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Cognitive Differentiation and Interpersonal Discomfort: An Integration Theory Approach

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Anderson's differential weight averaging model was used to predict the amount of interpersonal discomfort experienced by persons differing in the amount of differentiation of their cognitive structures. Poorly differentiated subjects were expected to experience considerable inconsistency when rating a hypothetical person identified by five personality trait descriptors. Such inconsistency was expected to evoke a judgmental process indicative of stimulus discounting and would be reflected by the presence of statistically significant interaction effects of an analysis of variance. On the other hand, highly differentiated persons were not expected to experience inconsistency in the same judgmental task. The judgmental process maintained by these persons was not expected to be defined by stimulus discounting nor statistically significant interaction effects. Although the results generally supported the predictions, psychologically meaningful interaction effects were noted in *both* experimental groups, but were qualitatively different in form.

In an attempt to identify a structural component of Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory, Bieri (1955) introduced the term cognitive complexity to reflect the amount of differentiation in an individual's personal construct system. A person who employs numerous, well-differentiated constructs to construe and represent the social world is cognitively complex, whereas a person who uses fewer constructs with little discriminability among them, possesses a simple cognitive structure (Bieri, 1955, 1961; Bieri, Atkins, Briar, Leaman, Miller, & Tripodi, 1966; Tripodi & Bieri, 1963). Bieri's (1955; Tripodi & Bieri, 1963) modification of Kelly's (1955) Role Construct Repertory (REP) Test was designed to provide an objective estimate of an individual's level of cognitive complexity. However, Crockett (1965) has argued that differentiation represents only one aspect of cognitive complexity. For Crockett, a complete explanation of complexity requires an understanding of the hierarchical integration of differentiated constructs. Similarly, Streufert and Fromkin (1972) have indicated that although various approaches to cognitive complexity accept differentiation as a precondition for integration, integration is not consistently in-

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voked as an important element in cognitive complexity research.[1]

Because many of the personal constructs maintained by poorly differentiated individuals are not independent but are highly interrelated, it may be understood that many of the trait combinations found on personality impression formation tasks would be inconsistent with the personal construct system of poorly differentiated people. For example, if a person believes that happy people are friendly and sad people are unfriendly, then pairing the traits *happy* and *unfriendly* or the traits *sad* and *friendly* on a personality impression formation task would be inconsistent with the combination rules that this person normally would apply to the *happy-sad* and *friendly-unfriendly* dimensions.

The manner in which people resolve such inconsistencies, particularly on personality impression formation tasks, may be understood in terms of information integration theory and the differential-weight averaging model proposed by Anderson (1974a, 1974b, 1974c):

> In the information integration model, each stimulus is considered to have a scale value, *s*, and a weight, *w*. The *s* parameter allows the stimulus to vary in value along the dimension of judgment. The *w* parameter allows for differential relevance or importance. The averaging model in general form is $R = \epsilon w_i s_i / \epsilon w_i$ where w_i and s_i are the weight and value of stimulus i. The sum is over all the relevant stimuli . . . .
>
> When all the [levels of one stimulus dimension] have the same weight, and all of the [levels within each of the other stimulus dimensions] have the same weight, then the formula becomes simplified and specifies the response as an additive or linear function of the stimulus values . . . . The linear law can thus be viewed as a special case of the averaging hypothesis that holds when stimuli within each factor have the same weight or importance.
>
> Linearity leads to the parallelism prediction which has a simple, powerful test in terms of the interaction in a factorial analysis of variance . . . . Linearity only holds when the condition of equal weighting applies. If [the levels of the stimulus dimensions] have different weights, then the denominator is variable and the equation is non-linear or configural. (Kaplan & Anderson, 1973, pp. 305-306)

According to Anderson's model, inconsistency among stimuli normally is resolved by stimulus discounting, i.e., the reduction in weight or natural importance of one or more of the inconsistent stimuli. In terms of present considerations, the weight of a particular personality trait would be expected to depend necessarily on the traits with which it is combined. As the poorly differentiated individual is likely to experience considerable inconsistency among personality traits presented for judgment, the differential-weight averaging model leads to the prediction that such an individual would depart from a strict linear model by altering the weight of one or more of these stimuli, thereby employing combination rules consistent with a configural model. As inconsistency among personality traits presented for judgment is an unlikely event for the highly differentiated person, the relative weight of each trait should remain the same regardless of the particular trait configuration. That is, judgment should be a strict linear function of the weights and scale values of the extant stimuli.

