Historical trends in South African race attitudes

Kevin Durrheim
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
durrheim@ukzn.ac.za

Colin Tredoux
University of Cape Town

Don Foster
University of Cape Town

John Dixon
Lancaster University

This article presents an historical survey of intergroup attitudes in South Africa, tracing social distance scores back to 1934 and semantic differential scores back to 1975. We compare the attitudes of different race groups towards each other over time by standardizing the scores from different historical periods on a common metric. This enables us to pursue two lines of investigation: (1) to chart the effect that racial classification has had on ingroup bias patterns, and (2) to assess the impact of changing historical contexts on intergroup attitudes — especially the threatening and competitive context of the post-1976 struggle for liberation and the post-1994 context of democracy and reconciliation. The data indicate that dramatic changes may be taking place, with white respondents showing declining levels of prejudice, the inversion of the historically asymmetric attitude ‘colour bar’, and a slight, perhaps negative, change in attitudes of black African respondents toward other groups.

Keywords: intergroup attitudes; race attitudes; semantic differential; social distance; South Africa

The measurement of intergroup attitudes has been an abiding interest of South African social psychologists. From as early as the 1930s, I.D. MacCrone brought the theories and measures of social attitudes to bear on “the racial situation” that existed in South Africa at the time and that had become “almost an obsession in the minds of many” (MacCrone, 1937, v). For MacCrone, race attitudes constituted an “underlying reality of the racial situation” (ibid), one that needed to be studied if the dynamics of change were to be understood. For example, he reported that the racial attitudes “in the mind of the white man” had formed around an “image or picture of the black race” as inferior in “intelligence and knowledge, ... standard of living and occupation, a tendency towards violent and criminal practices, and behaviour which is childish and often ridiculous ...” (p. 263). Certainly, such racist attitudes played a role in constituting the systemic racial inequality of that time.

Since MacCrone’s early investigations, numerous other researchers have revisited the problem of racial attitudes in different periods and intergroup contexts of South African history. This literature has been thoroughly reviewed (see Foster & Nel, 1991; Foster, 1991; Kinloch, 1985; Lever, 1978), providing a good outline of some of the major findings and omissions. The vast majority of earlier research focused on the racial attitudes of white respondents, who consistently displayed high levels of prejudice toward black outgroups. Indians were the most disliked of these groups. Pettigrew (1960) found, for instance, that 26% of Afrikaans-speaking and 20% of English-speaking white respondents supported the opinion ‘I wish someone would kill them all [Indians]’. Also, Afrikaans- speakers generally showed higher levels of prejudice than English-speakers in these studies. Although few studies investigated the attitudes of black South Africans toward other groups, it seems that the prejudice of Afrikaans-speaking whites was reciprocated. Samples of Indian, coloured and black African respondents typically expressed lower levels of prejudice than their white counterparts, but did reserve their highest levels of dislike for Afrikaans speakers.
On the basis of such evidence, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 1985) released a controversial report on *The State of South African Society* in which they claimed that black and white prejudice were mirror images of each other: racial prejudice from one side was matched by racial prejudice from the other. The data, however, did not support this conclusion. Not only did black groups express lower levels of prejudice toward outgroups but their attitudes were not clearly race based. Whereas the attitudes of English and Afrikaans speaking white respondents was marked by a ‘colour bar’ — reflecting positive attitudes toward all white groups and negative attitudes toward all black groups — the attitudes of black respondents did not reveal a colour bar, often showing positive attitudes towards white English speakers. This pattern led Foster and Nel (1991) to conclude that “blacks, strictly speaking, do not evidence a racist attitudinal pattern at all, in contrast to whites, who do” (p. 154).

Twenty years have lapsed since the most recent survey of this literature, and a fair amount of research has emerged in the intervening period. There is clearly a need to update the social psychological survey of South African race attitudes, and the present article attempts to do so. The article also addresses the problem of comparing and reconciling the findings of studies conducted in different historical epochs and employing different measures of race attitudes. In order to do so, we convert the data from different studies to a common metric and then plot these over time using an approach similar to that employed by Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan (1997) in their survey of race attitudes in the USA. The South African data are especially interesting for two social psychological reasons. First, the race attitude literature in the USA has mainly been concerned with a two-group scenario, contrasting white attitudes with attitudes of African Americans. South Africa is a multi-group context where we can investigate the ‘prismatic’ nature of intergroup attitudes, that is, the way in which the evaluation of each target group “reflects a spectrum of colours” as it is “refracted” through the eyes of each group of evaluators (cf. Zubrinsky & Bobo, 1996, p. 336). Second, South African society has undergone a profound political and social psychological change as it moved from colonialism and apartheid through a period of armed conflict and intense intergroup struggle to a legislatively desegregated and democratic dispensation. Is this changing ‘racial situation’ evident in the attitudes of the various racially defined groups of South Africans toward each other?

