

Changes in Interracial Marriages in South Africa: 1996-2011

Acheampong Yaw Amoateng

School of Research and Postgraduate Studies

North-West University (Mafikeng Campus)

Mafikeng, South Africa.

And

Tim B. Heaton

Department of Sociology

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah, USA.

Abstract

The present study used census and survey data from 1996 to 2011 to examine changes in interracial marriages in South Africa a generation after the establishment of democracy in that country. While in-group marriages appear to be the norm, they have been declining dramatically over the years, especially amongst Asian/Indians and whites, the two groups least likely to marry outside their group. In fact, the odds ratio for overall in-marriage dropped from 303 in 1996 to 95 in 2011. Increased educational attainment increases the odds that black Africans and coloureds would marry Asian/Indians and whites and vice versa. Regardless of gender and of whether education is increasing or reducing the odds of intermarriage, the effects of education are declining over time suggesting the erosion of the social class differences between the races in South Africa.

Keywords: Endogamy, Intermarriage, Social Cohesion, Educational Attainment, Racial Boundaries.

Introduction

Research on intermarriage in diverse multiracial contexts has revealed how societal changes over time have broken ethnic and racial boundaries through the weakening of ascribed bases of group membership. Specifically, this genre of research has shown that while ethnic, religious, and especially racial boundaries still exist, they are weaker than they used to be (Kalmijn, 1998; National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, 2009). Many scholars of interracial/interethnic marriages have seen this increasing frequency of interracial marriages as a function of a larger cultural shift in American thinking on the permeability of racial/ethnic boundaries in social interaction (Fu, 2001; Lee and Yamanaka, 1990; Porterfield, 1982; Spickard, 1989; Root, 2001; Qian, 2001).

Moreover, scholars of interracial marriages have emphasized the role of growing racial and ethnic diversity (e.g. Pollard and O'Hare, 1999) and the increasing importance of achieved traits such as earned education (e.g. Heaton and Albrecht, 1996; Fu, 2001; Kamijn, 1991a, b, 1994, 1998; Qian, 1997). According to this body of knowledge, trends in interracial relationships and marriages appear to be related to these changes in attitudes across the world. Specifically, the trends show a greater acceptance of relationships between individuals of different racial backgrounds. In fact, recent attitude surveys in the United States indicate that Americans are increasingly tolerant of racial intermarriage. In 1997 for instance, 67 percent of whites and 83 percent of African Americans approved of interracial marriages, while their support for racial integration in schools, housing and jobs was even higher (Schuman et al., 1997)¹.

Moreover, in the U.S., a survey in 2007 among adults on interracial dating found an increasing tolerance of dating between black and white Americans, with 83 percent of

¹ Many studies have suggested that while Americans seem comfortable supporting racial integration and equality in public arenas, they remain comparatively uneasy with interracial sexual intimacy and marriage (see e.g. Joyner & Kao, 2005; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001).

Americans agreeing that, it's "all right for blacks and whites to date". The 83 percent was up by six percentage points from 2003 and 13 percentage points from a Pew survey conducted 10 years prior to 2007 (Pew Research Center, 2007). Similarly, Lee and Edmonsto (2005) have noted this apparent massive change in Americans' racial attitudes that in turn have affected the prevalence of interracial marriages in the country. According to them, even though interracial marriages are far from being the norm in the United States², the numbers and proportions of couples that are interracial had steadily increased from about 300,000 in 1970 to 1.5 Million in 1990 and more than 3 million in 2000.

Specifically, Lee and Edmonsto (2005) found that interracial couples increased from less than 1 percent of married couples in 1970 to more than 5 percent in 2000, a situation which according to them, reflect both population growth and an increased tendency to marry across racial lines (see also Kalmijin, 1998; Labov & Jacobs, 1998; Qian & Lichter, 2007). Farley (2002), has observed that in 1970, approximately 321,000 interracial marriages appeared in U.S. census data and the number rose to about 1 million in 1980, 1.5 million in 1990, and 2.9 million in 2000. Some scholars have noted that this increasing trend of interracial marriages in the United States is generating a growing population of multiracial Americans who, as a group, has a tendency to out-marry (Qian and Lichter, 2007).

