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Updating the Bogardus social distance studies: a new national survey☆

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Abstract

The last quarter of the 20th century witnessed a number of events and social transformations that have had great implications for religious and ethnic relations around the world. This study seeks to gauge the changes in sentiment towards various U.S. ethnic and religious groups by updating and replicating the Bogardus social distance scale. The Bogardus study, which was designed to measure the level of acceptance that Americans feel towards members of the most common ethnic groups in the United States, was conducted five times between 1920 and 1977 with very few changes in research design. Consistent with prior replications, the authors of this study collected a random sample of 2,916 college students and administered the social distance scale in the form of a questionnaire. The findings indicate that the mean level of social distance towards all ethnic groups, as well as the spread between the groups with the highest and lowest levels of social distance, decreased since 1977. Mean comparisons and ANOVA test also showed that gender, nation of origin, and race are all significant indicators of the level of social distance towards all groups.
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When Emory Bogardus published *A History of Social Thought* in 1922, the use of social surveys and statistical analyses to describe social phenomena were in the early years of popular use by social scientists. With his focus on the "race problem" as one of the major issues confronting U.S. society, Bogardus incorporated these fledgling research techniques in his suggestion that we could gain insights through the analysis of a social survey on "racial" attitudes—conducted at regular intervals—to detect what changes, if any, occurred. As Bogardus (1922, p. 482) enthusiastically stated, the combination of the social survey with appropriate statistical analysis could result in "a flood of light upon important phases of societary life." His seminal idea

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of social measurement in the field of race relations, augmented by the notion of longitudinal comparisons, was the genesis of a simple but effective research tool that became a widely used and highly influential instrument in the study of intergroup relations.

Seeking to measure the perceived "social distance" from 30 "racial" groups, Bogardus initiated his first nationwide survey of college students in 1926. Except for some minor fine-tuning of that first instrument, Bogardus utilized the same procedures in subsequent nationwide surveys in 1946, 1956, and 1966. (He was out of the country in 1936.) Following his death in 1973, Carolyn A. Owen, Howard C. Eisner, and Thomas R. McFaul replicated the Bogardus studies in 1977, using the same 30 racial and ethnic groups and selecting their respondents in a manner virtually identical to that of Bogardus (Bogardus, 1925, 1933, 1947, 1958, 1968; Owen, Eisner, & McFaul, 1977).

Since 1977, no national study replicating the five studies from 1926 to 1977 has been done, until now. Perhaps a primary reason for this long interval is that demographic changes in U.S. society since 1977 so affected its diversity, that the original list of 30 groups became obsolete, making further comparisons useless. This study attempts to preserve the Bogardus legacy of social distance measurement yet meet the challenge presented by a far more diverse society. To do so, the authors deleted some groups—no longer visible minorities—to make room for newer groups both sizable in number and highly visible as minorities. Otherwise, the authors employed the same research instrument and methodology to replicate the earlier studies as closely as possible.

1. The social distance scale legacy

In his last book, *A Forty-Year Social Distance Study* (1967), Bogardus looked back on his work, noting both his own accomplishments using the social distance scale and that of others.

Although acknowledging that some questioned the underlying assumption of his or any other scale as a valid and reliable measurement index (Krech & Crutchfield, 1947; Sartain & Bell, 1947), he found satisfaction that the work of others reaffirmed his scale's reliability and validity (Hartley & Hartley, 1952; Newcomb, 1950; Sherif & Sherif, 1956).

And, as Brein and Ryback (1971) reported, many other scholars utilized the social distance scale to measure a wide variety of social distance phenomena, including that between doctors and nurses in a mental hospital (Pearlin & Rosenberg, 1962); among college students when mental retardation is a factor (Dent, 1966); and among health professionals when patients are dying (Kalish, 1966). Since Brein and Ryback's article, other social distance studies further explored this dimension of intergroup relations. Yancey (1998), for example, determined that whites attending interracial churches exhibit less social distance toward African Americans. Kleg and Yamamoto (1998), replicating the first Bogardus study, examined the views of 135 middle school teachers. Raden (1998) explored the preferred social distance toward Jews by blacks and whites. Wilson (1996) studied white attitudes toward Asians, blacks, and Hispanics. Walsh (1989) analyzed the relation between immigrants with lower social acceptance and naturalization rates.