Cognitive and personality explanations in social psychology anticipate a universal tendency for ingroup favouritism or ethnocentricism (Allport, 1954). However, the impact of apartheid in the South African context has meant that intergroup attitudes have taken a distinctly racial form. This has been evident to attitude researchers, who have interpreted the racial colour bar in white attitudes as the product of conformity to norms of racial prejudice. Van den Berghe (1962, p. 63) attributed the “strength of colour prejudice among South African Whites” to the desire among whites to “maintain a united front against the ‘black danger’”. Conformity to racist norms in this ideological context, he argued, far outweighs any general tendency to ethnocentricism:

“In a racialist country like South Africa, the social pressure toward colour prejudice is such that it will be found among people who have no personality predisposition towards it at all.” (Van den Berghe, 1962, p. 63)

Have racial attitudes changed in the wake of socio-political change in the country? Conformity to norms in favour of expressing anti-black attitudes is likely to have intensified among white South Africans under apartheid as the country entered a period of struggle and instability following the Soweto uprising of 1976. And we can expect a reversal in this normative pressure after the 1994 transition to democracy and reconciliation. If anything, social norms operate in the opposite direction today, as racial prejudice is socially proscribed and deeply troubling for many whites. Our study aimed to determine if South Africans’ racial attitudes evidence the effect of these changing norms. The American data (Pettigrew, 1979) would support these expectations. In the period following the establishment of Civil Rights legislation in the USA, “sweeping and fundamental” changes took place in the racial attitudes of white Americans, whose attitudes underwent a period of rapid and profound
liberalization (Pettigrew, 1979, p. 115). However, although expressions of anti-black prejudice declined sharply, opposition to policies that aimed to produce equality in practice remained entrenched (Schuman et al., 1997), suggesting that prejudice may have changed its form and focus. During the same period, the racial attitudes of African Americans remained strongly egalitarian, although they showed the “same type of gap that whites reveal between support for principles of equal treatments and integration and support for government implementation of these principles” (Schuman et al., 1997, p. 276).

The South African race attitude data allowed us to tentatively explore the differential impact that historical change may have had on racial attitudes and behavioural intentions. The two most consistently used measures of racial attitudes have been the social distance scale and the semantic differential scale (see Figure 1). The social distance scale has been used since MacCrone (1937) and is considered a measure of the behavioural intention to have intergroup contact. The semantic differential scale of is of more recent origin and is more strictly a measure of attitudes, namely the extent to which respondents like or dislike various outgroups (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Although a number of other attitude measures have been employed in South Africa, these were not included in this review, either because they were used infrequently, or because they were designed to measure the attitudes of one respondent group and did not allow us to conduct intergroup contrasts. These measures included adaptations of MacCrone’s attitudes towards the natives scale (MacCrone, 1937; Lever, 1977; Coleman, 1971), Ray’s (1976) anti-black scale, and Duckitt’s (1991) subtle racism scale.

1. Social Distance Scale (MacCrone, 1937)

According to my first feeling reaction I would willingly admit

Any: Most: Some: Few: No ... whites to live and work in my country

Any: Most: Some: Few: No ... whites to my school or university

Any: Most: Some: Few: No ... whites to my home as my personal friends

Any: Most: Some: Few: No ... whites to close kinship by marriage

2. Semantic Differential Scale (Durrheim et al., 2011)

Please describe how you feel about White people in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>Warm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspicious</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>Trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Examples of social distance and semantic differential measures

We encountered a number of challenges in identifying reliable data with which to compare social distance and semantic differential scores of South Africans in different historical contexts. First, different versions of the social distance and semantic differential scales have been used in different studies. These vary in terms of the number and content of the items as well as the response format employed. As the description of the scales in the methods section shows, however, there is a fair amount of consistency in that many of the items have been used repeatedly. This is why we chose to focus our analysis on these two scales, social distance and semantic differential, which have been used more consistently over time than any other measures of intergroup attitudes in South Africa. We
concede, however, that even where identical items have been used in different historical contexts, these may have acquired new meanings in the changed circumstances. Second, the available data is often based on small student samples rather than representative samples of the South African population. In addition, very few studies sampled the opinions of Indian and coloured respondents, and the data for these groups is uneven, sparse, and incomplete. Third, the target groups respondents evaluated have varied across study and historical context. For example, the group we refer to as ‘black Africans’ has been referred to as ‘natives’, ‘Africans’ and ‘blacks’ by different researchers. In many early studies, separate ratings were obtained for English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites, whereas in later research the global category ‘whites’ is often used.

