

ATINER CONFERENCE PAPER SERIES No: PSY2013-0543

**Athens Institute for Education and Research**

**ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series**

**PSY2013-0543**

**Measuring Ethnic Attitudes:  
Tolerance and Social Distance  
from Cross-cultural Perspective**

**Nino Javakhishvili**

**Professor, Director**

**D. Uznadze Institute of Psychology, Deputy dean,  
School of Arts and Sciences, Ilia State University  
Georgia**

**Johann F. Schneider**  
**Academic Director a.D. the Department of Psychology**  
**University of Saarland in Saarbrücken,**  
**University of Saarland**

**Ana Makashvili**  
**PhD Student**  
**Ilia State University**  
**Georgia**

**Natia Kochlashvili**  
**PhD Student**  
**Ilia State University**  
**Georgia**

Athens Institute for Education and Research  
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece  
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209  
Email: [info@atiner.gr](mailto:info@atiner.gr) URL: [www.atiner.gr](http://www.atiner.gr)  
URL Conference Papers Series: [www.atiner.gr/papers.htm](http://www.atiner.gr/papers.htm)

Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research.  
All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the  
source is fully acknowledged.

**ISSN 2241-2891**

18/09/2013

## An Introduction to ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. The papers published in the series have not been refereed and are published as they were submitted by the author. The series serves two purposes. First, we want to disseminate the information as fast as possible. Second, by doing so, the authors can receive comments useful to revise their papers before they are considered for publication in one of ATINER's books, following our standard procedures of a blind review.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos  
President  
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

**Javakhishvili, N., Schneider, J. F., Makashvili, A. and Kochlashvili, N.**  
(2013) "**Measuring Ethnic Attitudes: Tolerance and Social Distance from Cross-cultural Perspective**" Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: PSY2013-0543.

**Measuring Ethnic Attitudes:  
Tolerance and Social Distance from Cross-cultural Perspective**

**Nino Javakhishvili**

**Professor, Director**

**D. Uznadze Institute of Psychology, Deputy dean,  
School of Arts and Sciences, Ilia State University  
Georgia**

**Johann F. Schneider**

**Academic Director a.D. the Department of Psychology  
University of Saarland in Saarbrücken, University of Saarland**

**Ana Makashvili**

**PhD Student**

**Ilia State University  
Georgia**

**Natia Kochlashvili**

**PhD Student**

**Ilia State University  
Georgia**

**Abstract**

Current study aims to revive scholarly attention to the social distance scale designed almost 100 years ago by Emory Bogardus. The scale incorporates all three components of an attitude – cognitive, affective and behavioral ones. It is simultaneously a specific and a general measure: it yields two types of scores: distances to individual groups – specific attitude, and combined distances to all individual groups – general attitude. Construct validity of the Bogardus social distance scale was calculated through correlating its scores with the ethnic tolerance scale (6 questions) on three different samples (about 100 students in each sample) of Georgian, German and Japanese students. The tolerance scale, was factor-analyzed and then cross-checked by Cronbach's alphas. This procedure yielded different results for different samples. In case of German and Japanese students the tolerance scale produced only one factor; however, in case of German students the final scale included all six items, while that of Japanese students consisted of five items. In case of Georgian students, factor analysis of the ethnic tolerance scale produced two subscales. The resulting tolerance scale yielded correlation for German and Japanese students at a high significant level, whereas in case of Georgian sample only one scale yielded a correlation at a high significant level, the other scale yielding a correlation at a lower, albeit still significant level. The findings suggest that the ethnic tolerance scale functions differently for three different samples. Cross validation gave significant support to the validity of the Bogardus social

distance scale. Thus, social distance and tolerance scales are good measures of ethnic attitudes and values.

**Key Words:**

**Corresponding Author:**

The current study aims to revive scholarly attention to the social distance scale designed almost 100 years ago by Emory Bogardus. The term “social distance” was coined by sociologist Robert Park who believed that the concept in question is “to reduce to something like measurable terms the grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy which characterize personal and social relations generally” (Park, 1924, p. 339).