Specifically, Qian and Lichter (2007) found that intermarriage was lowest among whites (less than 5 percent) and highest among American-Indians (about 60 percent) in both 1990 and 2000. They also found that interracial marriages increased among whites and African Americans, but declined unexpectedly during the 1990s for Hispanics, Asian Americans, and American Indians. In a study in Sweden, it was also clear that majority of respondents could imagine dating and marrying interracially. However, the respondents were slightly more positive towards interracial dating than marriage (Malmö Institute for Studies

² Simmons & O'Connell (2003) have noted that in 2000, interracial marriages in the U.S. accounted for only 6 percent of all married couples.

of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, 2011). In Brazil, researchers of interracial marriages have observed both changes in attitudes toward more acceptance of racial intermarriage and the increasing racial heterogeneity in the marriage market due to migration (IBGE, 2000, 2004, 2007; Silva, 1999). Heaton and Mitchell (2012) observed this trend of change in their study of Brazil between 1991 and 2000. Even though they found that couples were about 27, 5.2, and 3.6 times more likely to marry someone of the same religion, race and education respectively, each type of homogamy declined over the decade. Moreover, they observed that the decrease in racial homogamy extended into the 2001-2008 period, although educational homogamy changed very little in the same period. In arguing that Brazil's racial boundaries are fluid, Jacobson and Heaton (2008) report odds ratios of 35.8 (in other words homogamous marriages are 35.8 times more likely than heterogamous marriages) in the United States, 9.68 in Hawaii, 37.11 in Canada, 9.63 in New Zealand, 11.38 in Beijing, and 287.2 in Xinjiang Province, China.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the situation is not different from other countries in terms of changes in attitudes in general, and changes in trends of interracial marriages. Even though Jacobson and Heaton (2008) report odds ratio of 237.7 for homogamous marriages in South Africa, a recent report on the subject of interracial marriages by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (2014) noted that since the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (Act No. 55 of 1949) was decriminalised in 1985, the country is gradually accepting mixed-race couples. This situation, according to the Broadcaster, has changed in the 20 years since the end of white minority rule in the country. Also in a qualitative study involving university students in Johannesburg, Jaynes (2007) observed that despite the fact that most of the students were of the view that interracial intimate relationships are still “abnormal” or “outside the norm”, they admitted that such relationships are increasingly—albeit—slowly becoming accepted especially among the younger generation.

The Context

While South African society has always been ethno-racially diverse due to immigration—both historically and contemporaneously—through the imperatives of modernization and general economic development, following the transition to democracy in the early 1990s the process of diversification of the population has to all intents and purposes, deepened. Even though in general one would expect this increased complexity of the society to result in increased tolerance due to liberalizing attitudes that accompany such societies, the country's experience has been one of increased racial, ethnic and socioeconomic tensions and less favourable attitudes towards foreign-born Africans more than two decades after the establishment of democracy.

In fact, in recent months, instances of violent service delivery protests, racial tension following the removal and or defacing of the statues of certain historical figures and civil disorder over the issue of immigrants from other African countries have all reinforced concerns about the cohesiveness of the society. The concerns about racial tensions and the apparent breakdown in social cohesion have been raised by a number of social and political commentators (see e.g. Du Preez 2015; Mbeki 2015). Du Preez (2015), for example, has bemoaned the fact that Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's "rainbow nation" has become a mosaic. In a recent study of attitudes of undergraduate students in a public university in the country about their sense of belonging in the country and acceptance of diversity, Amoateng, Fuseini and Udombosu (2015) found that the level of students' acceptance of the country's diversity was rather low. While students' sense of belonging in the country was higher than their acceptance of diversity, both measures of social cohesion were highly racialized. For example, on the issue of belongingness in South Africa, Indian/Asians and black Africans were much more likely than coloureds and whites to have a greater sense of belonging in the country compared to coloureds and whites. Against this backdrop of racial and ethnic

cleavages and tensions in the country, civil society is increasingly mounting pressure on the political leadership to identify the sources of this apparent lack of social cohesion in the society and engender social harmony.