Despite these constraints, we believe that there is value in expressing the data for the different studies on a common metric in order to explore comparative trends and historical shifts. In order to obtain mean score estimates in each decade since the first available study we have selected the best available data we could find in terms of sample size and representativeness and measurement validity. However, in light of the several constraints mentioned earlier, the findings reported below must be interpreted with due caution.

METHOD

We searched for articles (published and unpublished) that reported attitude data for surveys with South African samples, dating back to the first investigations of which we were aware, namely, the work of I.D. MacCrone in the 1930s. We aimed to be comprehensive and to report data for each of the apartheid racial categories (black, white, Indian, coloured), for each decade from the time of the first study until the present. As discussed above, we focused on research employing the two attitude measures used most consistently across this period, namely, the social distance measure of Bogardus (1925) and the semantic differential method of Osgood et al. (1957). As social distance and semantic differential data were reported in different ways in these studies, we transformed their data into a common metric.

The internal reliability of these scales is not contentious — many studies have calculated Cronbach alpha coefficients over the years and almost always report high values. For example, for the semantic differential, Durrheim et al. (2011) report as follows: black sample $\alpha = .81$, white sample $\alpha = .90$; and Plug & Nieuwoudt (1975) report alpha values between $.86$ and $.90$ for various samples. For the social distance scale, early studies reported inconsistent reliability coefficients, ranging from $.30$ for Afrikaans- to $.83$ for English-speaking white South Africans (reported by MacCrone, 1937). More recently, Holtman, Louw, Tredoux, and Carney (2005) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of $.88$ for a sample of black learners and $.92$ for a sample of white Afrikaans speakers, and these values are quite typical of other studies.

We selected the best examples of South African attitude research we could obtain over time, favouring published studies with large samples. When there were historical gaps, we intensified our search and included unpublished and small sample data when this could be found. We list below the data sources used in the study. For each, we provide a brief description of the sample and measures used. Note that where data are indicated as having been collected in a particular year, we attempt to reflect as closely as we can the date of data collection declared by the author(s), rather than the year of publication.

Data from 1934 (MacCrone, 1937)

Sample: White English speaking students from the University of the Witwatersrand ($n = 305$), and Rhodes University ($n = 96$), as well as white Afrikaans-speaking Potchefstroom University College students ($n = 120$).

Social distance: Respondents indicated whether they would willingly admit any, most, some, few or no members of various outgroups into the following social relationships: to live and work in my
country, full citizenship including right to vote, my school or university, profession or occupation, home as my personal friends, close kinship by marriage.

**Data from 1956 (Pettigrew, 1960)**

**Sample:** White students from the University of Natal, Durban \((n = 627)\), including 513 English speakers and 50 Afrikaans speakers. The sample totalled about one-third of the total student body of the university, though respondents were not sampled randomly.

**Social distance:** Respondents selected one from a list of five possible social distances arranged in order of closeness, at which they would accept nearest contact with various outgroups: marry one of them, have one as a guest to a meal, have one merely as an acquaintance to whom one talks on meeting in the street, prefer to have nothing at all to do with them, wish someone would kill them all.

**Data from 1956 (Crijns, 1959)**

**Sample:** 110 “young African intellectuals” (p. 106) who were university students or had completed a university course and were employed in “intellectual professions such as those of teacher, laboratory assistant, demonstrator, junior lecturer.” (p. 107). No other sample details were provided.

**Social distance:** Respondents indicated whether they would willingly admit any, most, some, few or no members of various outgroups into the following social relationships: to live and work in South African society, full citizenship including right to vote, my school or university, profession or occupation, home as my personal friends, close kinship by marriage.

**Data from 1960 (Van den Berghe, 1962)**

**Sample:** An incidental sample of students was recruited from tertiary education institutions in Durban. This included 125 white students from University of Natal, Durban, and 99 black and 139 Indian students, from a technical and nursing college in Durban.

**Social distance:** Respondents indicated which from a list of 14 social relationships they rejected having with various outgroups: servant, shop assistant, business associate, business superior, teacher, minister of religion, member of parliament, casual acquaintance, fellow student, neighbour, table guest, intimate friend, dance partner, husband or wife.