A common finding among these studies was that individuals typically are more comfortable with others of perceived similarity and so maintain a closer social distance in interactions

with them. Conversely, by evaluating their ingroup more favorably, they also tend to express a self-serving bias toward dissimilar outgroups (Mayhew, McPherson, & Rotolo, 1995; Parrillo, 2003, pp. 5–8).

Because the work begun by Bogardus inspired an extensive body of research, Owen, Eisner, and McFaul (1977, p. 82) reported, "Bogardus' measure of social distance has been the launching point for myriad studies of social class, occupation, religion, sex, age, and race in many social contexts and in many different cultures both here and abroad." In varying applications, the Bogardus social distance scale remains influential and extensively applied, vivid testimony from the academic community as to its merits.

We must be cautious, however, in our interpretation of what exactly such attitudinal evidence tells us. Since La Piere's classic study (1934), social scientists have continually called our attention to an oft-existing discrepancy between individuals' expressed attitudes and their actions (De Friese & Ford, 1969; Frideres, Lyle, & Warner, 1980; Jackman, 1976; Laing, 1967; Perry, Gillespie, & Lotz, 1976; Tarter, 1969; Ungar, 1998; Warner & DeFleur, 1967; Wicker, 1969). As Kleg and Yamamoto (1998, p. 187) noted, we can assume that "social desirability factors" may well be at work "when applied to such a sensitive and emotionally charged matter as a person's ethno-racial attitudes." In examining this new study, therefore, we must consider whether or not these attitudinal responses partly reflect the contemporary norm of "political correctness." This possibility raises important concerns about the validity of social distance measures. If respondents feel they are risking criticism or sanctions for their opinions about other groups, an artificial bias towards reduced social distance may be taking effect. Nevertheless, the assurances of anonymity and confidentiality are likely to counteract this effect to some degree.

2. Results of previous national studies

In all five past national studies, the respondents were students in U.S. colleges and universities. The actual number of participants was 1,725 in 1926; 1,950 in 1946; 2,053 in 1956; 2,605 in 1966; and 1,488 in 1977. Mostly undergraduate students in all majors, they were enrolled in social science classes (primarily in sociology), but not in ethnic studies or race relations courses. In each of his four studies, Bogardus garnered a 10% black respondent rate, primarily from southern schools; virtually all other respondents were whites. Owen et al. (1977) had four southern schools in their 12-school sample, with 19% black respondents and 2% Asian respondents. Instructions in all studies asked the students to reply to the scale items in a rapid manner, assuring them of their anonymity in the data analysis.

Social distance scores ranged from one to seven along a choice continuum (marriage, close friend, neighbor, co-worker, speaking acquaintance, visitor to my country, bar from my country). The lower the score, the greater the degree of intimacy a respondent would grant to members of a particular racial or ethnic group. Generally, in all previous studies non-ethnic U.S. whites and northern and western Europeans dominated the top third, with racial minorities in the bottom third, and a mixture of groups in the middle. Notably, Italians and American Indians moved upward significantly in the last two studies, placing in the top third. "Negroes" (the

Table 1
Overall mean social distance score and spread by year

Year	Overall mean	Spread
1926	2.14	2.85
1946	2.12	2.57
1956	2.08	1.75
1966	1.92	1.56
1977	1.93	1.37

Source: 1926, 1946, 1966 are taken from Bogardus. 1977 is taken from Owen et al.

term still generally acceptable in 1977) also showed marked improvement in social acceptance, rising from next to last in 1966 to about mid-range in 1977.

The five studies allowed for two other measurement comparisons. First was the overall mean of the sum total of all participants' responses to the 30 groups overall. Second was the calculated social distance spread, or difference in mean scores between the groups receiving the highest and lowest scores. Table 1 presents both sets of these data, revealing a steady decline in both, with the mean for social distance responses gradually lowering from 2.14 to 1.93, and the social distance spread dropping even more dramatically from 2.85 to 1.37.