The Present Study

It is against this backdrop of the lack of social cohesion in South Africa more than one generation after the establishment of democracy that the present study is undertaken. Specifically, the study uses available census and sample survey data in post-apartheid South Africa to examine changes in interracial marriages. Historically, in South Africa, the incidence and prevalence of interracial marriages have largely depended on the society's power structure at any particular point in time. For example, until the Nationalist Party swept to power in 1948, the different race groups were tolerant of each other and there were instances of interracial marriages, especially, in the frontier farms and towns (Atwell, 1986; Thompson, 1990).

However, after 1948 the boundaries between the races became rigid, especially after the passage of such racist legislation as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and its implementing mechanism, the Immorality Act (1950), the Population Registration Act (1950), the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Influx Control Act. Since all these measures limited physical contact between the race groups, interracial marriages became less common in the population because of the official sanctions and social ostracism suffered by persons who married across the colour line (e.g. Alibhai-Brown & Montague, 1992; Du Pre, 1994). Since the late 1980s when almost all the apartheid-era legislation were abolished culminating in the emergence of the democratic dispensation, interracial marriages have been increasing but slowly in the population.

This increasing tendency to marry across race lines in contemporary South Africa is largely a function of the socioeconomic reconstruction of the society through changes in such contexts as education, religion and neighbourhood. In fact, worldwide a large body of research has documented multiple mechanisms through which religious, educational, and racial contexts influence intermarriage rates (Goode, 1970; Mare, 1991; Kalmijn, 1991a, 1991b, 1998; Thornton, 2005; Qian and Lichter, 2007; Esteve and McCaa, 2007; fu and Heaton, 2008; Kosenleld, 200»; Jacobson and Heaton, 2008).

These rapid socioeconomic changes are bound to affect the marriage market as the anecdotal accounts of increasing interracial marriages in South Africa indicate. Yet, despite these accounts, there has been a paucity of empirical studies to document this trend of changes in the incidence of interracial marriages in the country. The first, and to our knowledge, only empirical study on the subject of interracial marriages in the country was carried out in 2004, ten years after the country's landmark political transition (see Jacobson, Amoateng & Heaton, 2004). In this study, the authors found that the endogamy (inter-group marriage or homogamy) rates in the population were very high, ranging from 96.60 percent amongst coloureds to 99.80 percent amongst whites

This gap in the empirical research on a racially conscious society such as South Africa is unfortunate since the subject of interracial marriages speaks to the broader question of social change in any multiracial society. Indeed, the extent of interracial marriages or marital assimilation in the population would be a good barometer of either narrowing or widening social distance between the races. In multiracial countries such as the United States, where there is a long tradition of research on interracial relationships, some of the early research focused on how interracial relationships could serve as a proxy for understanding changes in race relations and acceptance of other groups (see e.g. Allport, 1954, 1979; Gordon, 1964; Qian & Lichter, 2007). In fact, some researchers of interracial relationships in general have

contended that the prevalence of marital homogamy provides insight into the social organization of group boundaries. For example, educational homogamy reflects the importance of social class (Schwartz and Mare, 2005), and racial homogamy is a key indicator of race relations (Qian and Lichter, 2007). Following this tradition of research on interracial marriages to gauge the extent of social change, we employ census and survey data from 1996 to 2011 to examine changes in the prevalence of interracial marriages in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Conceptual Framework

Several theoretical perspectives have been employed by scholars to explain interracial/interethnic marriages and changes in such marriages over the years. For instance, one such theoretical perspectives is the Social Contact Hypothesis which contends that contact between groups is ameliorative and critical in improving intergroup relationships and that under specific conditions contact with members of different racial groups can promote positive and tolerant attitudes toward other groups (Allport, 1954, 1979; Pettigrew, 1998). According to this theory, the more contacts people have with others of different race, ethnicity and culture, the more tolerant they become to the different groups. In its classic formulation, the Social Contact Hypothesis posits that positive outcomes to social contact occur only (1) in cooperative events, (2) among participants of equal status, (3) between those who hold common goals, and (4) with those who have supportive authority (see e.g. Aronson, Fried, and Good, 2002; Desforges et al., 1997; Powers and Ellison, 1995).