Park’s student, Emory Bogardus proceeded with creating a scale to measure social distances. For him social distance was “the degree of sympathetic understanding that exists between two persons or between a person and a group” (Bogardus, 1933, p. 268). One of the major reasons why Bogardus designed this scale was existing prejudiced attitudes of Americans to immigrants, especially the new wave of immigrants in the twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Research community in social sciences shares the statement that people hold prejudice towards representatives of other groups, be these ethnic, religious, sexual, racial, and others. Prejudice is understood “as a hostile or negative attitude toward a distinguishable group on the basis of generalizations derived from faulty or incomplete information” (Aronson, 2011, p. 299).

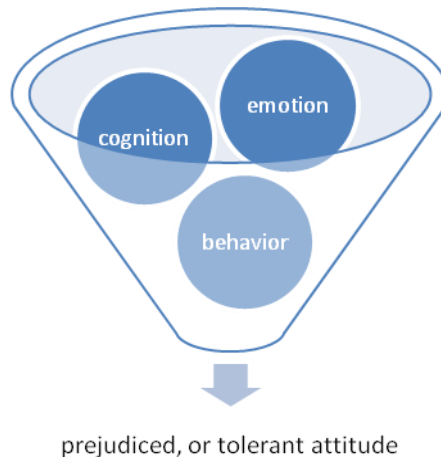
In the current age of globalization, social networking and political correctness, tolerance issues are still highly at stake. As Niall Ferguson, professor of history at Harvard University argues – leaning upon Samuel P. Huntington’s popular 1992 lecture on the Clash of Civilizations (who on his part argued that the primary nature of conflict in the future will be that of cultural and religious) – the contemporary era is paradoxical in that the ideologies considered as anti-democratic and anti-modern use modern and democratic tools (such as Facebook and Twitter) against the very same democratic values. In Ferguson’s own words: “It seems paradoxical. In Samuel Huntington’s version of the post–Cold War world, there was going to be a clash between an Islamic civilization that was stuck in a medieval time warp and a Western civilization that was essentially equivalent to modernity. What we’ve ended up with is something more like a mashup of civilizations, in which the most militantly antimodern strains of Islam are being channeled by the coolest technology the West has to offer” (Ferguson, 2011).

In the same paradoxical vein, the disclosure of anti-democratic values from certain ideological groups gives rise to generalized prejudiced attitudes towards those who might only be connected to these groups through their ethnic background. Based upon Sullivan’s and Transue’s (1999) suggestion, Noll, Poppe and Verkuyten assume that “tolerance for dissenting beliefs and practices is a key condition for citizenship and democracy” (2010, p. 46). In the researchers’ opinion, the central element in tolerance is respecting other peoples’ “rights” and “ways” (Noll, Poppe & Verkuyten, 2010, p. 46).

Attitude contains a cognitive component (a stereotype and set of beliefs about a group), an emotional component (dislike of or active hostility towards the group), and a behavioral component (a predisposition to discriminate against the group). An attitude can be tolerant, or intolerant. The relations among these terms are shown in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1.** *Three-component attitude model (Zanna, et. al.,1988; Crites, et. al., 1994)*



Social distance, hence, is one of the indicators of either intolerant or tolerant attitude. The social distance scale incorporates all three components of an attitude – cognitive, affective and behavioral ones. Bogardus social distance scale consists of 7 items designating various social distances. Items start from the shortest social distance, followed by other social distances gradually increasing in extent. Respondents are asked to place a check-mark against all statements with which they agree:

e.g., I would make *Italians*...

