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## Miscegenation in South Africa

A number of related factors make the Union of South Africa an ideal object of investigation in the field of miscegenation. The exceptionally virulent brand of racism that has developed in South Africa since the beginning of the 20th century was accompanied by an increasingly morbid fear of miscegenation unparalleled in intensity anywhere else in the world.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence of this "miscegenophobia", South Africa went further than any other country in recent times in prohibiting by law all sexual relations, whether marital or non-marital, between whites and non-whites. Finally, the South African government, in its concern over "bastardization", provides the social scientist with the best data on inter-racial marriage and concubinage of any country known to the author.

The history of miscegenation in South Africa is as old as the first permanent Dutch settlement at the Cape in 1652. In the first few decades, some instances of marriage between Dutchmen and christianized Hottentot women took place, as well as extensive non-marital relations between masters and female slaves.<sup>2</sup> In the 1670's, an estimated 3/4 of all children of female slaves had white fathers.<sup>3</sup> With the rise of colour prejudice in the latter decades of the 17th cen-

<sup>1</sup> Alan Paton's novel, *Too late the Phalarope*, besides being a masterful work of literature, gives a perceptive analysis of this "miscegenophobia". We are indebted to our colleagues S. E. Cruise, H. Dickie-Clark, K. Hill, J. Horton, E. Krige, H. Kuper, L. Kuper and J. Mann for help and advice, but the responsibility for the views contained in this paper is entirely our own.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. I. D. MacCrone, *Race Attitudes in South Africa*, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 42; M. W. Spilhaus, *The First South Africans*, Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1949, p. 127. M. Jeffreys, "Where do Coloureds come from?" *Drum*, August and September 1959. Simon van der Steel, the Dutch governor of the Cape had a Javanese grand-mother. At that time, culture and religion were the criteria of status at the Cape rather than race, so that christianized half-castes enjoyed equal status with the white burghers.

<sup>3</sup> MacCrone, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Spilhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

tury, legal unions of whites and non-whites became rare. A 1685 law prohibited marriage between white men and slave women; some legal unions of white men with free women of colour continued to take place, but with decreasing frequency. Miscegenation however, continued to flourish in the form common to most slave societies, namely institutionalized concubinage between white men and non-white women.<sup>4</sup>

The salient fact in the early history of miscegenation in South Africa is that, while intermarriage became rapidly condemned, extra-marital relations between white men and women of colour were not only tolerated, but even looked upon with amusement. The slave lodge of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape was a wide-open brothel of which Mentzel gives an interesting account:

“Female slaves are always ready to offer their bodies for a trifle; and towards evening, one can see a string of soldiers and sailors entering the lodge where they misspend their time until the clock strikes 9 . . . The Company does nothing to prevent this promiscuous intercourse, since, for one thing it tends to multiply the slave population, and does away with the necessity of importing fresh slaves. Three or four generations of this admixture (for the daughters follow their mother’s footsteps) have produced a half-caste population—a mestizo class—but a slight shade darker than some Europeans.”<sup>5</sup>

Among the European bourgeoisie, interracial concubinage was also common:

“Boys who, through force of circumstances have to remain at home during these impressionable years between 16 and 21 more often than not commit some folly, and get entangled with a handsome slave-girl belonging to the household. These affairs are not regarded as very serious . . . the offence is venial in the public estimation. It does not hurt the boy’s prospects; his escapade is a source of amusement, and he is dubbed a young fellow who has shown the stuff he is made of.”<sup>6</sup>

A British visitor to the Cape in the beginning of the 19th century tells that slave girls were routinely assigned to the bedroom of white guests to enliven the latter’s nights.<sup>7</sup> Slave girls were “loaned out” to Europeans by their masters:

“Female slaves sometimes live with Europeans as husband and wife with the permission of their masters who benefit in two ways: the cost of upkeep of the

<sup>4</sup> For a theoretical discussion of hypergamy, see Pierre L. van den Berghe, “Hypergamy, Hypergenation and Miscegenation”, *Human Relations*, XIII, pp. 83-91.