**Data from 1964 (Lever, 1978)**

**Sample:** A probability sample of residents, 18 years and older, was drawn from the municipal area of Johannesburg, including 1,026 white English speakers and 386 white Afrikaans speakers.

**Social distance:** Respondents selected one from a list of seven possible social distances, arranged in order of closeness, at which they would accept nearest contact with various outgroups: close kinship by marriage; one’s home as personal friends; one’s street as neighbours; one’s school, university, occupation or profession; citizenship, allow to live and work in one’s country; would exclude from one’s country.

**Data from early 1960s (undated) (Brett, 1963)**

**Sample:** An opportunistic sample of 148 members of the African middle class were interviewed, including professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.), ministers of religion, teachers and clerks.

**Social distance:** Social distance was measured in an unusual manner, by asking respondents to indicate their “degree of preference or aversion for each outgroup on an 8 point scale” (p. 4).

**Data from 1972 (Edelstein, 1972, 1974)**

**Sample:** Black African high school learners randomly selected from the cohort attending Forms IV and V at six Soweto high schools \((n = 200)\); randomly selected coloured respondents resident in the magisterial district of Johannesburg \((n = 500)\).
Social distance: respondents selected one from a list of 5 possible social distances at which they would accept nearest contact with various outgroups: would marry, as close friends, to live in one’s street as neighbours, to allow in one’s area as temporary residents only, to keep out of one’s area.

Data from 1975 (Plug & Nieuwoudt, 1983)
Sample: Adult South Africans were recruited by students from the University of South Africa as part of a course assignment (700 white Afrikaans, 790 white English, 320 black, 96 coloureds, and 99 Indians), drawn to varying degrees from the four provinces of that time, as well as what were then South West Africa and Rhodesia.
Semantic differential: a semantic differential scale with 15 items was used, the items having been selected from the original list provided by Osgood et al. (1957). Each item consisted of a 7-point rating scale bounded at the poles by an adjective pair. The following adjective pairs were used to rate groups: fair-unfair, reliable-unreliable, dishonest-honest, boring-interesting, wise-foolish, worthless-valuable, cruel-kind, lazy-hardworking, pleasant-unpleasant, unfriendly-friendly, cowardly-brave, clean-dirty, ungrateful-grateful, loyal-disloyal.

Data from 1980/1981 (Thiele, 1988)
Sample: A nationwide representative sample of adults (n = 3,978) consisting of 1,447 Afrikaans whites and 1,257 English whites collected in 1980, and 1,496 coloureds collected in 1981.
Semantic differential: A semantic differential scale with 35 items was used (but 31 only for the coloured respondents), the items having been selected through a process of item development at the HSRC, and by the author. Each item was bounded at poles by adjectives that described a target group. Some of the adjective pairs were different to those used by Plug and Nieuwoudt (1983), but many were similar, for example, polite-rude, hostile-friendly, patriotic-unpatriotic, clean-dirty, calm-emotional, trustworthy-untrustworthy, prejudiced-unprejudiced.

Data from 1981 and 1982 (Vergnani, 1985)
Sample: Adult Indians (n = 1,241), black Africans (n = 1,908), coloureds (n = 1,188), English whites (n = 1,081) and Afrikaans whites (n = 1,565) were recruited in a nationally representative omnibus survey conducted by the HSRC, except that deep rural areas were excluded, Indians were sampled from Natal urban areas, coloureds from the Cape Peninsula, and blacks from the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) area.
Social distance: Several items from the original Bogardus scale were augmented with items “specific to the South African situation” (Vergnani, 1985, p. 5), to make ten in total. The distance was scaled as follows by positing nearness of interactions with a target outgroup: sitting in the same restaurant, dancing at a party, attending the same school, neighbours in the same street, sharing a beach, accepting as superiors at work, having a personal friend, admitting into one’s country as citizens, as a relative by marriage, in the same profession/occupation.

Data from 1999 (Holtman, Louw, Tredoux, & Carney, 2005)
Sample: 1,119 learners from 19 desegregated coeducational high schools in Cape Town (93 black Africans; 502 coloureds; 205 Afrikaans whites; 279 English whites). Schools were stratified using SES and integration, and then randomly selected within strata. The school heads chose Grade 10 and 11 classes to whom the questionnaires were distributed.
Social distance: A four-item version of the English translation (Durrheim, 1995) of Groenewald’s (1975) scale was used. The levels of closeness ranged from admitting members of a target group to one’s school, to admitting members of a target group into one’s family by marriage.
Semantic differential: The semantic differential was modelled on that used by Plug & Nieuwoudt (1983). It consisted of 15 adjectival pairs to which participants had to respond on a 7-point scale, and used the same adjectives, as explained earlier in this article.
Data from 2006 (Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2010)

Sample: Students were sampled through an internet survey, including 1,049 black African students and 1,510 white students ($n = 2,559$). These students came from the University of Cape Town (34%), University of the Witwatersrand (26%), the University of South Africa (26%), and from the University of Johannesburg (14%). Their average age was 24 years.