1. As close relatives by marriage (1.00)
2. As my close personal friends (2.00)
3. As neighbors on the same street (3.00)
4. As co-workers in the same occupation (4.00)
5. As citizens in my country (5.00)
6. As only visitors in my country (6.00)
7. Would exclude from my country (7.00)

The social distance scale is simultaneously a specific and a general measure as it yields two types of scores: distances to individual groups – specific attitude, and combined distances to all individual groups – general attitude. The study of Parrilo and Donoghue conducted in 2005 employed the scale on a total of 2,916 students enrolled in 22 colleges and universities throughout the United States, and it showed that the mean distance score of Americans to Italians was 1.15 (marriage), while the total mean distance score of Americans to 30 various ethnic groups was 1.35 (marriage).

The scale was very popular in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Maree (2001), “Several measures of social distance have been developed in previous research on immigration (Bogardus, 1933), race relations (Lee, Sapp and Ray 1996, Sartain and Bell 1949 and Vaughan 1962), occupation (Bogardus 1929) and religion (Triandis and Triandis 1960)” (Maree,

Lawson,2001)”. Later on, researchers measured social distances to ethnic, racial (Bogardus, 1933; Morgan, 2006), religious groups (Bogardus, 1933), tribes (Brewer, 1968), gender groups, sexual and other minorities (Staat, 1978), occupations (Wilkinson, 1929; Bogardus, 1933), majorities (Lee at al, 1996), mental illness stigma (Adewuya & Makanjoula, 2005), just to name a few. However, the scale is sparsely used currently. One of the reasons might be the fact that it did not undergo psychometric analysis simply because there was no such technique available at that time.

Many other scales to measure attitudes have been developed during almost hundred years since the construction of the Social Distance Scale: Stouffer’s and content-controlled methods of studying tolerance, Allport’s Scale of Prejudice, Implicit Association Test (Sullivan et al., Arkes, Tetlock, 2004); and debates were held over how to measure attitudes (Gibson & Bingham, 1982). In the recent study we elaborate on the measure of attitude – the Social Distance Scale – comparing the data obtained among students from three countries: Georgia, Germany, and Japan. The article aims to demonstrate that the social distance scale is a highly appropriate and useful tool to measure attitudes by showing its construct validity. For this reason we use an ethnic tolerance scale that measures attitudes to minorities and which can be considered as one of the measures of attitude, similar to the social distance scale.

## **Method**

Construct validity of the social distance scale is measured by correlating its scores with the ethnic tolerance scale. The Tolerance Scale measures attitudes toward ethnic minorities. The six questions of the scale are worded in the following way:

What is your attitude toward the representatives of ethnic minorities, who

- Popularize their culture through TV shows? (1)
- Popularize their culture through public cultural events (such as concert, movie, public demonstrations, etc.)? (2)
- Settle in your country? (3)
- Have schools in their own language? (4)
- Have newspapers in their own language? (5)

Should majority representatives have more rights (as citizens) than other ethnic minorities living in their country? (6)

The answers are provided on a 5-point scale, starting from the extremely positive to the extremely negative, thus, high scores on the questionnaire mean that a person is intolerant. The less the scores, the more tolerant a person is.

