

Same-race marriages still the

RULE rather than the EXCEPTION

By Lizette Phillips

marriages across language groups are becoming more prevalent among the younger ages.

In comparing the socio-economic status of children from inter-group marriages to those of same race marriages, the study found that the children of mixed marriages with an African mother, or with an African father and coloured mother, have the lowest socio-economic status. Children of other mixed marriages have a higher socio-economic status than would be expected from the status of their parental groups. The children of white-other marriages, in particular, are relatively well off.

African marriages (25 and 23 marriages recorded in the study). Second, roughly twice as many African men are married to coloured women than the reverse.

Another trend is that more Asian men are married to coloured women than the reverse (226 vs. 87), and more white men are married to coloured women than the reverse (171 vs. 59). Also, more white men are married to Asian women than Asian men to white women (66 vs. 39).

Surprisingly, the hypothesis that education increases the chance of a person marrying outside their group received very limited support. Increased contact and changed

Two decades after the repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act and a decade after the transition to democracy, inter-group marriage is the exception rather than the rule in South Africa

attitudes created by education do not seem to have a large impact on marriage patterns. However, the study found evidence of an increase in the tendency among the younger generation of South Africans to intermarry across race groups, although without longitudinal data it is impossible to say what the trends are with any degree of precision.

The study also looked at inter-marriage amongst the country's many linguistic groups. It found a substantial difference between the groups. The highest rates of inter-linguistic marriages were found among the Xhosa, Northern Sotho and Tsonga groups, where 35% to 40% of the women and around 20% to 23% of the men married out of their own language group.

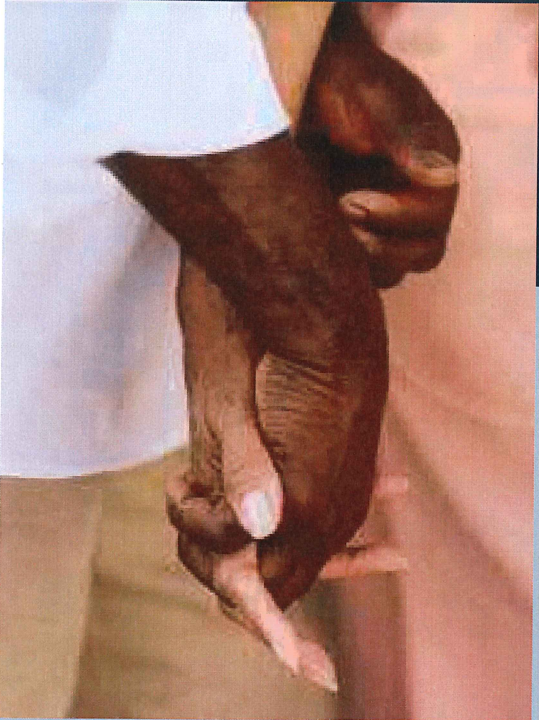
The lowest rates of out-marriage were among the Southern Sotho and Tswana groups where over 20% of the women and 13% of the men marry spouses who speak a different first language.

Significantly, the study suggests that

In general, there is more inter-marriage between whites and Asians, who historically had higher socio-economic status, and between coloureds and Africans, who had lower status. Inter-marriage across the gap between these poles of the socio-economic continuum are rare.

On the whole, what these findings show is that although the strict segregation and harsh legal constraints of the Mixed Marriages Act have been abolished, few South Africans have yet stepped outside the normative bounds by marrying someone of a different racial group. However, inter-marriage across language groups is relatively common and women are more likely than men to choose a mate from another language group. With marriage rates declining among young people all over the world, including in South Africa, it's hard to predict what trends in inter-marriage will be discerned over the next decade. •

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Even though the laws against inter-racial marriage in South Africa have changed, same-race marriages clearly remain the rule and inter-racial marriages are truly the exception. In a new study of marriage trends in South Africa undertaken by the Child, Youth and Family Development (CYFD) Research Programme, the figures suggest that little has changed in the past two decades since the scrapping of the offensive Mixed Marriages Act of 1949. According to Professor Yaw Amoateng, research leader and sociologist, all racial groups in South Africa continue to stick to their own.

"All four of the main racial groups have extremely high rates of same race marriages. The proportions are in the high 90% for all groups," says Amoateng.

The study found a gender asymmetry of inter-group marriages, for example, the number of African husband-white wife marriages is much lower compared to white husband-African wife pairs, a situation which is a reverse of the pattern in the United States. In fact, in South Africa the general trend is for lighter males to marry darker females, rather than the reverse.