Bogardus (1967, pp. 37–39) noted that this growing social acceptance of various groups would have been even greater, given immigration restrictions over this period, had it not been for the mitigating influence of such external events as the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, and the Cold War. He was optimistic about the future, convinced that the decline in social distance among groups would continue, but at a slower rate. However, he also conceded that the greater social distances toward some groups resulted from deep-rooted collective feelings, which might not change easily or quickly.

Better communication, amelioration of conditions fostering negative attitudes toward other groups, and long-term education programs were his solutions to reduce the remaining social distance among groups. Bogardus based his hopeful outlook on the belief that a positive cycle of improving attitudes toward other groups would feed on increased knowledge about outgroup members and positive intergroup experiences together leading to a resocialization of feelings toward others.

Indeed, Owen et al. (1977, p. 95) found evidence of a further decline in social distance in their study and concluded that their results "do support the half-century trend toward decreasing social distance with respect to many of the 30 ethnic groups studied." However, because their study had a disproportionately higher ratio of Blacks (19%) than in the Bogardus studies, they suggested that the "reluctance of Blacks to give Americans (U.S. Whites) a close social distance score" (a pattern also found by Bogardus) led to the latter's higher score of 1.25, compared to previous scores for Americans (1.10 in 1926, 1.04 in 1946, 1.08 in 1956, and 1.07 in 1966). The authors thus concluded that the actual spread would have declined more substantially had their proportion of black respondents been more comparable to those in the four Bogardus studies.

Given the passage of a quarter century since the last national study, several important questions arise. If a disproportionate percentage of black respondents increased the social distance score for Americans in 1977, what results would now occur from a student population sample

far more racially and ethnically diverse than in previous studies, including a sizable proportion born in another country? With the addition of newer minority groups, less fully assimilated, to replace other, mostly assimilated groups, would Americans express greater social distance towards those new groups, and would those feelings be reciprocated? How would African and Native Americans fare in comparison to other, more recently arrived, racial groups? Would the changed list and more diverse student sample (reflecting increased diversity in the larger society) adversely affect the predictions Bogardus made about continually shrinking social distances?

Based on past national findings, the authors expected to find that: (1) both overall mean score and social distance spread would further decline, despite the increased societal diversity; (2) groups more dissimilar from the mainstream (culture, race) would be more likely to place in the lower tier; (3) race would be an important variable in social distance scores; (4) place of birth would affect social distance results; and (5) females would display a higher level of social acceptance for others than males.

3. Methodology

The colleges and universities were selected at random from an alphabetical listing of 4-year higher education institutions, stratified by the four major regions of the United States (East, South, Midwest, and West). To further ensure a representative sample, the number of surveys to be completed at each institution was prorated according to its total enrollment. There were six schools each chosen from the East and South, and five schools each from the Midwest and West, for a total of 22. This fairly even distribution over the four regions thus makes this study comparable to previous studies in geographic sampling.

A total of 2,916 students enrolled in 22 colleges and universities throughout the United States participated in this study, conducted from late September through October 2001. Another 154 completed surveys were eliminated because they had been administered prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the radically changed world thereafter rendered those responses incompatible (invalid) with all other responses. The horror of 9/11 and the timing of the survey led the authors to a new expectation: 9/11 would have a negative impact on the survey results for Arabs and Muslims.

As with previous studies, the respondents were enrolled in social science (primarily sociology) courses, and no questionnaires were distributed in classes on minority groups or race relations. Under specific guidelines set by each institution's Institutional Research Board (IRB) for human subjects research, respondents were assured of anonymity in their answers.

To update the Bogardus survey instrument, seven groups were removed because they were either mostly assimilated and/or far less visible minority groups than others; these were the Armenians, Czechs, Finns, Norwegians, Scots, Swedish, and Turks. In addition, Japanese Americans and Mexican Americans were deleted, while keeping Japanese and Mexicans in the list. This change allowed for greater consistency in the designation of all groups. Added to the list, because of their numbers and high visibility, were Africans, Arabs, Cubans, Dominicans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Muslims,[1] Puerto Ricans, and Vietnamese, for a total of nine new groups.