[1]Because of the important theoretical distinction between differentiation and integration, the term cognitive differentiation, rather than cognitive complexity, will be used hereafter.

This study was concerned with the respective integration processes employed by a group of subjects who varied in their level of cognitive differentiation. A complete factorial arrangement of a set of five bipolar personality trait dimensions taken directly from each subject's REP test served as the judgmental stimuli. Each subject was asked to indicate the degree of comfort she would feel if it were necessary to spend some time with a person possessing the attributes indicated in each configuration of personality traits.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) model, employed by a number of investigators to detect the presence of linearity and configurality in the judgment process (e.g., Anderson, 1969; Hoffman, Slovic, & Rorer, 1968; Millimet & Greenberg, 1973; Rorer, Hoffman, Dickman, & Slovic, 1967; Slovic, 1969) was used to analyze the judgments of the two experimental groups. In terms of the ANOVA model, significant main effects indicate that judgment is an additive function of the significant stimulus dimensions, thereby signaling the presence of a linear integration process. Significant interaction effects indicate that judgment is made on the basis of two or more personality trait dimensions in combination. That is, the judgmental variation of one stimulus dimension is a function of at least one other stimulus dimension. It may be understood that stimulus interaction is a sign of configural integration process (Anderson, 1972).

Individuals who are described as possessing the positive characteristics of a series of personality trait dimensions (e.g., *kind, efficient* and *forgiving*) are more likely to be valued than individuals who are described as possessing the negative characteristics of the same personality trait dimensions (e.g., *cruel, inefficient*, and *resentful*). Consequently, it was expected that the number of significant main effects would be considerable in the analyses of the judgments of *both* experimental groups. However, as varying amounts of stimulus inconsistency was expected to be present in the impression formation task of the poorly differentiated subjects only, a differential-weight averaging model leads to the prediction that the poorly differentiated subjects would resort to stimulus discounting and exhibit a greater number of statistically significant interaction effects than the highly differentiated subjects in the analyses of the judgments of the two experimental groups.

Method

Subjects

Students enrolled in the second semester of an introductory psychology course at the University of Nebraska at Omaha were administered a modification of Bieri's (Tripodi & Bieri, 1963) REP test procedure. The respondents were asked to rate individuals who best corresponded to 10 provided role categories (e.g., mother, person you dislike) on each of 15 personal construct dimensions selected by the respondent from a list of 60 bipolar dimensions (e.g., shy-outgoing, unintelligent-intelligent). The

respondents were told to make their selection on the basis of the strength, frequency of use, and importance they place on these dimensions in describing or evaluating the various people in their life. A scale ranging from 1 to 7 was used in the rating procedure.

The scoring procedure used in the present study consists of subtracting the 10 ratings associated with one construct dimension from the corresponding 10 ratings of a second construct dimension. The 10 difference scores, including sign, are compared to each other so that all possible pairings (45) are considered. One point is scored for each pair of differences that are identical in sign and value. This procedure is performed for each of the 105 pairings of the 15 construct dimensions and summed to derive a total construct differentiation score that can range from 0 to 4725. The lower the total score, the greater the differentiation in the personal construct system. A minor modification in scoring is required to facilitate the analysis for some instances where a negative relationship exists between the construct dimensions.

A test-retest coefficient of .89 (N = 38) was obtained following a five week interval.

Because of the small number of males enrolled in the participating classes (N = 46), only female subjects were considered (N = 150). From this population, 20 poorly differentiated subjects with scores at least one *SD* above the mean, and 20 highly differentiated subjects with scores at least one *SD* below the mean, were selected for further investigation. Because one of the poorly differentiated subjects declined to participate, the least differentiated of the highly differentiated subjects was dropped in order to maintain equal group size (N = 19).