There are two exceptions to this general trend. First is the near symmetry in Asian-

Job market welcomes graduates, but historical hurdles remain

By Pat Lucas

University graduates have a distinct advantage in South Africa's competitive labour market. Their unemployment rate is low compared to non-graduates, and even those who battle to find employment generally do so within a shorter time than those with no tertiary degree. However, Africans, women and those who studied at historically black universities still have the greatest difficulty finding employment.

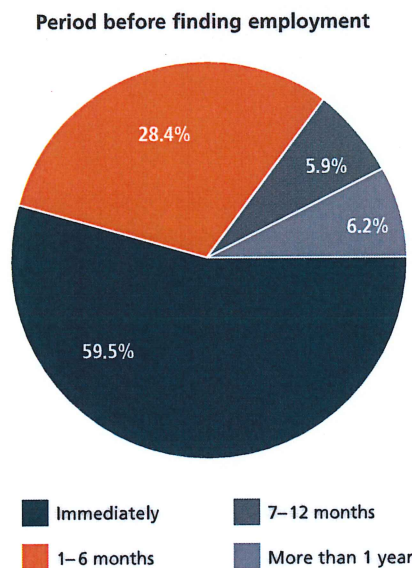
Such are the conclusions of a survey by the HSRC's Employment and Economic Policy Research (EEPR) of 2 672 university graduates who obtained their first degree between 1990 and 1998.

The study indicated that 59.5% of graduates found employment immediately after qualifying, while 93.8% did so within a year. A further breakdown of those graduates who didn't find a job immediately is provided in the chart (right). It shows that 28.4% found a job within 6 months, 5.9% within 7–12 months and 6.2% took more than a year to find employment.

Graduates in medical science had the highest success rate of 79.3% in finding employment, followed by engineering graduates with 77.2%. However, not all professional degrees guarantee a job. Law graduates, for instance, had an employment rate of only 49.6%. Graduates in humanities and the arts had the highest unemployment rate. Table 1 (below) illustrates this point.

The study also revealed differences along racial lines, 70.0% of white graduates found employment immediately, compared with

57.8% of Africans, 57.0% of coloureds and 52.0% of Asians. The unemployment rate of graduates from historically black universities was 65.4%, while the rate for graduates from historically white universities was only 34.6%.



Of those surveyed, 50.9% found their first job in the public sector, 46.8% in the private sector and only 2.4% were self-employed.

Ms Percy Moleke, Chief Researcher at the EEPR, indicates that, "affirmative action does not seem to be making a difference (in the private sector). Restructuring the public sector will likely result in fewer employment prospects for African graduates, with serious

implications for improving the economic and social well-being of this group, which has been hit hardest by the economic inequities of the past."

On the issue of mobility, the survey found that about 56.0% of graduates had changed jobs since entering the labour market, with just over half changing jobs only once. Despite popular perceptions that recent African graduates are "job hopping" in pursuit of better salaries, 61.8% were in their first job, compared with 38.1% of white and 35.8% of Asian graduates.

What influences mobility? Moleke says promotion to a higher job level was the main incentive for 30% of respondents to move jobs, whereas only 20% cited higher earnings.

The survey highlighted the lack of relevant information on the country's labour market available to matriculants contemplating careers. Many students enrolled at university with no idea about job prospects in different sectors. Little career guidance is available to potential university students to help inform their decision on a field of study, as a result of which many career choices are based on subjective factors, such as a role model in a student's family or community.

"Surveys such as this, done every year or two or even three, can provide pointers for students about which university courses will give them the best chances in the labour market," says Moleke. "It's important to keep the database current." •

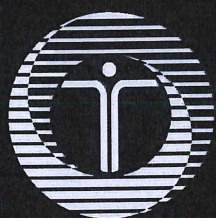
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Table 1: Period before finding employment by field of study

Field of study	Immediately %	1-6 months %	7-12 months %	More than 1 year %	Total %
Natural science	55.0	38.8	3.8	2.5	100
Engineering	77.2	18.3	3.0	1.5	100
Agriculture	61.6	31.4	5.8	1.2	100
Medical science	79.3	18.5	2.2	0.0	100
Humanities and arts	46.8	33.1	8.5	11.5	100
Education	57.0	33.8	3.9	5.3	100
Law	49.6	30.2	8.6	11.3	100
EMS*	65.4	23.3	6.2	8.0	100
Total	59.5	28.4	5.9	6.2	100

* EMS: Economic and management sciences

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