Otherwise, the survey instrument remained the same in structure and usage. Respondents were asked to "mark as many columns as you find appropriate to accurately reflect your feelings toward each of these individual groups," and to choose as many of the seven categories as they found appropriate. As in previous studies, a respondent's left-most answer (the closest degree of social distance) was scored to represent that individual's social distance for each particular group.

4. Respondents

The racial breakdown of respondents was fairly close to national totals. Caucasians comprised 70% of the sample, followed by Blacks at 10.1%, and Asians at 6.4%. Another 6.5% reported a different race, and the remainder of the sample reported either no race or more than one race. Hispanics accounted for 8.6% of all respondents. Catholics and Protestants constituted 60.9% of all respondents, but the 38% Catholic participation was higher than the national proportion of about 28%. The remainder were Jewish (5.1%), Muslim (1.2%), or Other (30.7%). The latter category was mostly "no religion," as well as a small number of other faiths such as Hindu and Buddhist. In the 1977 study, respondents were 37% Protestant, 37% Catholic, 5% Jewish, and 21% "Other" religious preference.

Females, at 62%, were a higher proportion than the typical college population or national norm, but only slightly higher than in past national studies. For example, the 1977 study had a 58% female participation, while the participants in the first Bogardus study were two-thirds female. Participants' home backgrounds and educational levels approximated normal expectations. The majority lived in suburbs, while nearly one-fourth came from urban areas and about one-seventh from rural areas. About 46% were first-year undergraduates in all majors taking an introductory social science course, with a descending proportion thereafter as the level of education increased.

Nearly 12% of respondents were born outside the United States, approximating that found in the 2000 Census of the total U.S. population. Asked if one or both parents were born outside the United States, nearly 23% responded in the affirmative.

In summary, except for the high proportion of Catholic respondents and of female respondents (as in earlier studies), this sample population cohort is quite representative. The proportions of racial and ethnic groups, native-born and foreign-born, geographic distribution and residential patterning all approximate the actual U.S. college population.

5. Findings

Although this analysis is not directly comparable with the five previous national studies because of changes in the list of groups, some comparisons are still possible in terms of mean scores, social distance spread, and general rankings. Previous studies employed only descriptive statistics, and this study utilizes them also to allow for those comparisons. In addition, results

Table 2
Social distance rankings in 2001 ($N = 2{,}916$)

Rank	Group	Score	Rank	Group	Score	Rank	Group	Score
1	Americans (white)	1.07	11	Jews	1.38	21	Dominicans	1.51
2	Italians	1.15	12	Indians (American)	1.40	22	Japanese	1.52
3	Canadians	1.20	13	Africans	1.43	23	Cubans	1.53
4	British	1.23	14	Polish	1.45	24	Koreans	1.54
5	Irish	1.23	15	Other Hispanics/Latinos	1.45	25	Mexicans	1.55
6	French	1.28	16	Filipinos	1.46	26	Indians (India)	1.60
7	Greeks	1.33	17	Chinese	1.47	27	Haitians	1.63
8	Germans	1.33	18	Puerto Ricans	1.47	28	Vietnamese	1.69
9	African Americans	1.33	19	Jamaicans	1.49	29	Muslims	1.88
10	Dutch	1.35	20	Russians	1.50	30	Arabs	1.94

of t tests and an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are used to illustrate the relative effects of gender, nation of origin, ethnicity and race on the level of social distance.

5.1. Descriptive statistics

With a larger sample size than for the previous studies, the total responses were thus also larger, reaching 126,053. The new list of 30 groups received an overall mean social distance score of 1.45, with a spread of 0.87. Thus, despite the removal of more assimilated groups and the addition of less assimilated groups to the list, the downward trend in both social distance indicators continued, revealing greater social acceptance than the 1977 replication. These summary findings would seem to suggest that Americans are becoming more comfortable with a greater number of ethnic groups, yet it may also be arising due to other factors such as the contemporary trend towards political correctness or the increased level of diversity on college campuses. Table 2 lists those groups ranked low to high in terms of their social distance scores. The exact placement of a group in relation to another near it should not be given too much importance, due both to the close proximity of social distance scores and the possibility of sampling variability.