Procedure

Upon entering the laboratory, each subject was given a 64 page booklet and a set of instructions. Each page of the booklet contained the same five bipolar personality trait dimensions that were taken from the subject's REP test. For the highly differentiated subjects, the five most differentiated dimensions were selected to serve as judgmental stimuli. For the poorly differentiated subjects, the five dimensions that exhibited the least differentiation were selected.

The five stimulus dimensions were presented 64 times in the same top to bottom position on each page with the left-right placement of the poles of each dimension determined by a fully-crossed methodology. Each of the initial 32 presentations represented a different configuration of the two poles of the five stimulus dimensions as determined by a 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design. The pole of each dimension that was to be considered in each configuration was circled. The pole that was not to be considered was left uncircled. In other words, a subject would see on each page of the test booklet the same five bipolar personality trait dimensions (now serving as stimulus dimensions), with one or the other pole of each dimension circled to indicate its salience to the hypothetical target person in the judgmental

task. It was considered necessary to present the uncircled polar opposite primarily for the benefit of the poorly differentiated subjects who were expected to be influenced by the implicit inconsistency of the various trait combinations (as illustrated in the *happy-sad* and *friendly-unfriendly* example provided earlier). The presence of the uncircled polar opposite for the highly differentiated subjects was expected to have little influence on their ratings given the uncorrelated nature of the trait dimensions that led to their inclusion in the study.

The order of presentation of the 32 stimulus configurations was determined randomly for each subject. The remaining 32 pages of the booklet consisted of the same 32 configurations in a different random order of presentation. The duplication of judgments was required for deriving an estimate of intra-judge test-retest reliability and the error term for the analysis of variance.

For each configuration, the subjects were given the following instructions: "Please assume that you are attending a social function and have just been introduced to a person whom you have never met. In the course of the conversation, it becomes clear to you that the person possesses the five attributes that are circled below. After you have carefully considered all the attributes this person possesses, please indicate on a ten point scale how comfortable you would feel in the presence of this person if it were necessary for the two of you to spend a considerable amount of time together."

The dependent variable of *comfortableness* (as opposed to the typical impression formation task where *likeableness* is the dependent variable) was selected because of its logical correspondence to anxiety defined by Kelly (1955) as an emotional state that is experienced when an individual recognizes that his or her construct system "does not apply to the events at hand. It is therefore, a precondition for making revisions" (p. 498). In terms of the ongoing example of the poorly differentiated person who expects happy people to be friendly and sad people to be unfriendly, the presence of *happy-unfriendly* and *sad-friendly* in the judgmental task of the present investigation should result in lower comfortableness ratings than would be expected for stimulus combinations that included *happy-friendly* and *sad-unfriendly*. Such a pattern of ratings would of necessity result in one or more statistically significant interaction effects that include these variables.

Ratings were made on a scale which ranged from 1 (extremely uncomfortable) to 10 (extremely comfortable). The task took from 15 to 30 minutes for each subject. Subjects were examined in groups of one to six and testing was completed over a three week period.

Results and Discussion

Mean test-retest reliabilities for the poorly differentiated (.82) and highly differentiated (.70) subjects were adequate and not significantly different ($Z = 0.83$, $p > .40$).

A separate 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 factorial analysis of variance was performed on the 64 ratings of each subject and resulted in F tests for five main effects (representing the five personal construct dimensions) and 26 interaction effects (representing the five personal construct dimensions in combination).

The results of the 19 separate analyses of the judgments of the poorly differentiated subjects showed that 89 out of a possible 95 main effects (93.7%) and 61 out of a possible 494 interaction effects (12.3%) were statistically significant ($p < .05$). The results of the 19 separate analyses of the judgments of the highly differentiated subjects showed that 77 out of a possible 95 main effects (81.1%) and 38 out of a possible 494 interaction effects (7.7%) were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

These frequencies demonstrate the strong linear component of judgment that was expected for *all* subjects, regardless of the subject's level of differentiation ($Z = 0.85, p > .40$). Furthermore, the poorly differentiated subjects exhibited significantly more interaction effects than the highly differentiated subjects ($Z = 2.21, p = .028$), thereby supporting the major hypothesis of the study.

