score		Estimated F-score				Difference in estimated means		
	Mean	σ	Mean	σ	Mean	σ	t	p	
Lows	92.4	10.8	105.2	14.7	106.4	9.9	0.8	.26	.80
Highs	115.9	8.1	118.4	14.9	119.3	11.9	0.9	.30	.75
Difference in estimated means			12.8		12.9				
t			3.96		5.06				
p			<.01		<.01				

F subjects to low F partners did not differ significantly from the mean of the scores attributed by other high F subjects to high F partners. Thus it appears that neither low F nor high F subjects distinguished accurately between those who were low on the F-scale and those who were high. However, there was a significant difference between the mean of highs estimating others and the mean of lows estimating others. That is, high F subjects estimated both lows and highs to be significantly higher on total F-scale score than did low F subjects.

In order to measure how similar to himself each subject perceived his partner, D-scores were computed between each subject's own responses and his estimate of the partner's responses. A frequency distribution of these D-scores was divided into quartiles. Quartile 1 contained the highest D-scores; these subjects

perceived their partners as least similar to themselves. Quartile 4 contained the lowest D-scores; these subjects perceived their partners as most similar to themselves.

Table 3. Relation between perceived similarity and F-scale position.

		Perceived similarity								
		Least	:	Q ₂	:	Q ₃	:	Most	:	Total
		Q ₁	:	Q ₂	:	Q ₃	:	Q ₄	:	Total
F-scale	Low	26	:	23	:	23	:	18	:	90
position	High	19	:	22	:	22	:	27	:	90
	Total	45	:	45	:	45	:	45	:	180
		$\chi^2 = 2.400$					$p > .05$			

Table 3 shows only a slight and statistically insignificant tendency for high F subjects to perceive others as more similar to themselves than did low F subjects.

In summary, the results do not support the hypothesis that low F individuals judge others more accurately than do high F subjects, or that high F individuals perceive others as more similar to themselves than do low F individuals. The only significant difference in interpersonal perception between the two groups was that high F subjects estimated others as higher on F-scale total score than did low F subjects.

It should be pointed out, in addition, that the mean of scores attributed by high F subjects to others very closely approximated the mean of the high F distribution. However, the mean of the scores attributed by low F subjects to others was thirteen to fourteen points higher than the mean of the low F

distribution. Thus even though the two groups do not differ significantly in perceived similarity as measured by profile similarity, it seems that low F subjects are inclined to view others as somewhat more conservative than themselves, while no such tendency is discernible among high F subjects.

2. Relation between discussion topic and accuracy.

It was predicted that the subjects who discussed the more relevant topic--parent-child relationships--would be more accurate in their estimates of others than would the subjects who discussed the less relevant topic--radio, television, and movies.

Table 4. Relation between accuracy and discussion topic.

		Accuracy				Total
		Least : Q ₁ :	Q ₂ :	Q ₃ :	Most : Q ₄ :	
Dis- cussion topic	Radio, tele- vision, movies	21	14	25	30	90
	Parent-child relationships	24	31	20	15	90
	Total	45	45	45	45	180
		$\chi^2 = 12.178$				$p < .01$

However, as Table 4 shows, the opposite occurred. The subjects who discussed radio, television, and movies were significantly more accurate in their estimates than those who discussed parent-child relationships.

Several hypotheses were explored to account for this difference in accuracy. First, it was possible that subjects who discussed parent-child relationships made more extreme estimates of

their partners than those who discussed radio, television, and movies. As Cronbach (3) has pointed out, the use of extreme judgments of itself is likely to reduce accuracy, as measured by profile similarity. That is, if a subject misjudges the direction of his partner's opinion, then an extreme estimate of the partner's opinion will produce a greater error than will a moderate estimate. Since the D-score is computed by squaring the differences and summing the squares, larger errors will be particularly effective in reducing one's accuracy score. The number of times each subject attributed a +3 or -3 response to his partner was computed. A frequency distribution of the extreme responses was constructed and divided into quartiles. Quartiles 1 and 2 contained the number of subjects making the highest number of extreme estimates, and quartiles 3 and 4 contained the number of subjects making the lowest number of extreme estimates.

Table 5. Relation between number of extreme estimates and discussion topic.

		Number of extreme estimates :		
		Highest : Q ₁ + Q ₂ :	Lowest : Q ₃ + Q ₄ :	Total
Dis- cussion topic	Radio, tele- vision, movies	40	50	90
	Parent-child relationships	50	40	90
	Total	90	90	180
		$\chi^2 = 2.224$ $p > .05$		

While there was a negative and statistically significant relationship between the use of extreme judgments and accuracy

Table 6. Relation between number of extreme estimates and accuracy.