As expected, non-ethnic Whites remained in the most accepted, top position, with other top 10 slots filled by Canadians and various European groups, essentially continuing a 70-year pattern. What is particularly striking about the new listing, however, is the dramatic rise of African Americans into the top sector. At first blush, this would appear to contradict opposite findings in such classic studies as Massey and Denton (1989, 1994) on residential segregation and of Hacker (1995) on our racially divided society. However, a more consistent finding, as explained shortly, emerged after further analysis.

Three new groups to the list—Africans, Puerto Ricans, and Jamaicans—made a reasonably strong debut in the middle sector. Most Hispanic groups—including Cubans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Other Hispanics/Latinos—all received about the same score, suggesting a general consensus about this ethnic group. Most, but not all, Asian groups clustered together in the third sector. However, the mean scores for Japanese, Koreans, Mexicans, and Asian Indians were all lower than in previous studies, as respon-

dents in 2001 collectively expressed a higher level of social acceptance than previous respondents.

Without question, the administration of this survey so soon after September 11th produced results tempered by the tragic events of that day. Arabs, for example, received the highest number of "bar from entering my country" responses, a total of 112 (3.8%). At the same time, Arabs also received one of the lowest responses (52%) from the total sample for marrying into one's family, while Muslims scored 49% for this category. With a greater social distance score than that given other groups, Arabs ranked last among the 30 groups. Yet when these scores were compared against the 154 pre-9/11 responses not included in these findings, no one selected the response "bar from my country." Furthermore, Arabs reaped a 75% positive response for marrying into one's family, with Muslims collecting a 68% similar response in the responses gathered prior to 9/11. Such a contrast in scores, even in this limited sample, suggests events may well have affected responses in the post-9/11 survey.

Even so, Arabs' overall mean score in the 2001 national study was 1.94, lower than the mean scores for 18 groups in the 1977 study. Muslims fared slightly better, with a mean score of 1.88. This is a significant finding. Despite the impact of such a traumatic external factor as nine-eleven, respondents generally declared a closer social distance to Muslims and Arabs than respondents in 1977 did for nearly half of their choices (an assortment of European, Hispanic, and Asian groups).

5.2. Results of t tests and ANOVA

Means comparison for gender, place of birth, ethnicity, and race give some insight into the importance of these variables (see Table 3). Consistent with findings in previous national studies, females were more tolerant than males in nearly all 30 groups. Their tolerance was significantly greater for Cubans, Dominicans, Muslims, and Vietnamese ($p < .05$), and more so for Canadians and Indians ($p < .01$). Females were even more significantly tolerant than males towards Arabs ($p < .001$). Moreover, the 1.43 total mean score by females, compared to the 1.48 total mean score by males, was also significant ($p < .05$).

Foreign-born status also proved to be a significant variable. Native-born respondents reported lower social distance than foreign-born respondents for all 30 groups. Native-born respondents were found to have significantly more tolerance for African Americans, Canadians, Filipinos, Jamaicans, Jews and Russians ($p < .05$), and more so for the Dutch, French, Germans, Greeks and Polish ($p < .01$). They were even more significantly tolerant than foreign-born respondents for Americans (white), American Indians, Irish, and Italian ($p < .001$). The mean social distance scores for all groups was also significantly higher for foreign-born respondents (1.53) than for native-born respondents (1.44, $p < .01$).