A direct test of the significance of the additive and nonadditive variance components of each subject's judgments showed that although all 38 subjects were defined by a significant additive component of judgment ($p < .05$), 2 out of 19 (10.5%) highly differentiated subjects and 9 out of 19 (47.4%) poorly differentiated subjects exhibited significant deviations from additivity, a difference that is highly significant ($Z = 2.51, p = .012$).

It may be argued that the proportion of significant interaction effects characterizing the judgments of the two experimental groups is so small relative to the proportion of significant main effects that the difference in nonadditivity is not worthy of serious consideration. In this regard, Goldberg (1968) has concluded that even though "judges can process information in a configural fashion . . . the general linear model is powerful enough to reproduce most of these judgments with very small error" (p. 491).

There is no denying that a linear model can adequately reproduce the judgments of people, even when there is evidence of reliable configurality in the integration process. But Goldberg's conclusion begs the question, at least as far as integration theory is concerned. From the perspective of integration theory, it is not how well a model reproduces the judgments of an individual, but how well the model reflects the combination rules governing the integration of information. That is, it is not the magnitude of an effect that confirms a judgmental model, but whether the effect is reliable, albeit small, and follows from predictions made by the model (Anderson, 1972).

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that a significant interaction effect may not reflect a psychologically meaningful integration process, but may be the product of a nonlinear response scale. Such nonlinearity is often the result of response preferences and anchor effects (Anderson, 1972).

Although it is possible that such effects influenced the responding of the subjects in the present investigation, examination of the data showed that the majority of subjects composing the two experimental groups either never used the most extreme responses allowed them on the ten-point rating scale or used these responses only once — when the stimulus configuration consisted of all five positive stimuli or all five negative stimuli. Furthermore, the grand means of the 64 ratings were not significantly different ($t(36) = 1.32$, n.s.), indicating that the average rating of comfortableness given to the stimulus configurations was the same for both groups of subjects. That is, the tendency to assign favorable ratings did not differ for the two experimental groups.

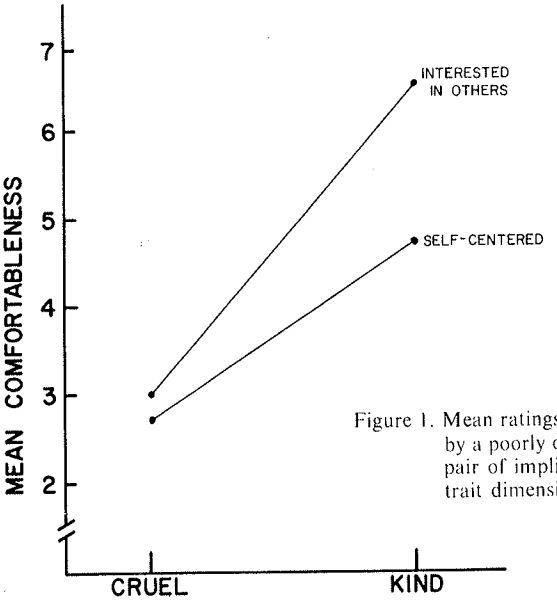

Figure 1. Mean ratings of comfortableness given by a poorly differentiated subject to a pair of implicitly related personality trait dimensions.

Of course, the critical test of the response scale resided in examining the profiles of the significant interaction effects for psychological meaning. For the poorly differentiated subjects, 30 of the 37 significant two-factor interactions were nearly identical in appearance to the one presented in Figure 1. That the profile diverges to the right indicates that the positive trait *interested in others* was discounted when paired with the negative trait *cruel*. As it is unlikely that a *cruel* person would be genuinely *interested in others*, at least not in a positive sense, the inconsistency between these traits seems apparent. Furthermore, the nature of this discounting process is consistent with previous research that has shown that the presence of at least one negative trait tends to produce a negative judgment, regardless of the variation in the remaining traits with which the negative trait is combined (e.g., Birnbaum, 1974).