		Accuracy				:	:
		Least	Q ₂	Q ₃	Most	:	Total
		Q ₁	:	:	Q ₄	:	
Extremeness of estimates	Highest Q ₁ + Q ₂	33	24	21	12		90
	Lowest Q ₃ + Q ₄	12	21	24	33		90
	Total	45	45	45	45		180
		$\chi^2 = 20.00$				$p < .01$	

(Table 6), Table 5 demonstrates that the difference in accuracy between subjects in the two experimental variations cannot be explained on that basis. Although there was a slight tendency for the subjects who discussed parent-child relationships to make more extreme estimates, the trend was not significant.

Another possible explanation for the greater accuracy in the radio, television, movies variation was that these subjects were more similar to their partners than were those in the other variation. If this were true, they would be expected to be more accurate.

As Table 7 shows, the two variations did not differ significantly. However, the radio, television, and movies variation contained many more subjects in the most similar quartile than did the other variation. In view of the high relationship between similarity and accuracy, it seems that this excess of very similar pairs in the radio, television, movies variation may account for the greater accuracy in this variation. Further ex-

Table 7. Relation between similarity and discussion topic.

		Similarity				Total
		Least : Q ₁	: Q ₂	: Q ₃	: Most : Q ₄	
Dis- cussion topic	Radio, tele- vision, movies	22	22	16	30	90
	Parent-child relationships	24	22	28	16	90
	Total	46	44	44	46	180
		$\chi^2 = 7.406$				$p > .05$

perimentation, in which pairs in each variation are matched for similarity, will be required to establish these relationships further. Nevertheless, the original hypothesis, that subjects in the parent-child relationships variation would be more accurate than those in the radio, movies, television variation, seems eminently incorrect in view of the present data.

3. Relation between accuracy and similarity.

In previous research on the ability to judge others, Halpern (7), a positive relationship was found between similarity of the judge to his subject and accuracy of judgments. Therefore, it was predicted that the subjects who were most similar to their partners on original F-scale responses would be the most accurate in estimating the responses of their partners. To measure the original similarity of the pairs, a profile similarity score was computed between the judge's own responses to the F-scale and the responses of his partner. Quartiles 1 and 2 contained the subjects who were least similar to their partners and quartiles 3 and 4 contained the subjects who were most similar to their partners.

Table 8. Relation between similarity and accuracy.

		Accuracy				Total
		Least : Q ₁ :	Q ₂ :	Q ₃ :	Most : Q ₄ :	
Similarity	Least Q ₁ + Q ₂	33	27	20	13	90
	Most Q ₃ + Q ₄	12	18	25	32	90
	Total	45	45	45	45	180
		$\chi^2 = 24.16$		$p < .01$		

As is shown in Table 8, the results support the hypothesis. The subjects who were similar to their partners were significantly more accurate than those who were dissimilar to their partners.

The existence of a positive relationship between similarity and accuracy raises the question of whether the greater accuracy results simply from the subject's attributing his own responses to his partner, or whether it reflects an awareness of the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between himself and his partner. In other words, the question is whether subjects who were similar to their partners perceived this similarity and whether those subjects who were different from their partners perceived this difference.

As Table 9 indicates, there was a positive relationship between actual and perceived similarity. Subjects who were similar to their partners tended to perceive themselves as similar, and subjects who were different from their partners tended to perceive themselves as different.



Table 9. Relation between similarity and perceived similarity.

		Perceived similarity				Total
		Least Q ₁	Q ₂	Q ₃	Most Q ₄	
Similarity	Least Q ₁ + Q ₂	31	24	19	16	90
	Most Q ₃ + Q ₄	14	21	26	29	90
	Total	45	45	45	45	180

$\chi^2 = 11.44$ $p < .01$

Since similarity was positively related to both accuracy and perceived similarity, it was hypothesized that (a) subjects who were similar to their partners and perceived the partners as similar to themselves would be very accurate; (b) subjects who were not similar to their partners and perceived their partners as different from themselves would also be quite accurate; (c) subjects who were similar to their partners and perceived their partners as different from themselves would be inaccurate; (d) subjects who were different from their partners and perceived their partners as similar to themselves would be inaccurate.

As Table 10 indicates, the subjects who were similar to their partners and perceived the similarity were, in fact, very accurate. Those who were different from their partners and perceived their partners as different were the least accurate. However, when the subjects who were similar and perceived their similarity are removed from this table, there is very little difference between the accuracy of the remaining groups.

Table 10. The relation of similarity + perceived similarity combined to accuracy.