In the United States and other multiracial contexts, some studies have employed the Social Contact Hypothesis to answer the question of contact and attitudes. These studies have generally found that those who have more interracial contact have more positive attitudes than those who do not and therefore tend to intermarry more. For example, Emerson, Kimbro and Yancey (2002) used this framework to study the effect of prior experiences of interracial

contact in schools and neighborhoods on the likelihood of adults having more racially diverse general social groups and friendship circles. They found that 13 percent of married respondents who had both racially mixed experiences were interracially married compared to just 2.5 percent of those who had no racially mixed experience.

Consistent with contact theory, Vickery (2006) notes that in the U.S., exposure to other races and social groups make people more likely to intermarry. More exposure can come from more education, military service or living in a location where one's race is scarce. Moreover, Alba and Nee (2003) have observed, contrary to classical assimilation theory, that in the United States, upward socioeconomic mobility provides minorities with new opportunities for contact with whites in work and residential settings and, as a result, promotes boundary crossing between minority and majority groups. Indeed, as a measure of socioeconomic status, educational attainment has been found to be a strong predictor of minority intermarriage with whites in the U.S. (Batson, Qian, and Lichter, 2006; Rosenfeld, 2005).

In fact, factors such as group size and the sex ratio which scholars of interracial marriages have found to be related to the prevalence of and variations in interracial marriages fall within the broader framework of the contact theory (Blau, 1977; Lee and Edmonsto, 2005). For example, Blau (1977) has noted that group size shapes patterns of social interaction between groups. For instance, when minority populations grow in size, opportunities for intragroup contact necessarily increase and interaction with the majority population declines. This view found empirical support in Qian and Lichter's (2007) study in which they observed that the 1990s witnessed sharp declines in Asian-Americans' and Hispanics' intermarriage with whites as a result of the increase in the size of these groups due to the growth in the Asian and Hispanic immigrant populations.

Commenting on this, they note:

The retreat from intermarriage largely reflects the growth in the immigrant population; increasing shares of natives are marrying their foreign-born counterparts. The substantive interpretation is clear: growth in minority group size promotes in-group contact and interaction while reinforcing cultural and ethnic solidarity and marital endogamy (Qian & Lichter, 2007:90).

Lee and Edmonsto (2005) have argued that if there are far more men than women in the prime marriage ages (for example, between ages 20 and 35) in one group, then men from this group are more likely to intermarry than men in a group with a more balanced sex ratio in these ages. Moreover, in the United States, Vickery (2006) has found that the scarcer the minority race is in a state, the higher the incidence of intermarriage for that group and the lower the incidence of intermarriage for the white race. Similarly, the scarcer the white race is, the more likely they are to be intermarried and the less likely the minority race is to be intermarried (except in the case of Hispanics).

In the South African context, Jaynes (2007), found that socioeconomic factors influenced interracial marriages as interracial relationships were more likely in university settings because of greater similarities in terms of financial status, class, and educational levels between university students, regardless of race. Universities are also known to be places of diversity and cosmopolitan value systems and studies in different geographic contexts have similarly found that higher education likely increases exposure to individuals from other races/ethnicities, as well as the idea of and examples of intermarriages (Vickery, 2006; National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, 2009; Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, 2011).

Additionally, the more education one has, the more they are exposed to different social groups and the more they may learn tolerance of peoples' differences (Vickery, 2006). Researchers have generally found higher status to be an avenue of out-marriage for low status

minorities (Qian, 1997; Fu and Heaton, 1997). Moreover, education and urban life generally provide egalitarian norms and settings that are more tolerant of out-group marriage (Heaton and Jacobson, 2000). Education and urban life in general increase the chances that individuals will have contact with other groups and marry someone of another group.

Related to the Social Contact Theory, especially about the effect of education on the marriage market, is Exchange theory which has been used to explain interracial marriages. Even though first proposed by Robert Merton (1941), Kalmijn places it in the larger framework of economic and social preferences. The more general sense of the theory is that potential spouses are evaluated in terms of resources they have to offer at the same time that the candidate offers his or her own resources in return. These resources include socioeconomic status, attractiveness, and other cultural resources (see Kalmijn, 1998).