<sup>5</sup> O. F. Mentzel, *A Description of the African Cape of Good Hope, 1787*, Cape Town, The van Riebeeck Society, 1944, vol. II, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> Mentzel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Percival, *An Account of the Cape of Good Hope*, London, C. & R. Baldwin, 1804, p. 291.

slave is reduced through the presents she receives from the man, and her children are the property of her master since children of female slaves are themselves slaves . . . In this manner, the slave population is always increasing . . .”<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the whites interbred extensively with the nominally free Hottentots. Vaillant estimates the number of *Bastards* (for such was the contemporary designation of white-Hottentot half-breeds) in the 1780's at 1/6 of the inhabitants of the whole Cape Colony.<sup>9</sup> In the first half of the 19th century, entire communities of *Bastards* settled along the Orange River where they established autonomous “states”. The offspring of these white-slave and white-Hottentot unions, as well as interbreeding between slaves and Hottentots gave rise to the people known today as the “Cape Coloureds”.<sup>10</sup>

In this early period, then, miscegenation was not only common but sanctioned, so long as it took the form of concubinage between higher-status men and lower-status women. There was no trace of a feeling of horror against miscegenation *per se*. The main concern of the dominant white group was the preservation of its superior status, and the latter was left unthreatened by master-slave concubinage. Intermarriage, on the other hand, entailed a measure of social equality, and was consequently opposed.

During the 19th century, miscegenation continued as witnessed by people like De Buys and Dunn whose descendants now constitute entire communities of Coloureds. The majority of the *Voortrekkers*, however, who settled the Orange Free State and the Transvaal in the first half of the 19th century do not seem to have shared the amused tolerance of miscegenation found at the Cape in the 18th century. Their rigid Calvinist morality and their deep-seated colour prejudice were incompatible with such an attitude. The Boers' linking of both sex and dark skin colour with sin and damnation, joined with their fear of being “swamped” by the surrounding Bantu tribes are probably at the root of the modern South African revulsion against miscegenation. This irrational, deep-seated horror of “bastardization” became even more firmly entrenched in the 20th century.<sup>11</sup>

Today, miscegenation is viewed by the vast majority of South African whites as a vile and debasing practice, indeed, almost as a

<sup>8</sup> Mentzel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 130.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Boulenger, *Voyages de F. Vaillant dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique, 1781-1785*, Paris, Plon, 1932, pp. 160-162. The term *Bastard* was not derogatory at the time.

<sup>10</sup> J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1957*, London, Longmans, Green & Co. 1939.

<sup>11</sup> This change in attitudes is part of what we have described elsewhere as a transition from a “paternalistic” to a “competitive” type of race relations. Cf. Pierre L. van den Berghe, “The Dynamics of Racial Prejudice”, *Social Forces*, XXXVII and “Distance Mechanisms of Stratification”, *Sociology and Social Research*, XLIV.

form of bestiality.<sup>12</sup> Preserving one's "racial purity" is now regarded by most whites as a sacred duty, and is linked, illogically enough, with the survival of "Western Civilization". Whether miscegenation decreased in frequency as a consequence of this change in attitudes cannot be determined with certainty. Indeed, this feeling of revulsion is not incompatible, at a deeper and more repressed level, with a sexual attraction towards the woman of colour as the "forbidden fruit". In any case, what sexual relations continued to take place across racial lines became more clandestine, commercialized, transitory and probably less fertile. In 1955, only 11.3% of the Coloured population lived in the three northern provinces (Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State) where European settlement started around 1840. This fact indicates (though it does not prove) that miscegenation declined in the 19th and 20th centuries, or, at least, that interracial relations became more sterile.

The wave of "miscegenophobia" was accompanied by ever more stringent legislation against interracial intercourse. A Cape Colony law of 1902 started, modestly to be sure, by prohibiting sexual relations between white prostitutes and Africans. The other three provinces (or rather British colonies as they were at the time) of South Africa adopted a similar law in 1903. The next major legislative attack on miscegenation was the Immorality Act of 1927 passed under the Hertzog government, and forbidding sexual intercourse between Europeans and Africans.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after Malan's government came into office, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 made intermarriage between Europeans and all non-Europeans illegal. Finally, in 1950 and 1957, the Immorality Act of 1927 was amended to prohibit sexual intercourse or even "immoral or indecent acts" between whites and *all* non-white groups. The maximum penalty for "immorality" is seven years of hard labour, with corporal punishment for men. The Acts of 1949 and 1950 thus make any form of sexual relations between whites and all non-whites a criminal offence, except for the case of persons legally married before the passage of the 1949 Act.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Paton, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-254, 267-269.