		Subjects were				
		Similar and per- ceived similar	Similar and per- ceived differ- ent	Different and per- ceived similar	Different and per- ceived different	Total
Accuracy	Least Q ₁ + Q ₂	11	18	22	39	90
	Most Q ₃ + Q ₄	44	17	13	16	90
	Total	55	35	35	55	180
		$\chi^2 = 31.08$		$p < .01$		

Table 11. Relation to accuracy of similarity + perceived similarity when those in the most positive group are removed.

		Subjects were			
		Similar and per- ceived different	Different and per- ceived similar	Different and per- ceived different	Total
Accuracy	Least Q ₁ + Q ₂	18	22	39	79
	Most Q ₃ + Q ₄	17	13	16	46
	Total	35	35	55	125
		$\chi^2 = 3.44$		$p > .05$	

As is shown in Table 11, removing those who were similar and perceived the similarity from Table 10, eliminates the statistical significance. Among the subjects who were different, perceiving the difference did not increase the accuracy of the estimates.

Thus similarity apparently increases accuracy only when the subject is aware of the similarity. The inaccuracy of those subjects who recognized their difference from their partners may, perhaps, be explained by a lack of knowledge on their part of orientations other than their own, and the lack of opportunity in the twenty minutes provided for subjects to probe deeply into their partners' beliefs and interests.

DISCUSSION

It is evident that the results of this experiment do not indicate that "nonauthoritarians" as measured by scores on the F-scale were more accurate in judging the F-scale responses of other people than were "authoritarians". The accuracy D-scores were no larger for the high group than for the low group. Neither low F nor high F subjects distinguished reliably between other lows and highs. The low F subjects tended to judge others as slightly higher than themselves on total F-scale score, while high F subjects tended to judge others as being at about the same level as themselves.

Scodel and Mussen obtained similar results in their study. Their low F subjects judged others (highs) as slightly higher than themselves and their high F subjects judged others (lows) as being at the same level as themselves. Our data indicates, however, that this difference does not reflect differential accuracy. Apparently accuracy in judging the attitudes of others depends on more than F-scale position, especially when one is

judging anything as complex as another's F-scale responses.

Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford reported that authoritarians were "intolerant of ambiguity" and tended to think of other people in terms of ingroups and outgroups. Scodel and Mussen hypothesized that authoritarians would perceive members of a peer group as being more similar to themselves in attitude than would nonauthoritarians because of this rigid, dichotomized type of thinking. Cameron (2) has labeled this mechanism of attributing one's own conscious attitudes to members of the ingroup, "assimilative projection."

In the present study, however, the authoritarians did not perceive the partners as more similar to themselves than did non-authoritarians. Assuming that the subjects perceived their partner as a member of a peer group, they did not exhibit a mechanism of "assimilative projection." Although the high F subjects attributed more high responses to others than did low F subjects, they did not attribute more of their own individual responses to the partner. Moreover, the low F subjects tended to attribute somewhat more high responses to others than they themselves had on the F-scale. It appears that everyone tends to think of other people as possessing "authoritarian" attitudes. The results of this study suggest that the mechanism of "assimilative projection" is an oversimplified concept in interpersonal perception; at least that it is not adequate in itself to account for all the data.

It is not apparent why the subjects who discussed radio, television, and movies were better able to judge the attitudes

of their partners than were those who discussed parent-child relationships. It is possible that in discussing the former topic a subject received more cues as to whether the partner was similar to himself or different from himself in general attitudes, and thus more accurately estimated his partner's F-scale responses. If this were true, judgments of subjects in the radio, television, movies variation would probably be more accurate only if the subjects were more similar in attitudes in the beginning. A resolution of this problem awaits further experimentation.

As for judging research in general, the results indicate that accuracy is positively related to similarity and to perceived similarity. Among the subjects who were least similar to their partners, accuracy was not improved by perceiving the partner as different. Evidently if the subject is different from the person he is judging, many more cues about him are necessary to judge him accurately than if he is similar.

It is evident from this study that more research is needed into what cues are used in judging another person, how these cues are integrated into a comprehensive judgment of the other person, and what factors hinder or facilitate a judge's utilization of the cues.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The California F-scale was administered to students in general psychology classes at Kansas State College and to residents in the men's dormitory. On the basis of these scores, 180 sub-

jects were assigned in pairs to one of six experimental variations. In 30 pairs both members were above the median F score of others of their sex, in 30 pairs both were below the median, and in the remaining 30 one was above and one was below the median. Pairs were assigned randomly to discuss either parent-child relationships (presumably relevant to the F-scale), or radio, television, and movies (presumably irrelevant). After a 20-minute discussion, each subject marked the F-scale as he felt his partner would respond. Actual and estimated scores were compared by analyzing total scores on the F-scale, and by Cronbach's profile similarity technique.