Thus, exchange theory suggests that white women with low socioeconomic status exchange their high status for economic security, while well-to-do minority men exchange their high socioeconomic status for inter-racial acceptance and evidence that they can marry “white” (Heaton and Albrecht, 1996; Kalmijn, 1993; Schoen and Wooldredge, 1989; Qian, 1997). In fact, most research driven by the status-exchange hypothesis has focused on the educational aspect of status. Higher educational status in general is associated with less negative attitudes toward other groups, greater contact with a broader range of people, greater resources that enhance mate selection, and sometimes less conformity to group norms (Phillips and Zuckerman, 2001).

In an analysis of Census data in Brazil, Heaton and Mitchell (2012) found that higher educational attainment increased the likelihood of homogamy for whites and blacks, but more educated brown (mixed race) men were more likely to marry someone of a different race. The educational effect on white homogamy was increasing over time, but the reverse was true for educational effects of black homogamy. More specifically, there was an increasing tendency

for more educated brown women to marry exogamously, while the educational effect for brown men was stable. Moreover, Heaton and Mitchell (2012) observed that educational homogamy was highest at the tails of the distribution and educational homogamy in the middle of the distribution was declining. According to the authors, the major difference was that the Census data showed some decline in intermarriages between Brown husbands and wives, while the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio*- National Household Survey (PNAD) data showed a decline in Brown homogamy that paralleled declining homogamy for the other two groups.

In South Africa, since the establishment of democracy, the democratic government through its developmental state agenda has sought to level the socioeconomic playing field through such state policies as Affirmative Action, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), expanded access to education, previously socioeconomically disadvantaged groups such as black Africans and coloureds have been brought into the mainstream of society through socioeconomic and geographic mobility. On the other hand, some previously advantaged groups, especially, among the white minority, have fallen through the cracks due to the declining importance of ascribed status as opposed to the increasing importance of achieved status in the New South Africa.

In view of these state socioeconomic policies, in the present study, we seek to test the following hypotheses in regard to the effects of education on interracial marriages in the post-apartheid period: (1) As a result of the expanded access to education and other socioeconomic opportunities, educated black Africans will marry “higher” status groups such as Asian/Indians and whites; (2) For similar reasons, coloureds will marry “higher” status groups such as Asian/Indians and whites; and (3) Higher status groups like Asian/Indians and whites will marry within their groups.

The *Assimilationist Perspective* is another theory that has been used to explain patterns of interracial marriages. Essentially, the theory sees interracial marriages as an indicator of assimilation, cultural preferences, and economic and social preferences (e.g. Kalmijn, 1998). Generally, the assimilationist perspective argues that greater tolerance of other groups will result in higher levels of heterogamy although assimilation is slowed by endogamous cultural preferences for language, beliefs, norms and behaviour (Spickard, 1989), what Kalmijn (1998) refers to as “third party” constraints. For instance, the decline in racial endogamy has generally been explained within the context of assimilation perspective: Through generational replacement, national origin groups gradually integrate in the host society (e.g. Kalmijn, 1998). Besides these main theoretical perspectives, gender has been found to affect variations in interracial marriages in the literature. For example, many studies on black-white intermarriage in the United States consistently show that black men marry whites more often than black women marry white men (Jacobs & Labov, 2002).

In the U.S., black men are more than twice as likely as black women to intermarry, a differential that has widened in recent years. In 1970, about 2 percent of black men were intermarried, compared with less than 1 percent of black women. In 2000, almost 10 percent of black men, but just 4 percent of black women, had a nonblack spouse. However, in the case of Asian-Americans, women are more likely than men to intermarry. For example, in 1970, 25 percent of Asian women and 14 percent of Asian men were intermarried. In 2000, 22 percent of Asian women were in interracial marriages, compared with 10 percent of Asian men (Lee & Edmonsto, 2005). Qian and Lichter (2007) found that sex differences in interracial marriage were modest among whites, Hispanics, and American Indians, but were substantial among African Americans and Asian Americans. Further, they observed that in 2000, only 5 percent of African American women, compared with 14 percent of African

American men, were in racially-mixed marriages. Moreover, among Asian Americans, only 26 percent of men but 39 percent of women married interracially in 2000.