<sup>13</sup> The four major racial groups in South Africa in the 1951 Census were as follow: Europeans or whites (2.6 million, 21% of total), Asiatics or Indians (370,000, 3% of total), Natives or Africans (8.5 million, 67% of total), and Coloureds, i.e. the people of mixed ancestry (1.1 million, 9% of total). The Europeans have imposed a hierarchy of political power and rights, of economic position, and of "racial" status with themselves clearly at the top, the Coloureds and the Indians in an intermediate but rapidly deteriorating position, and the Africans at the bottom. It is interesting to note that sexual intercourse with Africans was prohibited over 20 years before intercourse with Coloureds and Indians was forbidden.

<sup>14</sup> However, intermarriage between Coloureds, Indians and Africans is still allowed. The same is true for non-marital miscegenation. Cf. J. Lewin, "Sex, Colour and the Law", *Africa South*, IV, pp. 63-66.

Let us now turn to the practice of miscegenation in recent years. The first problem that faces us is one of definition. Throughout South African history, the incentive to pass for white has been such as to encourage light Coloureds to become "play-whites" as the Coloureds say. The amount of this continuous "passing" is, of course, impossible to determine accurately. A 1935 estimate (or, perhaps better, a guess) puts the number of "Europeans" with a sprinkling of Coloured "blood" at 500,000, i.e. some 25% of the "white" population of the time.<sup>15</sup> It is a well-known fact that most of the old Boer families have members who are of mixed ancestry.<sup>16</sup> Obviously miscegenation in a *genetic* sense continues on a large scale insofar as those almost-white persons are classified as "whites" and intermarry freely. In this study, however, we shall confine ourselves to *social* miscegenation, i.e. to sexual relationships between persons who are socially recognized as belonging to different "racial" groups.

Miscegenation as defined above can be of two varieties: it can be either marital or non-marital. For obvious reasons, systematic statistics are only available about the former. We shall then begin with an analysis of marital miscegenation.<sup>17</sup> Table I, based on the latest available statistics before the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, shows that the four racial groups are almost entirely endogamous, since only 1.38% of all people entering registered marriages do so outside their racial group. The expected percentage of intermarriage if "race" were not a selective factor is 49.8%.<sup>18</sup> In other words, intermarriages are 36 times less frequent than one would expect on the basis of random selection.

Of the four groups, the whites are by far the most endogamous. Only one white person out of 714 marries outside his group, compared to one out of 20 for the Coloured, one out of 31 for the Indians, and one out of 67 for the Africans. The percentages for the total and for the Africans are inflated, however, by the fact that the endogamous unions between Africans according to tribal custom are not included in the statistics. If one assumes that the Africans marry at the same rate as the average for the other three groups, there should have been

<sup>15</sup> H. Gibbs, *Twilight in South Africa*, London, Jarrolds, 1949, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> J. Hoge, *Bydraes tot die genealogie van ou Afrikaanse families*, Balkema, 1958, M. Jeffreys, *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Racialist policies in South Africa have at least the useful by-product of providing the social scientist with an impressive set of racial statistics.

<sup>18</sup> The expected proportion of intermarriages is based on the formula:

$$P = 1 - \sum p_i^2$$

where  $p_i$  is the proportion of group  $i$  in the total population. The formula assumes an equal sex ratio, an equal marriage rate between the various groups, and a constancy of proportion of the four racial groups in the total population between 1925 and 1946.

some 166,700 Africans marrying in 1946. Accepting this figure as closer to the actual number of Africans who married that year than the figure of 43,219, the corrected percentage of Africans marrying outside their group becomes 0.39% instead of 1.50%. Similarly, the corrected percentage for the total becomes 0.68% instead of 1.38%. In other words, intermarriages occur 73 times less frequently than expected, given random racial mating. Even before the passage of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, over 99% of all marriages were racially endogamous.