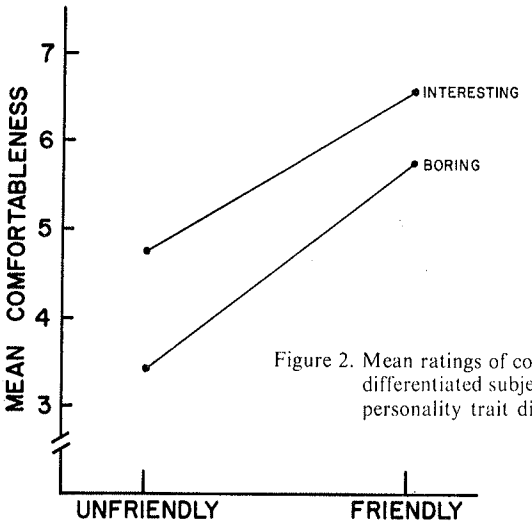

Figure 2. Mean ratings of comfortableness given by a poorly differentiated subject to a pair of implicitly related personality trait dimensions.

On the other hand, consider one of the seven significant interactions of the poorly differentiated subjects that showed a convergence to the right (see Figure 2). This profile indicates that the negative trait *boring* was discounted when paired with the positive trait *friendly*. However, the inconsistency in the conjunction of the traits *friendly* and *boring* is not readily apparent. In fact, apart from the effect indicated in Figure 1, not one of the significant two-, three-, or four-factor interaction effects produced by the poorly differentiated subjects was composed of stimuli that seemed to reflect a logically inconsistent relationship. Keep in mind that the procedure employed in the present study is quite unlike that of previous research in which logically inconsistent stimuli were presented to randomly selected subjects (e.g., Anderson & Jacobson, 1965). The procedure used in selecting the stimuli in the present study insured the implicit inconsistency of the stimuli for the poorly differentiated subjects. The discounting process employed by the poorly differentiated subjects, it now appears, is not the result of logically inconsistent pairings among personality traits, but rather that of a more primitive semantic quality resulting from the inconsistency of traits differing in evaluative connotation. *Friendly* is good and *boring* is bad and never the two shall meet — in the same person — for the poorly differentiated individual.

But a more important consideration arises. What are the determinants that led some poorly differentiated subjects to discount the positive trait, and other poorly differentiated subjects to discount the negative trait, of a dyad composed of one positive and one negative trait? The question becomes especially intriguing when it is recognized that the scale values of the respective positive and negative traits noted in Figures 1 and 2 are nearly identical to each other, within and between the two profiles. In

Figure 2, for example, the scale values of *interesting* and *friendly* are 5.11 and 5.19 respectively, whereas the scale values of *boring* and *unfriendly* are .97 and .92, respectively (Anderson, 1968). In addition, it is important to understand that the scale values of the respective positive and negative traits in each figure are equidistant from the midpoint (3) of the response scale used by Anderson (1968). And yet the interaction effect noted in Figure 1 resulted from discounting a positive trait, whereas the interaction effect noted in Figure 2 resulted from discounting a negative trait. Therefore, as Anderson (1974b) has pointed out, "the frequent claim that negative information carries more weight than positive information . . . is not a simple question of fact. As most investigators have realized, it requires controlling for the scale values so that observed differences reflect only the weight parameter" (p. 87). Indeed, the equality of the scale values in the profiles appearing in Figures 1 and 2 suggests that greater weight is not always assigned to negative traits.

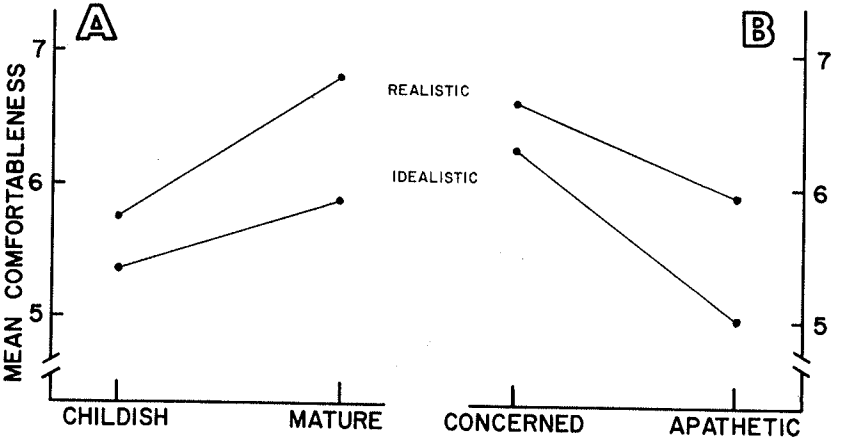

Figure 3. Mean ratings of comfortableness given by a poorly differentiated subject to two pairs of implicitly related personality trait dimensions.