Participants

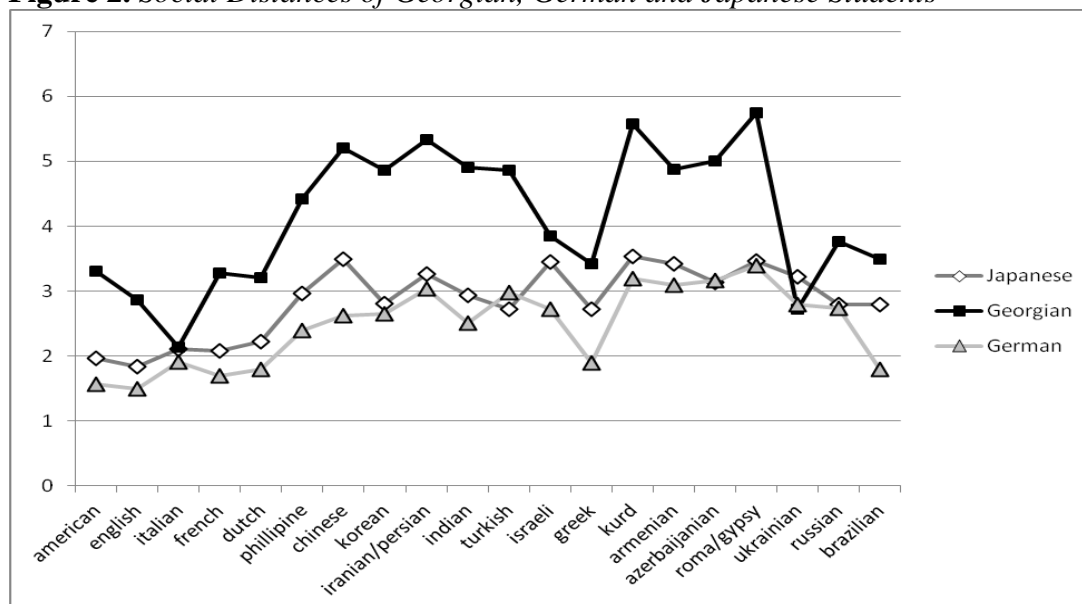
The two measures – social distance scale and tolerance scale – were administered to three different samples of Georgian, German and Japanese students.

Sample of Georgian students: N=91, 45, 7% - male, 54.3% - female,  
 Sample of German students: N=114, Male- 31%, Female - 69%,  
 Sample of Japanese students: N=98, Male - 39% Female - 61%.

**Results**

Social distances of Georgian, German and Japanese students differ from each other. Georgians have the largest distances and their distance pattern differs from those of Germans and Japanese whose distances are smaller and patterns are more similar to each other (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Social Distances of Georgian, German and Japanese Students**



Lower acceptance of other ethnic groups by Georgians is confirmed by the data of the tolerance items as well: Georgians are the least tolerant to ethnic minorities (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Tolerance item scores of Georgian, German and Japanese students**

Tolerance items	Georgian Mean Score	German Mean Score	Japanese Mean Score
TV programs	2.98	2.71	2.24
Cultural events	2.88	2.50	2.18
Settlement	3.41	2.29	2.46
Schools	2.85	3.60	2.56
Newspapers	2.70	2.68	2.36
Ethnic rights	3.86	1.87	3.30

To demonstrate the validity of the social distances scale, we calculated correlations between the social distance and the tolerance scales. But before that, tolerance scale items were factor-analyzed and then cross-checked by computing Cronbach's alphas.

Principal components analyses were computed separately for each national sample. German and Japanese samples yielded a one- factor solution each. Visual inspection of the correlation matrix of the scale items showed that one of the items (item 6) measuring rights of ethnic minorities had insignificant correlation with other items. Therefore, it was excluded from the analysis and the factor analysis was carried out again without this item included in it.

**Table 2.** *One factor-solution (six items) for the German sample*

	Factor 1
TV programs	0.834
Cultural events	0.827
Settlement	0.782
Schools	0.626
Newspapers	0.707
Ethnic rights	0.528

**Table 3.** *One factor solution (five items) for the Japanese sample*

	Factor 1
TV programs	0.747
Cultural events	0.803
Settlement	0.67
Schools	0.775
Newspapers	0.824

Unlike the German and Japanese samples, Georgian sample yielded a two-factor solution, where two items – popularizing ethnic minorities' own culture through TV shows and public cultural events (such as concert, movie, public demonstrations, etc.) – provided high loadings on a separate factor.

**Table 4.** *Two-factor solution (six items) for the Georgian sample*

	Factor 1 'Hard' Tolerance	Factor 2 Soft' Tolerance
TV programs		-0.900
Cultural events		-0.891
Settlement	0.673	
Schools	0.797	
Newspapers	0.736	
Ethnic rights	0.753	

Items combined under factor 2 showed lower mean scores, indicating higher tolerance of the Georgian students, compared to the scores on items combined under factor 1 (see Table 1). Based on the mean scores the two subscales were labeled as 'hard' and 'soft' tolerance. It is easier to accept various cultural activities of minorities (factor 2, 'soft' tolerance) than living close by, having schools, newspapers and equal rights (factor 1, 'hard' tolerance).