TABLE I

*Number of Persons Entering Registered Marriages,  
and Percentage of Persons Entering Mixed Marriages by Race, 1946.*

Race	Number of Persons Marrying	Number of Persons Marrying outside race	% Exogamous	Expected rank order of endogamy	Actual rank of endogamy
Whites .....	56,693	77	0.14	2	1
Coloureds .....	15,908	798	5.02	3	4
Indians .....	3,870	122	3.15	4	3
Africans .....	43,219	649	1.50	1	2
TOTAL ..	119,690	1,646	1.38	—	—

(Adapted from: *Official Year Book of the Union*, XXVII, Pretoria, 1953; E. Hellmann, *Handbook of Race Relations in South Africa*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 11; H. Sonnabend & C. Sofer, *South Africa's Stepchildren*, Johannesburg, p. 24.)

One may expect the numerically larger groups to be more endogamous than the smaller groups. Indeed, if only two groups are involved, this is bound to result, given monogamy.<sup>19</sup> If more than two groups are involved, any deviation from the expected rank order of endogamy based on size of group is *prima facie* evidence that *intermarriage* does not occur randomly. The two larger groups in South Africa (Africans, 67% of the total population, and Europeans, 21%) are indeed the most endogamous, and the two smaller groups (Coloureds, 9%, and Indians, 3%) are the least endogamous. However, the double reversal between expected and actual rank order of exogamy in Table I indicates that factors other than relative size of groups operate. Why,

<sup>19</sup> Registered marriages in the Union are monogamous.

then, are the Europeans more endogamous than the Africans and the Indians more so than the Coloureds?

The greater stigma attached to intermarriage by Europeans, and the greater degree of racial prejudice in that group probably account for the whites coming in first position instead of second as expected on the basis of their numerical proportion. The reversal between Coloureds and Indians is probably the consequence of a number of factors. Over 90% of the Indians belong to religions (Hinduism and Islam) that are hardly represented at all among the other three groups. Religious endogamy among Indians largely follows the lines of racial endogamy, whereas religious divisions cut across racial lines for the other three groups. In addition to religious endogamy, many Hindu Indians still practice a measure of caste endogamy.<sup>20</sup> The Coloureds on the other hand, probably are the least "corporate" of the four racial groups. They are a residual category in relation to the other groups. In language and religion they are almost completely acculturated to the white group with which many Coloureds identify themselves. This lack of cultural distinctiveness coupled with the desire of many Coloureds to "marry white" combine to make the Coloured group less endogamous than expected on the basis of their relative size.

TABLE II  
*Number of Whites Marrying  
and Percentage Marrying outside their Race, 1925-1946.*

Year	Number Marrying	Number Marrying outside their race	% Exogamous
1925 .....	28,137	133	0.47
1930 .....	33,307	97	0.29
1935 .....	41,289	91	0.22
1940 .....	56,774	105	0.18
1945 .....	48,234	92	0.19
1946 .....	56,693	77	0.14

(Adapted from: Sonnabend & Sofer, *op. cit.*, p. 26.)

Table II shows the steady tendency for whites to marry less and less outside their group, i.e. to become increasingly endogamous. Only 1.4 Europeans out of 1,000 married exogamously in 1946, compared with 4.7 in 1925. This trend reflects the increasing stigma

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hilda Kuper, *Indian People in Natal*, Natal University Press, 1960.



attached to miscegenation in South Africa over the years. It is interesting to note that the greatest drop occurred between 1925 and 1930, and coincided with the passage of the Immorality Act of 1927. A direct causation between the two events is unlikely since the Act only affected non-marital relations between Africans and Europeans. Both events can be interpreted more plausibly as independent indices of the rising prejudice against miscegenation.

The breakdown by sex given in Table III shows that European men are much more likely to marry outside their race than are European women. Between 3/4 and 4/5 of all interracial marriages involving whites are of the hypergamous variety. Disapproved as all interracial marriages are in South Africa, the prejudice against a white woman entering such a union is even greater than that encountered by a white man.

TABLE III

*Mixed Marriages of Whites by Sex, 1925-1946.*

Year	White male to non-white female	White female to non-white male	Total	% Hypergamous
1925 .....	98	35	133	73.7
1930 .....	76	21	97	78.4
1935 .....	75	16	91	82.4
1940 .....	87	18	105	82.9
1945 .....	71	21	92	77.2
1946 .....	60	17	77	77.9

(Adapted from: Sonnabend & Sofer, *op. cit.* p. 26.)