That the determinants of discounting are even more complex is dramatized in Figure 3. Here it can be seen that for the same poorly differentiated subject, pairing *idealistic* with the positive traits of *mature* and *concerned* resulted in qualitatively different discounting processes, even though the magnitude of the discounting process was the same in both instances. Figure 3a shows that *mature* was discounted when paired with *idealistic*, whereas Figure 3b indicates that *idealistic* was discounted when paired with *concerned*, even though the trait dimensions of *childish-mature* and *apathetic-concerned* possess nearly the same positive and negative scale values (Anderson, 1968).

Unlike the interaction effects noted for the poorly differentiated subjects, examination of the significant interaction effects produced by the

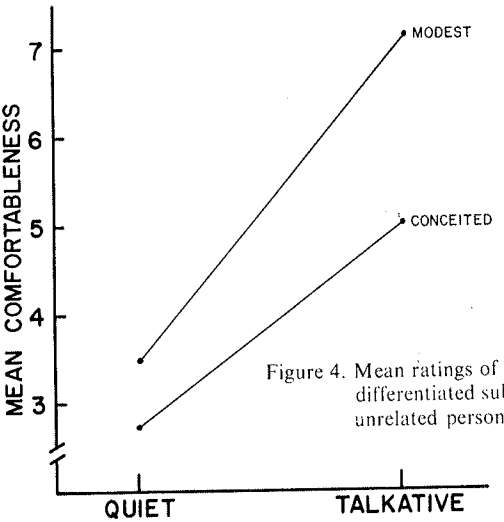

Figure 4. Mean ratings of comfortableness given by a highly differentiated subject to a pair of implicitly unrelated personality trait dimensions.

highly differentiated subjects revealed the presence of considerable psychological meaning. However, in no instance did these effects appear to reflect inconsistencies among the traits under consideration. On the contrary, these interactions reflected considerable sophistication in the manner in which the traits were combined. For example, consider the significant two-factor interaction presented in Figure 4. As can be seen, when *modest* and *conceited* were paired with *talkative*, the *talkative modest* individual produced considerably greater comfort in the subject than the *talkative conceited* individual. However, when *modest* and *con-*

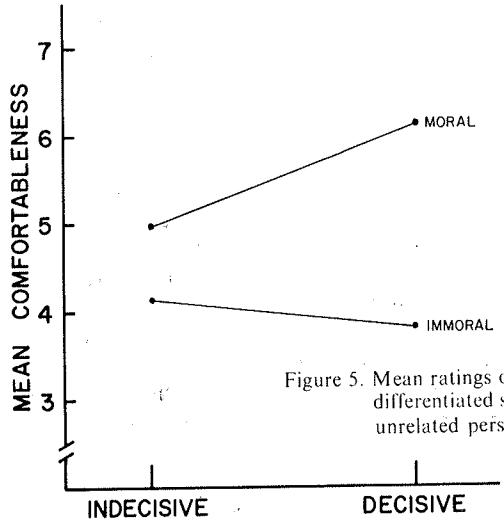

Figure 5. Mean ratings of comfortableness given by a highly differentiated subject to a pair of implicitly unrelated personality trait dimensions.

ceited were paired with *quiet*, no difference in comfort was experienced. It may be interpreted that a person who does not verbalize conceit is behaviorally no different, and presumably no more offensive, than a person who does not give a verbal indication of modesty.

Now consider the profile in Figure 5. Although the *indecisive moral* person was experienced with more comfort than the *indecisive immoral* person, the magnitude of the difference between the *moral* and *immoral* traits increased greatly when these traits were paired with *decisive*. The *decisive moral* person produced a considerable increase in comfort, whereas the *decisive immoral* person produced an increase in discomfort. It may be understood that the *indecisive-decisive* dimension is an important determinant of the likelihood of a person to carry out his or her *moral* or *immoral* inclinations.