The first set of hypotheses was a test of the findings of Scodel and Mussen's study on the social perception of authoritarians and nonauthoritarians. Scodel and Mussen reported (a) that nonauthoritarians were more accurate in judging the F-scale responses of others than were authoritarians, and (b) that authoritarians attribute more of their own attitudes to others than do nonauthoritarians. The results of the present study do not support either of these conclusions. There was no significant difference between high F and low F subjects in either accuracy or perceived similarity.

Neither low F nor high F subjects distinguished reliably between low F and high F partners. Instead, low F subjects tended to judge their partners as somewhat higher than themselves, and high F subjects judged their partners to be at about the same level as themselves, regardless of the partner's actual position. However, the mean of the highs' estimates of others was

significantly higher than the mean of the lows' estimates of others.

The second hypothesis tested was that subjects who discussed a relevant topic--parent-child relationships--would be more accurate in judging their partners than would subjects who discussed an irrelevant topic--radio, television, and movies. The opposite was found to be true. The subjects who discussed radio, television, and movies were significantly more accurate in their estimates. The reasons for this result are not clear in the present data.

The third hypothesis was that the subjects who were similar to their partners would be more accurate in judging their partners than those who were not similar. The results support this hypothesis. Also, those who were similar tended to perceive the partner as similar. The subjects who were similar to their partners and perceived their partners as similar were very accurate in their judgments. However, among the subjects who were dissimilar, perceiving the dissimilarity had no apparent effect upon accuracy.

This study points out several aspects of interpersonal perception. Authoritarians as a group did not differ in accuracy of judgments or in perceived similarity from nonauthoritarians. However, the authoritarians, i.e., those who themselves gave high responses to the F-scale, tended to use a higher range in assigning F-scale responses to others than did nonauthoritarians. In each group the most accurate judges were the individuals who were similar to their partners and who perceived that they were similar.

The experiment suggests that discussing a topic relevant to the area in which judgments will be made may lead to less accurate judgments, provided that the judge has incomplete information about the partner, by causing the judge to make more extreme estimates. That is, the judge with the greatest accuracy in the long run will be one who makes moderate, rather than extreme, judgments and who modifies these moderate judgments only part of the way toward one extreme or the other as he gains additional information. The cues which provide accurate information, and the personality characteristics which affect a judge's ability to utilize these cues were not explored in this study, but await future investigation.

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INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION OF AUTHORITARIANS
AND NONAUTHORITARIANS

by

THOMAS ARTHUR MEIDINGER

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ABSTRACT

This is an investigation of the way in which people perceive the social attitudes of other people.

The hypotheses tested were:

- (1) The Scodel and Mussen hypothesis that authoritarians differ from nonauthoritarians in their perception of the F-scale responses of others.
 - (a) in accuracy. High F individuals are expected to be less accurate in their judgments than low F individuals.
 - (b) in perceived similarity. High F individuals are expected to perceive others as more similar to themselves than will low F individuals.
- (2) The accuracy will be greater when the subjects discuss a topic that is relevant to the F-scale (parent-child relationships) than when they discuss a topic irrelevant to the F-scale (radio, television, and movies).
- (3) The more similar the subjects are in F-scale responses, the more accurate they will be in judging each other. This should be especially true if they perceive the other person as similar to themselves.

The California F-scale was administered to students in general psychology classes and to residents in the men's dormitory. On the basis of these scores, 180 subjects were assigned in pairs to one of six experimental variations. In 30 pairs both members

were above the median F-scale score of others of their sex, in 30 pairs both were below the median, and in the remaining 30 one was above and one below the median. Pairs were assigned randomly to discuss either parent-child relationships (presumably relevant to the F-scale), or radio, television, and movies (presumably irrelevant). Actual and estimated scores were compared by analyzing total scores on the F-scale and by Cronbach's profile similarity technique.

The conclusions were:

- (1) The low F group and the high F group did not differ significantly (a) in accuracy, or (b) in perceived similarity. Neither low F nor high F subjects distinguished reliably between other lows and highs. The low F subjects tended to judge others as slightly higher than themselves on total F-scale score, while high F subjects tended to judge others as being at about the same level as themselves. The high F subjects estimated others as significantly higher on F-scale score than did low F subjects.
- (2) The opposite result was found to be true. The subjects who discussed radio, television, and movies were significantly more accurate in their estimates than those who discussed parent-child relationships.
- (3) The subjects who were similar to their partners were significantly more accurate in their estimates. The subjects who were similar tended to perceive their

partners as similar. Among the subjects who were different, perceiving the partner as different did not increase the accuracy.