Despite the racial and ethnic tensions that have characterized post-apartheid South African society in recent years, there is little doubt that race and ethnic relations are qualitatively much different from what they used be in apartheid society. The socioeconomic reconstruction of the society has undoubtedly brought about changes in attitudes among members of the different race groups and consequent tolerance of one another consistent with the ideals of a non-racial, non-sexist South Africa as envisioned by the African National Congress's *Freedom Charter* (1955). Based on this process of the evolution of the society into a non-racial and non-sexist one, we hypothesize in general that marriage will be a random event. Specifically, we test the following hypotheses within the context of the *Assimilationist Perspective*: (1) That because potential partners marry based on personal, cultural, economic and social preferences, the number of interracial marriages in the population will vary by the gender of potential partners; (2) That the overall rate of interracial marriages will increase over time; and (3) That as a result of these “natural” processes of integration, we hypothesize that the impact of education on intermarriage will decline over time.

Data and Methods

We examine patterns of intermarriage using the three national censuses and one community survey since the end of Apartheid: 1996, 2001, 2007 and 2011. Data are obtained from <https://international.ipums.org/international/>. We use the 10 percent census data because it provides a nationally representative sample with large enough sample sizes to get reliability data for smaller groups such as marriages between Black Africans and Indians/Asians. In order to show recent trends and reduce some error created by differential mortality and

divorce, we limit the sample to people age 35 years or younger. Male and female partners are matched for the analysis.

We address three questions regarding interracial marriage in South Africa. First, we describe the overall pattern of marriage and develop a model that accounts for the association between male and female partner's race. Second, we show how the parameters in the model are changing over time. Finally, we show how these parameters are influenced by partner's education. Education is coded into four groups including primary or less, secondary school, undergraduate or technical training and post-graduate.

Results

Table 1 reports the cross-tabulation of male and female partner's racial group. The most obvious pattern is that most marriages occur within these broad racial categories. Only one percent of Black Africans and Whites marry outside their group. Approximately 5 percent of the Coloured and Indian/Asian populations marry outside their group. Thus, there are some marriages outside of one's group.

Table 1 about here

To get a sense of relative importance of these patterns, we fit various log-linear models to these data and the results are shown in Table 2. The first model in Table 2 assumes that marriage is random with respect to race so that population size determines the number of marriages in each cell. This model provides a very poor fit to the data. There is a strong pattern of in-group marriage. Model B accounts for most of the association between husband's and wife's race. Marriage between same race partners is 152 times more likely than intermarriage, after population composition is taken into account. However, there is

some tendency for different groups to have different rates of in-marriage (Model C). The ratios of in-marriage to out-marriage are 290.3 for Blacks, 15.5 for coloureds—lower because this is already a mixed race group, 349.7 for Asian/Indians, and 1408.1 for whites---clearly the most exclusive group. This model accounts for almost all of the baseline association. Finally, there is some tendency for more intermarriage between black Africans and coloureds, than between other groups with an odds ratio=6.3 (Model D). When each of these patterns are included, they account for 99.0 percent of the association between husband's and wife's race.

Table 2 about here

We are particularly interested in how marriage patterns are changing over time. Table 3 reports parameters when we calculate these parameters for each year. Overall, in-marriage has declined dramatically over time. The odds ratio for overall in-marriage dropped from 303 in 1996 to 95 in 2011. But, the declines are not uniform across groups. The greatest declines are for the groups that are most likely to marry within their group: Whites and Indians/Asians. White in-marriage dropped more than 10 fold from 6192 in 1996 to 577 in 2011, while the Asian/Indian ratio declined 7 fold from 1032 to 144. Black in-marriage dropped more than 3 fold, and declined somewhat between 2007 and 2011. Coloured in-marriage is very low compared to other groups and changes less. Black/Coloured intermarriage increased and then declined again, but is small relative to other parameters.