**Table 5.** *Mean tolerance scores for Georgian, Japanese and German students*

	Tolerance scale Mean score	
Japanese sample	2.36	
German sample	2.60	
Georgian sample	- Mean score 3.17	2.92

Reliability analysis of the revised scales was carried out. The analysis showed that all the scales had high reliability. With the German sample Cronbach's alpha was 0.812; with the Japanese sample 0.820; with the first subscale of 'hard' tolerance (4 items) Cronbach's alpha was 0.732 and with the second subscale of 'soft' tolerance (2 items) Cronbach's alpha was 0.810.

Correlations between tolerance scale and social distance scale underscored the validity of social distance scale. For the German sample the correlation was

0.484 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ); for the Japanese sample 0.272 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). For the Georgian sample we calculated correlations for the two subscales separately, 'hard' tolerance scale yielded a correlation of 0.634 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), and 'soft' tolerance scale provided a correlation of 0.299 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

The observation that tolerance scale items load on different factors for different samples suggests that the ethnic tolerance scale seem to function differently in the three national samples. While German students felt more or less comfortable with all forms of minority life, Japanese had problems with granting equal rights to minorities, Georgians had problems with almost all forms of minority life, except popularizing their culture, which we named 'soft' tolerance factor.

Validity of the social distance scale was demonstrated through correlations with a separate tolerance scale. The results of our cross-cultural study provide even a stronger argument for the validity of the Bogardus scale as we could show this using three different samples, all providing statistically significant, positive correlations.

This meets our expectations concerning the social distance scale as a relevant measure of attitudes. Recent studies neglect this classical tool and, offer other, more technically advanced measures based on new technologies (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004; Quillian, 2008). However, research by Bertram, Schneider and Ewaiwi (2013) shows, that these measures are especially relevant in case of "subtle prejudice" when people hold prejudice, but manage to suppress it while they do not seem to discriminate in case of overt attitudes and prejudices.

In case of Georgian students, their prejudiced attitudes toward minorities and other ethnic groups can be considered as overt, based on numerous opinion polls conducted by various local and international organizations (CRRC, 2011; Media Monitoring Results, 2011; Sumbadze, 2012) and on the political and social situation in the country (Freedom House, 2013). In present-day democratic Germany, where norms of tolerance and political correctness seem to prevail, subtle prejudice is at stake (e.g., Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995), while with Japanese students, a somewhat middle position can be discerned: more subtle, than overt prejudice. If this is the case, then the graphic lines of Georgian, Japanese and Georgian samples (see Figure 2) might have become closer if attitudes were measured with more contemporary measures. Therefore, we might conclude that Bogardus social distance scale, as a classical measure can be fully utilized with the populations who do not hold subtle attitudes. The limitation of this tool might mainly take place with populations holding subtle prejudice.