Semantic differential: Six bipolar adjectival continua made up this scale, each with a 7-point range. Respondents were asked to indicate their feelings towards the other group using each adjective continuum. This scale is a modification of the semantic differential, as proposed by Zanna (1994). Adjectives describing respondent feelings about the target group used in this study were: warm-cold, negative-positive, friendly-hostile, suspicious-trusting, respect-disrespect, and admiration-disgust.

Social distance: The scale consisted of 6 items answered on a 5-point scale, and chosen to be relevant to the university context of the respondents. The distance was scaled as follows by positing nearness of interactions with a target outgroup: attending the same university, neighbours in the same street, having as guests to one’s home, having one as a personal friend, admitting to the same work (or study) group, as a close relative by marriage.

Data from 2007 (Durrheim et al., 2011)

Sample: A sample of 2,859 South African citizens, 18 years or older, were contacted by randomly generated selection of cell phone numbers. The sample included 200 coloured, 173 Indian, 1,648 black African, and 793 white respondents.

Semantic differential: A five-item semantic differential scale was used to rate (on 10-point scales) how respondents felt about blacks and whites: negative-positive, cold-warm, hostile-friendly, suspicious-trusting, and disrespect-respect.

To make the results from the different studies comparable we standardized the mean scores on the scales so that they had a potential range from zero to one. For most studies standard scores and error bars were computed from means, standard deviations and sample sizes. Pettigrew (1960), Vergnani (1985) and Lever (1978) reported the data in frequency tables, from which we calculated closely approximate means and standard deviations using a weighted frequency method. The data from Crijns (1959), Edelstein (1972), Van den Berghe (1962), and Brett (1963) did not include standard deviations and so we were unable to compute standard errors for these studies.

Social Distance

The standardized social distance scores for white Afrikaans, white English, black African, coloured, and Indian raters are reported in Figure 2. The data for the Indian and coloured samples are sparse in comparison with the white and black African data. First consider the data for English and Afrikaans speaking whites. The 1934 data show very high mean social distance scores for both groups toward black outgroups — especially for the Afrikaans respondents, whose mean social distance score toward Indians was close to the maximum possible. Over the 70-year period the levels of social distance toward the three black outgroups remain consistently high, with an average social distance score of .77 for Afrikaans speakers and .60 for English speakers.

Although the social distance scores of the white respondents toward black outgroups remain high throughout, the data also show some decline in social distance over time. The mean social distance scores of the white respondents toward black outgroups declined more steeply over time for the Indian (1934 = .92, 1982 = .56) and coloured outgroups (1934 = .89, 1999 = .57) than for black Africans (1934 = .80, 2006 = .59). Part of the reason for these differential trends may be the switch in the least preferred outgroup that took place in the post-1976 context of political struggle. Up until the 1960s both English and Afrikaans whites expressed highest social distance toward Indians but black Africans received highest social distance ratings after the 1980s.
The historical data are less reliable in the case of the three groups of black respondents. Measures of variance were not reported and it is therefore not possible to compute estimates of sampling error (cf. the missing error bars in Figure 2). In addition, the samples are smaller than the samples of the white groups and the trends thus appear to be less stable over time. For example, the estimates of outgroup social distance for black Africans drop substantially from 1956 to 1960 and then rise again in 1964. To compound these problems, very few studies have measured social distance among Indian and coloured samples. We thus need to exercise caution in interpreting these data. Nonetheless, the graphs do show remarkably similar patterns of social distance scores toward the different outgroups and suggest historical trends.

Overall, the three black groups expressed lower levels of social distance toward whites than whites expressed toward them. Of all groups, Indians expressed lowest levels of social distance (towards Afrikaans = .42, English = .25), followed by coloureds (towards Afrikaans = .53, English = .41) and black Africans (towards Afrikaans = .65, English = .43). Afrikaans speakers consistently attracted the highest social distance scores from black African raters. Indian and coloured raters showed relatively high levels of social distance toward white Afrikaans speakers and toward black Africans.