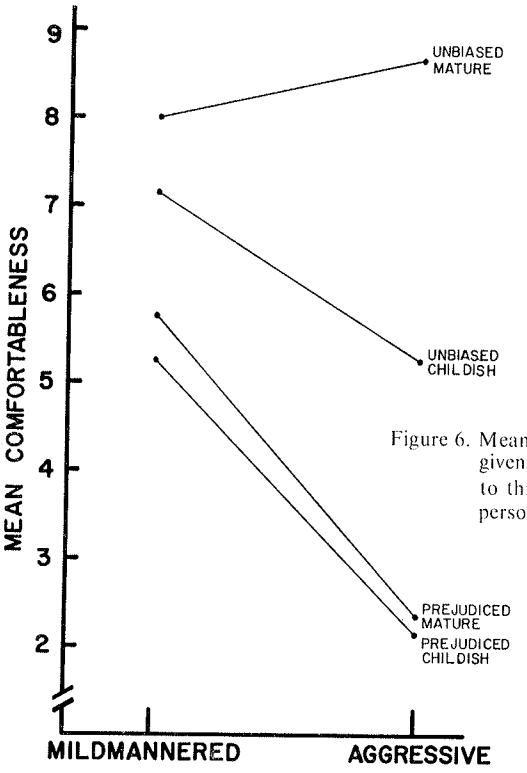

Figure 6. Mean ratings of comfortableness given by a highly differentiated subject to three implicitly unrelated personality trait dimensions.

Finally, consider the three-factor interaction shown in Figure 6. It can be seen that pairing *prejudiced-unbiased* and *childish-mature* with *mild-mannered* produced considerably less response variability than when these dimensions were paired with *aggressive*. Clearly, the presence of a strong activity dimension, such as *mildmannered-aggressive*, has a strong bearing on a person acting out his or her *prejudiced* or *unbiased* orientation, es-

pecially when the *unbiased* person is distinguished by his or her level of maturity.

The configural effects exhibited by the highly differentiated subjects are remarkably similar to a set of serendipitous findings obtained by Birnbaum (1974). Birnbaum showed that the activity component of one trait can multiply the evaluative component of another trait, resulting in a psychologically meaningful interaction effect. For example, Birnbaum (1974) showed that "*self-confident* and *malicious* is less likeable than *shy* and *malicious* although *self-confident* is more likeable than *shy* in combination with other traits. A *self-confident, malicious* person may be perceived as more likely to carry out malicious actions than a *shy* one" (p. 547).

Indeed, various aspects of the configural effects noted in the judgments of the highly differentiated subjects are consistent with certain properties of multiplying models. For example, an important requirement of multiplying models is that the stimuli under consideration be independent. It is clear that the manner in which the stimuli were selected satisfied this condition. Secondly, multiplying models are denoted by a fan of diverging straight lines, a characteristic that is consistent with nearly all of the configural effects of the highly differentiated subjects. Unfortunately, the presence of only two stimuli in each trait dimension did not permit a direct test of bilinearity or any discrepancy from it. Finally, it may be argued that stimuli belonging to an activity trait dimension function like adverbs when paired with stimuli belonging to an evaluative trait dimension (Birnbaum, 1974). In this regard, adverb-adjective pairings have been shown to produce effects consistent with a multiplying model (Anderson, 1974a, 1974b, 1974c).

Although a multiplying model cannot be ruled out, it appears that a differential-weight averaging model provides a better explanation of these data. This is not to say that differential weighting occurred in response to inconsistent information, as was the case with the poorly differentiated subjects. Clearly, the manner in which the personality traits were selected provifes little reason to suspect that inconsistent information was presented to the highly differentiated subjects. Rather the process of stimulus integration appears to be in response to the differential likelihood of certain personality traits to be manifested in behavior. That is, if a person generally maintains a low level of activity, then many of the personality traits the person possesses are not likely to be expressed in behavior. Consequently, such traits would not be viewed as salient to the dimension of judgment. On the other hand, if a person generally maintains a high level of activity, then many of the personality traits the person possesses are more likely to be expressed in behavior. Such traits would be viewed as salient to the dimension of judgment and should assume greater importance in the integration process.