Table 3 about here

Finally, we test two hypotheses regarding the role of education in intermarriage. The results are shown in Table 4. First, the simple exchange hypothesis states that education facilitates marriage into higher status groups and discourages marriage into lower status groups. Second, given the expectation that racial boundaries will weaken over time, we hypothesized that the impact of education on intermarriage will decline over time. We estimate a series of multinomial regressions for each race group with race of their partner as the dependent variable. Independent variables include year, education and an interaction between year and education.

Results generally show strong and consistent support for our hypotheses. Higher educational attainment increases the odds that Blacks and Coloureds will marry Asians/Indians and Whites while more education reduces the odds that Asians/Indians and Whites will marry Blacks or Coloureds with the exception of Asian/Indian men and Coloured women. With the exception of marriages between Coloured men and Black women, rates of intermarriage are increasing over time. Of particular interest is the interaction between education and year. In each of the 8 models, the coefficient for this interaction is opposite in sign compared to the coefficient for education.

In other words, regardless of gender and of whether education is increasing or reducing the odds of intermarriage, these effects of education are declining over time. Many of these interactions are small and not statistically significant, indicating that the declining importance of education is generally not large. Still, the consistent pattern suggests that social class differences between the races are slowly eroding.

Table 4 about here

Summary and Conclusion

Even though racial hierarchy in terms of differential access to society's resources based on racial identity was an integral part of the colonial project in South Africa, it reached its apogee in the country when the Nationalist government came into power in 1948. During this period, a series of legislation were enacted to ostensibly enable the difference race groups develop 'separately but equally' along their own cultural lines. Notable among these myriad 'apartheid' laws was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 that had the effect of curtailing the limited but growing interracial marriages in the society during the colonial era.

Following the abolition of these laws in the late 1980s culminating in the democratic transition in the early 1990s, the expectation was that there would be greater tolerance among the races due to changes in attitudes there would be increased incidence in interracial marriages in the population. However, ten years into the democratic transition an empirical assessment by Jacobson, Amoateng and Heaton (2004) found that the incidence of interracial marriages was the exception rather than the rule in South Africa as evidenced by the high rates of in-group marriages.

The present study was an attempt to revisit the subject by examining possible changes in interracial marriages 21 years after the establishment of democracy in the country, using census and survey data spanning 1996 to 2011. We found a strong pattern of in-group marriages in the population; in fact, only 1 percent of black Africans and whites married outside their group, compared to approximately 5 percent of coloured and Asian/Indians.

Despite this tendency towards in-group marriage, overall, in-marriage has declined dramatically over the years, especially, for Asian/Indians and whites, the two groups that were the least likely to marry outside their groups. However, although the odds for intermarriage are changing because they were so high in 1996, the actual number of intermarriages is small.

While higher educational attainment increased the odds of intermarriage between black Africans and coloureds, it reduced the odds of Asian/Indians and whites marrying black Africans and coloureds respectively. Specifically, educated black African men are more likely to marry coloured, Asian/Indian and white women respectively compared to marrying black African women. However, while educated coloured men are more likely to marry both Asian/Indian and white women, they are less likely to marry black African women. Finally, educated white men are less likely to marry coloured and Asian/Indian women compared to white women. As far as women are concerned, educated black African women are less likely to marry coloured men but more likely to marry white men compared to black African men. Similarly, educated coloured women are less likely to marry black African men compared to coloured men, but more likely to marry Asian/Indian and white men. Educated Asian/Indian women are more likely to marry only white men, while educated white women are less likely to men from any group other than white men.

In conclusion, the seeming racial/ethnic tension that has engulfed the South African society in recent months appears to be over the pace of the socioeconomic transformation of the post-apartheid society given the deep divisions over the differential access to these resources based on racial identity. However, as the present study has amply demonstrated, ironically the equitable distribution of the socioeconomic resources such as education is having perhaps the unintended consequence of engendering the much-needed social cohesion

the country needs through breaking down the most rigid racial boundaries established by the apartheid system: The marriage market.