Being Hispanic was another highly important factor in determining social distance. Not surprisingly, Hispanics displayed greater affinity for other Latinos, usually at the expense of white ethnics. The closer scores that Hispanics gave to Cubans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics/Latinos were all very significant ($p < .001$). Also significant were the greater social distances that Hispanic respondents reported for Germans and Jews ($p < .05$), and the Irish ($< .001$). While the differing scores among these individual groups were

Table 3
Independent-sample *t* tests for the effect of gender, foreign born and ethnicity on social distance

Group	Gender		Foreign born		Hispanic origin	
	Mean difference (males–females)	*t* values	Mean difference (foreign born–U.S. born)	*t* values	Mean difference (Hispanic–non-Hispanic)	*t* values
Africans	0.051	1.877	0.0563	1.442	−0.005	−0.111
African Americans	0.026	1.154	0.0875	2.387*	−0.018	−0.502
Americans (white)	0.007	0.573	0.0826	3.611***	0.017	0.783
Arabs	0.199	3.326***	0.0454	0.55	−0.143	−1.633
British	0.015	0.59	0.058	1.774	0.063	1.443
Canadians	0.067	2.566**	0.0732	2.428*	0.061	1.669
Chinese	0.053	1.7	0.0174	0.414	0.045	0.897
Cubans	0.093	2.328*	0.0376	0.675	−0.263	−5.556***
Dominicans	0.077	2.146*	0.0616	1.161	−0.193	−4.073***
Dutch	0.024	0.798	0.1365	2.974**	0.105	1.883
Filipinos	0.046	1.404	0.0939	1.985*	−0.046	−0.993
French	0.032	1.162	0.1182	2.965**	0.09	1.777
Germans	0.016	0.551	0.1383	3.165**	0.135	2.49*
Greeks	0.043	1.512	0.1395	3.242**	0.053	1.098
Haitians	0.072	1.75	0.0712	1.283	−0.056	−0.927
Indians (Asian)	0.1	2.574**	0.0885	1.581	0.024	0.42
Indians (American)	0.032	1.1	0.1968	4.211***	0.052	0.973
Irish	0	0.001	0.1955	4.864***	0.202	3.828***
Italians	0.012	0.746	0.109	3.733***	−0.044	−1.818
Jamaicans	0.063	1.937	0.1258	2.468*	0.014	0.272
Japanese	0.017	0.521	0.0764	1.546	0.06	1.065
Jews	0.014	0.507	0.1105	2.52*	0.136	2.49*
Koreans	0.069	1.911	0.0701	1.359	0.094	1.601
Mexicans	0.044	1.119	0.0361	0.707	−0.272	−5.873***
Muslims	0.107	2.081*	0.0644	0.874	−0.017	−0.205
Other Hispanics, Latinos	0.041	1.175	0.0222	0.487	−0.369	12.935***
Polish	−0.007	−0.199	0.1279	2.627**	0.102	1.802
Puerto-Ricans	0.047	1.348	0.0614	1.252	−0.237	−6.095***
Russians	−0.057	−1.675	0.1292	2.525*	0.073	1.225
Vietnamese	0.097	2.331*	0.0658	1.159	0.072	1.058
All groups	0.047	2.07*	0.0893	2.691**	−0.009	−0.243

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

significant, the differences in overall mean scores between Hispanics (1.44) and non-Hispanics (1.45) was not statistically significant. The fairly similar social distance scores that Hispanics (who can be of any race) and non-Hispanics gave to African Americans and Africans help buttress the finding of improved race relations as measured by the fairly high rankings for African Americans and Africans in Table 2. That is, among a group of greater racial diversity

(Hispanics), no significant difference in social acceptance of blacks existed in comparison to non-Hispanics (Table 3).

As expected, race played an important role in this study, especially since marrying into one's family was the closest measurement of social distance. Members of a particular racial group were more likely to choose same race groups for marriage than other racial groups. Although interracial marriages are more common than in previous years (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004, p. 52), they are by no means commonplace. Using a simplified definition of race (White, Black or Other)[2], one-way ANOVA tests showed that Blacks tended to express significantly greater social distance scores than Whites or "Others," towards Europeans and Asians (see Table 4). Post-Hoc tests (not shown), using the more conservative Tamhane's T2, which does not assume equal variances, found that Blacks were significantly less tolerant