As was the case with the white samples, the data for the black African samples suggest a similar trend of decreasing levels of social distance toward outgroups over time. The downward trend is less consistent than in the case of the white samples — possibly owing to problems with data quality — but they do suggest increasing willingness to have contact with white people. There is very little available data for the Indian and coloured samples so it is not possible to identify historical trends, besides offering the tentative observation that — with the exception of the 1982 data — the means appear to be relatively stable over time, possibly showing a slight trend toward decreasing levels of social distance over time.

![Figure 2. Social distance scores over time](image-url)
The graphs in Figure 2 show evidence of both the colour bar and ingroup favouritism. The colour bar is manifest in the gap between the average ratings of white and black groups and ingroup favouritism is manifest in the gap between the rating of the ingroup and the nearest outgroup. Table 1 reports indices of the colour bar and ingroup favouritism over time. We calculated an index of the colour bar by determining the ratio of the average rating of the black or white outgroups to the average rating of the (black or white) ingroups. Ingroup favouritism was quantified by dividing the prejudice score of the nearest outgroup (regardless of race) by the ingroup mean score.

Table 1 summarizes trends in respect of ingroup favouritism and the colour bar. All the colour bar and ingroup favouritism means are greater than unity, showing that all groups preferred contact with ingroup over outgroup members. The colour bar effect is much stronger for the white than for black groups. This is especially true in the early studies (up to 1962), where the graph shows high social distance for black groups and low social distance for white groups. Because the means for the Afrikaans speakers toward black outgroups is generally higher than the means of the English speakers, the colour bar is also more pronounced for Afrikaans speakers. Whereas the social distance of English- and Afrikaans-speaking white respondents was strongly race-based, strictly speaking there is no colour bar for the black groups. Black African, Indian and coloured samples all preferred con-
Table 1. Indices of the Colour Bar and Ingroup Favouritism for Social Distance Scores

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In contrast with English-speaking white South Africans than with other black outgroups. The data show declining levels of the colour bar among whites over time, whereas the colour bar for black groups was constant or may have strengthened marginally. Unfortunately, more recent studies did not obtain ratings of social distance toward both ingroups and outgroups, and changes in the colour bar from the 1980s onwards are thus not recoverable from the data.

In contrast to their low colour bar means, the black groups showed relatively high levels of ingroup favouritism, which were similar to those shown by English whites, but much higher than for Afrikaans-speaking whites. Overall, the data show three patterns of ingroup bias: (1) English whites manifest high colour bar bias and ingroup favouritism, (2) Afrikaans whites manifest high colour bar bias but low ingroup favouritism, and (3) the three black groups manifest low colour bar bias, but high ingroup favouritism.

Semantic Differential

The standardized semantic differential scores for white Afrikaans, white English, black African, and coloured raters are reported in Figure 3. There was insufficient data for Indian respondents for us to track historical trends, so these are not included in the figure. It is immediately clear that the pattern of the semantic differential data differs quite markedly from the social distance data. Comparing these two sets of data gives an indication of the relative readiness to endorse behavioural versus attitudinal prejudice. First, Figures 2 and 3 show that the mean semantic differential scores towards outgroups are much lower than the mean social distance scores. The average semantic differential scores for Afrikaans (mean = .44) and English (mean = .40) whites toward black outgroups were lower and less discrepant than their respective social distance mean scores of .77 and .60. Coloured respondents also rated whites (Afrikaans = .36, English = .33) much more favourably on the semantic differential measure, but semantic differential ratings of whites given by black Africans (Afrikaans = .50, English = .43) were almost identical to their social distance means.

A second difference between the semantic differential and social distance data is evident in the historical trends in mean outgroup prejudice levels. For both the English- and Afrikaans-speaking white raters there are more pronounced historical shifts in semantic differential scores than in social distance scores. From 1975 to 1999 there was a trend for increasing prejudice toward black out-
Figure 3. Semantic differential scores over time
groups — a trend which was particularly strong in the case of attitudes towards the black African outgroup. While there was some evidence of the post-1976 increase in social distance against black Africans, the similar trend was much more pronounced in the case of semantic differential scores. Also more pronounced was the monotonic decrease in prejudice toward black Africans after 1999.

The data for the black African and coloured raters provides a stark contrast. There has been no clear decrease in outgroup prejudice in recent years for these groups. The 2006 and 2007 data only include ratings of the global category white, not the subgroups of English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites, and although the mean scores of attitudes towards whites are marginally lower than in the 1999 data, nevertheless the large error bars indicate that the global category ‘white’ is rated no more favourably in 2006 and 2007 than English whites were rated in 1999.