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Table 1. The overall pattern of intermarriage

| | | Population group of wife | | | | Total |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| | | Black | | | | |
| | | African | Coloured | Indian or Asian | White | |
| Population group | | 221244 | 2029 | 67 | 141 | 223481 |
| of | | 99.0% | 0.9% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 100.0% |
| Husband | Black African | 99.4% | 4.9% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 67.4% |
| (Rows report n's, row percentages and Column percentages) | | 1050 | 38394 | 248 | 201 | 39893 |
| | | 2.6% | 96.2% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 100.0% |
| | | 0.5% | 93.5% | 1.7% | 0.4% | 12.0% |
| | | 139 | 357 | 14234 | 120 | 14850 |
| | | 0.9% | 2.4% | 95.9% | 0.8% | 100.0% |
| | | 0.1% | 0.9% | 96.8% | 0.2% | 4.5% |
| | | 146 | 278 | 156 | 52582 | 53162 |
| | | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 98.9% | 100.0% |
| | | 0.1% | 0.7% | 1.1% | 99.1% | 16.0% |
| | | 222579 | 41058 | 14705 | 53044 | 331386 |
| | | 67.2% | 12.4% | 4.4% | 16.0% | 100.0% |
| Total | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Table 2. Models of homogamy and intermarriage

| Model | LR χ^2 | % of baseline |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| A-Independence | 578780.26 | 100.00 |
| B-Simple homogamy | 3856.62 | 0.67 |
| C-Differential homogamy | 485.80 | 0.08 |
| D-Differential homogamy | 74.32 | 0.01 |

**and black/coloured
intermarriage**

Table 3. Parameters for change over time

| Parameters for: | Year of Census/survey | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | 1996 | 2001 | 2007 | 2011 |
| Simple homogamy | 303.1 | 175.7 | 121.0 | 95.3 |
| Group specific homogamy: Black | 695.1 | 380.3 | 163.4 | 206.4 |
| Coloured | 18.1 | 15.2 | 13.9 | 11.0 |
| Asian | 1031.7 | 531.1 | 471.5 | 144.2 |
| White | 6191.9 | 1614.9 | 2525.0 | 577.1 |
| Black/Coloured intermarriage | 6.1 | 8.7 | 12.3 | 5.0 |

Table 4. Multinomial regressions predicting partner's race

| Husbands Race: | Wife's race (comparison group is same race as partner) | Husband's Education | Survey year | Education*year interaction | Model χ^2 | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------|--------|
| Black | Coloured | .285* | .001 | -.018* | 65640.3* | | |
| | Asian/Indian | 1.474* | .023* | -.034* | | | |
| | White | 2.029* | .073* | -.055* | | | |
| | Coloured | Black | -1.062* | -.033 | | .060* | |
| | | Asian/Indian | 1.016* | .124* | | -.021* | |
| | | White | 1.621* | .212* | | -.051* | |
| | Asian/Indian | Black | -.819* | .156* | | .015 | 770.5* |
| | | Coloured | .319* | .207* | | -.045 | |
| | | White | .767* | .101 | | -.009 | |
| White | Black | .054 | .221* | -.026 | 218.1* | | |
| | Coloured | -.652* | .035 | .019 | | | |
| | Asian/Indian | -.036 | .078 | .013 | | | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | | |
| Wife's Race: | Husband's race (comparison group is same race as partner) | | | | | | |
| Black | Coloured | -.677* | -.044* | .043* | 342.1* | | |
| | Asian/Indian | .368 | .148* | -.010 | | | |
| | White | 1.345* | .130* | -.024 | | | |
| Coloured | Black | -.771* | .017 | .029* | 997.1 | | |
| | Asian/Indian | 1.103* | .123* | -.026 | | | |
| | White | 1.229* | .141* | -.029 | | | |
| Asian/Indian | Black | -.520 | .061 | .017 | 194.9 | | |
| | Coloured | -.239 | .064 | .009 | | | |
| | White | 1.001* | .211* | -.035 | | | |
| White | Black | -.431 | .114 | .000 | 173.5* | | |
| | Coloured | -.483* | .045 | .016 | | | |
| | Asian/Indian | -.344 | .067 | .009 | | | |