Table 4
One-way ANOVA results for the effect of race on social distance

Group	Means			
	Whites	Blacks	Other	*F*
Africans	1.4358	1.2329	1.5172	16.035***
African Americans	1.3477	1.0993	1.3943	26.974***
Americans (white)	1.0461	1.1058	1.146	25.301***
Arabs	1.9792	1.9271	1.7866	3.398**
British	1.1575	1.5876	1.3293	69.122***
Canadians	1.1423	1.4674	1.2688	41.71***
Chinese	1.4652	1.6587	1.3286	16.985***
Cubans	1.5558	1.5189	1.435	3.082*
Dominicans	1.5246	1.4399	1.4706	1.643
Dutch	1.2737	1.6783	1.4381	43.703***
Filipinos	1.4684	1.5137	1.3753	3.395*
French	1.2256	1.5294	1.3529	28.689***
Germans	1.2501	1.699	1.4472	56.445***
Greeks	1.2592	1.6735	1.4016	48.056***
Haitians	1.6424	1.5651	1.5882	1.103
Indians (Asians)	1.6026	1.6263	1.5397	1.054
Indians (American)	1.402	1.3517	1.4196	0.824
Irish	1.1384	1.6117	1.3935	110.324***
Italians	1.098	1.3527	1.2353	58.372***
Jamaicans	1.5	1.339	1.5275	5.625**
Japanese	1.5101	1.6564	1.4858	4.439*
Jews	1.3114	1.6747	1.5051	42.779***
Koreans	1.5238	1.6838	1.4766	5.355**
Mexicans	1.5761	1.5445	1.4857	1.67
Muslims	1.9112	1.7474	1.7873	3.408*
Other Hispanics, Latinos	1.4897	1.363	1.374	5.352**
Polish	1.3766	1.8069	1.5234	36.812***
Puerto-Ricans	1.501	1.3093	1.4178	7.089***
Russians	1.4418	1.8616	1.5542	30.145***
Vietnamese	1.689	1.8028	1.5694	5.091**
All groups	1.4295	1.5497	1.4535	5.696**

* *p* < .05.
** *p* < .01.
*** *p* < .001.

than Whites towards Americans (white), British, Canadian, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jews, Koreans, Polish, and Russians ($p < .05$). They were also found to be significantly less tolerant than "Others" for all of the same groups except Americans (white).

In addition, Whites were found to be significantly closer than "Others" to Europeans, but significantly less tolerant of Asians. This was evidenced by the significantly closer scores for Whites than Others for Americans, British, Canadians, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Jews, Polish and Russians ($p < .05$), but the significantly less tolerant scores for Chinese, Filipinos, and Vietnamese. This latter finding, however, was likely influenced by the fact that the category of "Others" included mostly Asian respondents. Towards Hispanic groups, Blacks expressed significantly more tolerance than Whites for Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics/Latinos ($p < .05$). Blacks also reported more tolerance than Whites for Cubans, Dominicans, Haitians, and Mexicans, but the differences were not significant. Virtually no significant differences were found to exist between Blacks and "Others" for those same Hispanic groups. t tests for Equality of Means without assuming equal variances, found that on the whole, race proved to be a significant indicator of social distance for 25 of 30 groups ($p < .05$). This variation of the ANOVA test for equality of means is also considered to be more conservative.

6. Discussion

The findings are encouraging in many ways. As anticipated, gender, and place of birth all affected a group's social acceptance. The greater tolerance by females over males echoed other studies (Carter, 1990; Johnson & Marini, 1998; Mills, Magrath, Sobkoviak, Stupec, & Welsh, 1995; Qualls, Cox, & Schehr, 1992). However, the spread in social distance—despite (1) increased diversity in society, (2) a revised list reflecting that demographic reality, and (3) increased diversity among respondents— continued to shrink. The overall mean score of 1.45 was substantially lower than the 1.92 and 1.93 overall mean scores in 1966 and 1977 (see Table 1). These results may suggest a growing level of acceptance by a more diverse society of different others, even though many are recent arrivals, racial minorities, and/or from nonwestern lands. As stated earlier though, that growing acceptance might also be due to the legacy of political correctness and multicultural education initiatives designed to promote tolerance of others (Parrillo, 2003, pp. 583–585). With 96% of respondents under age 30 and 46% first-year undergraduates (proportions comparable to past national studies), most of those expressing these attitudes were young adults who were inundated with such initiatives in the elementary and secondary grades. Interestingly though, there were no significant differences in their responses compared to those who were over 30 years of age.