In an averaging model, the weight a stimulus assumes is directly related to the amount of importance attributed to it. Since the weights in an averaging model are relative and must sum to one, a change in the weight

of one stimulus will be associated necessarily with a change in the weight of the other stimuli in the context of judgment. As the weight of a stimulus decreases, the value of the stimulus will have a decreasing influence in the integration process. Conversely, as the weight of a stimulus increases, the value of the stimulus will have an increasing influence in the integration process. Consequently, even though stimuli may be considerably different in scale value (as would be expected for a bipolar personality trait dimension possessing a strong evaluative component, such as *immoral-moral*), judgments made to the bipolar stimuli should become more alike as the weight of each stimulus approaches zero (as would be expected when evaluative traits are paired with a trait connoting considerable inactivity, such as *indecisive*). On the other hand, a strong divergence in judgment would be expected when evaluative traits are paired with a trait connoting considerable activity (such as *decisive*).

It may be understood that the nature of the configural effects noted in the judgments of highly differentiated persons and the considerable differentiation maintained among the personal constructs maintained by these persons are based on the same phenomenon, i.e., the presence and independence of a relatively high number of personal construct dimensions differing in connotative meaning. In fact, an examination of the 95 dimensions considered by the poorly differentiated subjects in the present investigation showed that every dimension possessed a strong evaluative component, whereas out of the 95 dimensions considered by the highly differentiated subjects, 12 dimensions manifested a strong activity component and three exhibited a strong potency component — fully 16% of the total number (cf. Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Furthermore, every one of the significant interaction effects noted in the analyses of the judgments of the highly differentiated subjects included at least one activity or potency dimension. And with the possible exception of one or two of these effects, the configurality exhibited was consistent with the theory and examples discussed above.

It may be concluded that the configural effects noted in the judgments of both experimental groups were consistent with Anderson's differential-weight averaging model. For the poorly differentiated subjects, the differential weighting was in response to the considerable inconsistency in the factorial combinations of highly interrelated evaluative trait dimensions. For the highly differentiated subjects, the differential weighting resulted primarily from the factorial combination of activity and evaluative trait dimensions.

But recall that it had been predicted that the judgments of the differentiated subjects would adhere to a strict linear model. This prediction was based on the notion that selecting a set of highly differentiated stimuli for judgment would preclude the occurrence of inconsistency in the stimulus combinations. Consequently, it was not expected that differential weighting and stimulus interaction would be associated with the judgments made by these subjects. However, it could not have been anticipated that

the independence of the stimulus dimensions considered by the highly differentiated subjects would be based on the connotative distinction among evaluative, activity, and potency dimensions. Nor could the particular form of the integration process be anticipated, i.e., the differential weighting of an evaluative dimension when paired with an activity dimension and, to a lesser extent, a potency dimension.

It may be argued by some that, in fact, no clear test of the judgmental processes of the two experimental groups was made, owing to the way the judgmental stimuli were selected. The argument is as follows: If the stimuli selected for the poorly differentiated subjects to rate were qualitatively different than the stimuli selected for the highly differentiated subjects to rate (as indeed they were, as noted above), then one cannot know whether the experimental results reflected differences between types of subjects or differences between types of stimuli. How can one know that the results would not have been reversed if the sets of stimuli had been switched, so that the highly differentiated subjects rated the trait dimensions selected from the personal construct system of the poorly differentiated subjects and vice versa? To validly compare the performance of the two experimental groups, it would be necessary to have the two groups rate the *same* stimulus dimensions.

In reply, it may well be that supplying a set of activity and potency dimensions to the poorly differentiated subjects for their judgment would have resulted in qualitatively the same configural processing noted for the highly differentiated subjects. But such a procedure is quite inconsistent with Kelly's (1955) theoretical position concerning personal constructs. For Kelly, to investigate how an individual would function with someone else's constructs would be a completely meaningless enterprise. In this regard, to have made use of an experimental design in the nomothetic tradition, where the same set of stimuli would have been administered to all subjects, undoubtedly would have failed to capture the interesting and important idiographic effects noted in the present study.

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