If we consider the historical trends of the black and the white respondents next to each other we can identify a remarkable and dramatic reversal in patterns of prejudice. Whereas white South Africans — especially Afrikaans speakers — have historically shown evidence of extremely high levels of racial prejudice and social distance, by 2007 anti-white prejudice among black Africans had become higher than anti-black prejudice among whites! In 1975, the data show that black African raters had lower mean outgroup prejudice scores than Afrikaans-speaking whites. By 1999, there were no significant differences between ratings of whites by black Africans, and ratings of black Africans by whites. Recently there has been a reversal, as ratings of whites by black Africans have been found to be more negative than ratings of black Africans by whites both in 2006 (standardized means of .43 vs .37; $t = 3.18$, $df = 2623$, $p < .001$, $d = .13$) and 2007 (standardized means of .44 vs .27; $t = 17.72$, $df = 2482$, $p < .0001$, $d = .67$).

### Table 2. Indices of the Colour Bar and Ingroup Favouritism for Semantic Differential Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raters</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White English</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Afrikaans</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raters</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White English</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Afrikaans</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A third contrast between the semantic differential and social distance data is evident in the ingroup bias data reported in Table 2. A visual inspection of the graphs confirms the quantitative observations that ingroup favouritism and the colour bar are less pronounced for semantic differential data. A small degree of ingroup favouritism is apparent for all groups who rate themselves a little more favourably than outgroups in all the studies. However, these means do not manifest the same level of ingroup bias as the social distance means in either absolute or relative terms: the mean ingroup scores are not as close to zero as was the case for social distance and neither is the discrepancy between the ingroup and outgroup scores so large. In fact, the 1975 and 1980 colour bar scores for
black African and coloured respondents is less than unity, revealing a tendency to prefer whites overall in comparison with blacks. This is largely due to the positive ratings of English-speaking whites and the negative rating of black outgroups. Notice, however, the increase in colour bar scores for black African and coloured samples in 1999, which suggests that these black samples have become more race conscious in their attitudes.

Summary of findings

1. Is it possible to make historical comparisons across such different data sets? Certainly, there is much missing data and there are some anomalous findings. However, overall there is a great deal of consistency in the findings of the different studies and the historical patterns suggest steady trends in the data. The most striking consistency is evident in the profile of means charting how each group rated the various outgroups over time. The ‘skyline’ of the data plots in the figures is replicated repeatedly, suggesting very consistent patterns of ingroup and outgroup attitudes.

2. Are there group differences in prejudice? Both English and Afrikaans speaking whites have historically expressed high levels of prejudice toward all black groups, but Afrikaans speakers have been the more prejudiced. All the black groups have expressed higher prejudice toward Afrikaans speaking whites than toward any other group. They have also generally expressed more favourable attitudes toward English speaking whites than to other black outgroups.

3. Are there historical changes in levels of prejudice? Alongside the consistency in the patterns of prejudice over time we can also identify a number of historical trends: (1) The data for whites show that a switch occurred in respect of the least preferred outgroup in the post-1976 context, with highest levels of prejudice being expressed toward black Africans in place of Indians or coloureds. (2) The social distance data indicated a slight decrease in whites’ prejudice toward blacks in recent years. This downward trend was more pronounced in the semantic differential data. (3) The social distance data for black African and coloured raters also show slight downward trends, suggesting increased acceptance of contact with black and white outgroups. (4) The semantic differential data, in contrast, show stable levels of anti-white prejudice among black African and coloured raters. Overall, all black groups have lower social distance scores than whites but all show increasing acceptance of contact over time. In contrast, whereas whites expressed highest levels of (anti-black) prejudice on semantic differential scales in the past, black Africans presently express the highest levels of (anti-white) prejudice today.

4. Is ingroup bias universal? All groups expressed more favourable attitudes towards themselves than to outgroups. However, the nature of the bias was expressed either in race terms, taking the form of the colour bar, or in more general ethnocentric terms, contrasting favourable ingroup attitudes with less favourable attitudes toward the nearest outgroup. Whites tended to be more race conscious than blacks in their social distance attitudes but blacks tended to be more race conscious than whites in their semantic differential attitudes. All groups became less race conscious in social distance ratings over time, but there are suggestions that blacks have become more race conscious in their recent semantic differential ratings. Overall, much lower levels of ingroup bias — ethnocentric ingroup favouritism and colour bar bias — were evident in semantic differential attitudes than in social distance.