## References

- Adewuya, A.O. & Makanjuola, R.O.A. (2005). 'Social distance towards people with mental illness amongst Nigerian university students'. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 40, 865–868.
- Arkes, H. R. & Tetlock, P. E. (2004). 'Attributions of Implicit Prejudice, or "Would Jesse Jackson 'Fail' the Implicit Association Test?"' *Psychological Inquiry*, 15 (4), 257–278.
- Aronson, E. (Ed.). (2011). *The Social Animal* (11th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.
- Bertram, J., Schneider, J. F. & Ewaiwi, A.- (2013). Explicit and implicit measures of prejudicial attitudes toward Muslims: on the relationship between explicit and implicit. In: K.S. Larsen, G. Vazov, K. Krumov, J. F. Schneider (editors). *Advances in International Psychology: Research approaches and personal dispositions, socialization processes and organizational behavior*. Kassel University Press, pp. 45 -62.
- Bogardus, E.S. (1925). 'Social distance and its origins'. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 9, 216–226.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1929) 'Social Intimacy and Social Distance, *Sociology and Social Research*', 13, 171-175.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1929). 'Occupational Distance, *Sociology and Social Research*,. 13, 73-81.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1933). 'A Social Distance Scale'. *Sociology and Social Research*, 17, 265–271.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1938). 'Social distance and its practical applications'. *Sociology and Social Research*, 22, 462–476.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1940). 'Scales in Social Research'. *Sociology and Social Research*, 24, 69-75.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1958). 'Racial Distance Changes in the United States During the Past Thirty Years'. *Sociology and Social Research*, 43, 127–135.
- Brewer, M. B. (1968). 'Determinants of Social Distance among East African Tribes'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 10 (3), 279 – 289.
- Crites, S. I. Farbiger, I. R. and Petts, R. E. (1994). Measuring the affective and cognitive properties of attitudes: conceptual and methodological issues. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 619-634
- CRRC Georgia (2011). *The Caucasus Research Barometer*. Available Online: <http://www.crrc.ge/>
- Ferguson, N. (2011). 'The Mash of Civilizations'. *Newsweek Magazine*, Apr 10, 2011. Available Online: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/04/10/the-mash-of-civilizations.html>
- Freedom House (2013). Available Online: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/georgia>
- Gibson, J.L. & Bingham, R. D. (1982). 'On the Conceptualization and Measurement of Political Tolerance'. *The American Political Science Review*, 76 (3), 603–620.
- Lee, M. Y., Sapp, S. G. & Ray, M. C. (1996). 'The Reverse Social Distance Scale'. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 136 (1), 17–24.
- Morgan, H. (2006). 'Social distance: Self reports by black and white school age children'. *The Negro Educational Review*, 57, 15–33.
- Noll, J. van der, Poppe, E. & Verkuyten, M. (2010). 'Political Tolerance and Prejudice: Differential Reactions towards Muslims in the Netherlands'. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 32, 46–56.

- Parillo, V. N. & Donoghue, C. (2005). 'Updating the Bogardus social distance studies: a new national survey'. *The Social Science Journal*, 42, 257–271.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Meertens, R. W. (1995). 'Subtle and blatant prejudice in western Europe'. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 25, 57-75.
- Park, R. (1924). 'The Concept of Social Distance As Applied to the Study of Racial Attitudes and Racial Relations'. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 8, 339–344.
- Quillan, L.(2008). 'Does Unconscious Racism Exist?' *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 71 (1), 6–11
- Sapp, S.G. & Ray, M.C. (1996). 'The Reverse Social Distance Scale, The Journal of Social Psychology'. 136 (1), 17-24.
- Sartain, A. Q. & Bell, H.V. Jnr. (1949). 'An Evaluation of the Bogardus Scale of Social Distance by the Method of Equal-Appearing Intervals, The Journal of Social Psychology'. 29, 85-91.
- Staat, G.R. (1978). 'Stereotype content and social distance: Changing views of homosexuality'. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 4, 15–27.
- Sullivan, J., Pierson, J., & Marcus , G. (1979). 'An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases 1950s-1970s'. *The American Political Science Review*, 73 (3), 781–794.
- Sumbadze, N. (2012),. *Generations and Values*. Tbilisi: Institute for Policy Studies.
- Thyne, M.A. & Lawson, R. (2001). 'The Design of a Social Distance Scale to Be Used in the Context of Tourism'. *Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*. 4, 102–107.
- Vaughan, G. M. (1962). 'The Social Distance Attitudes of New Zealand Students Towards Maoris and FifteenOther National Groups'. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 57, 85– 92.
- Wilkinson, F. (1929). 'Social distance between occupations'. *Sociology and Social Research*, 13, 234–244.
- Zanna, P. Rempel, J. (1988). Attitudes A new look at an old concept. In D. Bar-Tal and A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.). *the Social Psychology of Attitudes*. 315-334 New York: Cambridge