



Marise Swardt

10/09/2004 09:06 AM

To: All HSRC Office's

cc:

Subject: Mail & Guardian 10-09: Tying the rainbow know

~~10/09/04~~ 10/09/04. p. 11

Dear All

The attached article appears in today's Mail & Guardian.

Tying the rainbow knot

More and more South Africans marry partners outside their own racial group, reports Yaw Amoateng

Interracial marriages among South Africans are increasing. Coloureds are the most likely to marry outside their group, while Africans, followed by whites, are the least likely. Africans are 7 332 times more likely to marry each other than outside their group.

The 1996 and 2001 census figures show that the vast majority of people are still married to someone of the same racial group. But there were slight annual increases between the two census years in interracial marriages, especially among the younger

generation. This emerges from a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study that is part of a broader project looking at the social, economic, and demographic factors that affect family formation and dissolution patterns such as marriages, child-bearing and divorce in South Africa.

The overall rate of women aged 35 or younger involved in interracial marriages increased from 0,9% in 1996 to 1,3% in 2001. Marriages between coloured men and African women increased by about 1%, a substantial change relative to the number of such marriages in 1996.

The number of marriages between Africans increased by about 17% percentage points, from 94 895 to 111 340 between 1996 and 2001, while the number of Asian/Asian and white/white marriages decreased by 14% and 25% respectively during the same period.

While there are small differences in the tendency to intermarry, none of the tendencies are large. For example, there are more marriages between African men and coloured women than between African women and coloured men. And the HSRC study found no major increase in marriage rates between African men and white women, coloured men and African or white women, or white men and African women.

Using age as an indicator of trends over time suggests that intermarriage rates are increasing by about 3% per year relative to the overall rate. As far

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as education goes, the study found that each additional year of education increases the chances that an African or coloured person of either sex will marry an Asian or white person.

Conversely, the lower the education, the greater the chances that non-African groups will marry Africans, or that whites will marry coloureds. Among whites, the most educated are least likely to marry out of their group.

There is also a tendency for interracial marriages to be informal, except in cases where African men marry Asians or white women, or coloured men marry Asian women.

Even though coloureds are the most likely to marry outside their group, they have the slowest rate of change. In fact, at their present rate of change, it will take another 116 years before coloured/coloured marriages would be eliminated, com-

pared to 40 years and 80 white/white and Africa marriages respectively.

A more realistic prediction says white couples will be Africa, and intermarriage whites and other groups will but there will still be a white/white marriages in 4

In this South Africa is no Same-race marriage rates Africa are slightly higher than United States – a multi-ethnicity like South Africa. For in 1990 the rate for white/w marriages in the US was 96,9% to 99,7% and 99,2% in 1996 respectively for South Africa

Professor Yaw Amoateng is chief research specialist in HSRC's child, youth and family development research program

Marise Swardt

Corporate Communications
Human Sciences Research Council
Private Bag X41
Pretoria

Tel: 012 302 2026
Fax: 012 302 2028
Cell: 083 9953 889

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