5. Are there differences in expressions of prejudice in terms of attitudes and behavioural intentions? The discussion above has indicated a number of differences between expressions of prejudice on social distance and semantic differential scales. (1) The mean social distance scores are generally
higher than the mean semantic differential scores, suggesting that respondents are more willing to express opposition to intergroup contact than to express negative beliefs about outgroups. (2) The expressions of ingroup favouritism and colour bar bias are stronger in the social distance measures than on the semantic differential scales. (3) All groups show declining levels of social distance over time but black Africans’ semantic differential scores have remained stable whereas whites’ semantic differential scores have declined relatively sharply in recent years.

DISCUSSION
Recent studies of race attitudes in South Africa have noted a significant reversal in patterns of intergroup prejudice. Throughout the twentieth century, white samples have manifested a racist attitudinal pattern, characterized by a colour bar and strongly negative attitudes toward black outgroups (Foster & Nel, 1991). During the post-1976 era, English and Afrikaans speaking white samples expressed especially negative attitudes towards black Africans. In contrast, samples of black respondents consistently expressed negative attitudes towards Afrikaans speaking whites but comparatively favourable attitudes towards English-speaking whites. Recent data from two large scale independent samples (reported by Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2010, and by Durrheim et al., 2011) suggest that black African respondents now express higher levels of prejudice against whites on the semantic differential scale than whites express toward them. Moreover, the historical trends indicate that the prejudice scores of white respondents toward black outgroups have steadily declined over time, whereas those of black Africans have remained constant. Although the data for Indian and coloured respondents are too sparse to reach a definitive conclusion, there are suggestions of similar trends in negative attitudes toward whites in the semantic differential data for coloured samples.

Other survey studies have reported similar findings. Gibson and Claassen (2010) used a measure of support for interracial ‘reconciliation’ to examine changes in intergroup attitudes in South Africa. Their measure included such traditional indicators of prejudice as ‘they are untrustworthy’, ‘I don’t believe what they say’, and ‘South Africa would be a better place without any of them’. In their 2004 survey (reported in their 2010 article), Gibson and Claassen found that black Africans were significantly less ‘reconciled’ than their white, coloured, and Asian counterparts; and that the attitudes of black Africans towards whites had become more negative in the period between 2001, and 2004, whereas the attitudes of white respondents toward black Africans had improved.

How are we to interpret this converging evidence that points toward a sea change in intergroup attitudes in South Africa? Does it mean that white racism is a thing of the past? Does it indicate that black racism is on the rise? We would resist both of these interpretations. First, evidence of declining prejudice among whites on the semantic differential scale has not been matched by evidence of a similar decline in social distance scores. This distinction between behavioural intentions and attitudes may indicate the emergence of a similar principle-implementation gap to that found in the USA (Schuman et al., 1997). Changing social norms may mean that whites are unwilling to express negative sentiment toward blacks, but there still remains a ‘stubborn core’ of resistance to integration and change (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Dixon et al., 2010).

South Africa remains a society obsessed by race. However, the social situation has changed dramatically from the days when there was social pressure toward expressing prejudice among whites. On the contrary, current norms work in the opposite direction, as whites struggle against the stigma of racism. Such normative pressures do not apply to black respondents. On the contrary, accusations of white racism are common occurrences, and can very easily serve as grounds for prejudice or pre-judgement against whites. Black South Africans do not have an historical legacy of racism to counteract, and critical attitudes towards whites can sometimes be portrayed as politically transformative and progressive. At the same time, the ongoing reality of racial inequality and discrimination can fuel prejudice. Perhaps it is this changing normative climate, together with the lingering racial inequalities of the past, that is expressed in the data analysed in this article.
Of course, the meaning of these ‘historical traces’, left by survey respondents from times past and presented here in the present by social psychologists, is not self-evident. We must remember that these expressions of prejudice — pre-judgements of dislike — were made in layered social contexts in which racialised research ‘subjects’ completed scales at the request of (mostly white male) researchers. At the same time, survey respondents were also participants in unequal and segregated forms of life that were characterised by the racism of the colonial and apartheid contexts. Dislike on the part of the oppressed is certainly not equivalent in any moral or political sense to dislike on the part of the oppressor. The label of racism has thus often been reserved for only the prejudice of the oppressor (e.g. Biko, 1978). In any event, in the South African context, oppressed groups typically did not formerly express a form of prejudice that could be characterized as racist.

Today, however, the (racial) identity of any ‘oppressor’ has become much more ambiguous (see Durrheim, Mtose, & Brown, 2011) and with it the meaning, morality and politics of racial prejudice, dislike, or even hatred. As in the past, social psychological research on racial attitudes has provided an occasion to pause and reflect on the state of South African society.

REFERENCES

Monographs, 111, 263-281.