In some ways, little changed in the pattern of responses. U.S. Whites remained top-ranked, with the various European groups continuing to occupy most of the upper ranks, while a variety of racial minorities, especially Asians, continued to rank near the bottom. Significantly, however, African Americans broke the racial barrier in entering the top sector and placing ahead of other white ethnic groups. What explains this finding? The race of respondents was

a contributing variable, but not the key one, since black respondents this time were a smaller proportion than in 1977 (10.1–19%). In the new study, whites gave African Americans a much better social distance score (1.35–2.02). Why? One possible factor may be that more African Americans than ever before are identified as middle class (Frazier, 1957; Landry, 1987), offering perhaps an answer to the debate of race (Clark, 1980; Feagin, 1991; Willie, 1979) v. class (Sowell, 1981; Wilson, 1976, 1987). Does this finding possibly indicate that a growing black middle class has resulted in greater social acceptance, despite racial differences, as upward mobility earlier did for previously disparaged white ethnic groups? Or do these responses reflect something more parochial, that of students revealing calm acceptance of racial others as they mostly do on their more diverse campuses? Or is the explanation found even elsewhere, such as in the traumatized post-9/11 feelings among the U.S. populace?

Whatever the reason to explain improved social distance scores for blacks, race remains a significant factor in determining the degree of closeness in an individual's attitude toward other racial groups, especially when it comes to racial intermarriage. The racial barriers may have lowered, but they have not disappeared. And, as the statistically significant, negative black responses to various white ethnic groups show, ethnicity is also an important component as well. The generally more tolerant scores of Blacks over Whites toward Hispanics is intriguing and merits further study. Race may have been a factor in these responses, since Hispanics can be of any race. However, other factors such as economics or immigration attitudes of respondents could also have affected the differing scores.

Of course, external events do influence attitudes. Previous social distance studies revealed how World War II affected responses about Japanese in 1946 and the Cold War affected responses about Russians in 1966 and 1977. The ranking of Muslims and Arabs in the last two places is hardly surprising as a repercussion of the terrorist attacks, but how do we explain their comparatively low social distance nonetheless?

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Americans coalesced around the suddenly popular motto, "United we stand" and acted accordingly. Reminded of the diversity among the thousands of victims, motivated by civic leaders calling for tolerance, and inspired by patriotism against terrorist enemies, Americans displayed greater acceptance of others unlike themselves (Frye, 2001; Harden, 2001; Hill, 2001). Since this study was undertaken in the 7 weeks following 9/11, it is quite possible that this mindset affected the results, generating more positive responses than might otherwise have occurred had everyone's world not changed so dramatically after the survey was conducted.

Perhaps this study thus bears witness to a "unity syndrome," the coalescing of various groups against a common enemy who attacked our country. Only time will tell how lasting this new spirit is, both in the bottom rankings of Muslims and Arabs, and in the low social distance scores for all groups. Yet even if the unity syndrome lessens in its power, this study illustrates that greater acceptance of diversity is not only possible, but achievable. Finally, this study only captures social acceptance of groups at a given moment in time, a time immediately after the first successful attack on U.S. mainland soil. It is neither conclusive nor necessarily indicative of new patterns. Future replications of this social distance study will hopefully give a clearer picture of how tolerant Americans remain in their ever-growing multi-racial, multi-cultural society.

Notes

1. Our inclusion of "Muslims" as a distinct category paralleled earlier studies' inclusion of "Jews," in essence to measure acceptance of a large, visible religious minority that some perceive as "different."
2. The category of "Other" included Asians, Hawaiian Pacific Islanders, American Indians and those that reported a different racial category. Respondents and those who reported no race or multiple races were excluded from this test.

Acknowledgements

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