Table IV gives the relative frequency of the six racial combinations of intermarriage for the sum of all cases occurring between 1925 and 1946, while Table V shows the trend over time for each racial combination. The discrepancies between expected and actual percentages in Table IV show that three combinations are overrepresented. One of these is between members of racial groups of roughly equivalent status (Coloured-Indians), and the other two are between members of racial groups adjacent in the South African status scale (African-Coloured and white-Coloured).

Intermarriages between whites and Africans (the two extreme groups on the colour scale) occur 28 times less frequently than one would expect if *intermarriage* occurred randomly. The remaining two combinations are between adjacent groups (Indians-whites and

TABLE IV

*Number and Percentage of Interracial Marriages by Race, 1925-1946.*

Racial combination	Number of Marriages 1925-1946	% of Total	Expected %*
White-Coloured .....	1,766	13.33	7.60
White-Indian .....	116	0.88	2.53
White-African .....	277	2.09	56.51
African-Coloured .....	9,255	69.87	24.22
African-Indian .....	170	1.28	8.07
Indian-Coloured .....	1,662	12.55	1.08
TOTAL .....	13,246	100.00	100.01

\* The expected proportion for any given combination is:

$$P = \frac{p_i \cdot p_j}{\sum p_i \cdot p_j}$$

where  $p_i$  and  $p_j$  are the proportions of the groups in the total population. The same assumptions are made as in computing the expected proportion of intermarriage.

(Adapted from: Hellmann, *op. cit.*, p. 11, and Sonnabend & Sofer, *op. cit.*, p. 24.)

Indians-Africans), and are also underrepresented, but not nearly as much as African-white unions. In short then, the overwhelmingly majority (98%) of all intermarriages occur between persons belonging to racial groups of either equivalent or adjacent status. Conversely, marriage between the two extreme groups on the racial status scale is very rare. Indians, when they intermarry, tend to restrict their choice to the Coloureds, a group of approximately equal status. Indians tend to marry either "up" or "down" to a lesser extent than the Coloureds.

The total incidence of interracial marriage increased somewhat faster than the general population. Between 1925 and 1946, the total number of intermarriages grew by 84.53%, whereas the total population of the Union showed an increase of only 64.79% between 1921 and 1946. As Europeans became increasingly endogamous over the years, and as the Coloured endogamy rate remained almost constant, the slight increase in the incidence of intermarriage is attributable to the Africans. Turning to Table V, we see that African-Coloured unions constituted an ever greater percentage of all intermarriages. By 1946, such unions accounted for over 3/4 of the total.

TABLE V  
*Percentage of Each Racial Combination of Inter-marriage  
 in Total Number of Inter-marriages, 1925-1946.*

Year	White-Col.	White-Indian	White-African	African-Coloured	African-Indian	Indian-Coloured	Total %	Total No of Mixed Marriages
1925 .	25.34	0.22	4.26	58.74	0.90	10.54	100.00	446
1930..	16.78	1.12	3.80	63.53	0.67	14.10	100.00	447
1935..	15.70	0.58	1.36	70.35	0.78	11.24	100.01	516
1940..	13.24	0.27	0.53	71.93	1.74	12.30	100.01	748
1945..	9.54	0.82	0.47	72.79	0.71	15.67	100.00	849
1946..	8.02	0.73	0.61	76.55	1.70	12.39	100.00	823

(Adapted from Hellmann, *op. cit.*, p. 11, and Sonnabend & Sofer, *op. cit.*, p. 24).

White-Coloured and white-African marriages have declined both relatively and absolutely long before the passage of the 1949 Act. Not only are white-African marriages rare, but they have become increasingly so over time. By 1946, only 0.61% of the mixed unions were between these two extreme groups, compared to 4.26% in 1925. Indian-Coloured unions show no trend towards either an increase or a decrease, while white-Indian and African-Indian percentages are based on too few cases to draw any conclusions.

There exist, of course, no statistics on the extent of non-marital miscegenation, but prosecutions under the Immorality Acts constitute a source of data unique to South Africa. Such prosecutions have averaged some 300 cases each year since 1951.<sup>21</sup> Naturally, not all cases of miscegenation reach the courts. For one thing sexual relations between members of the three non-white groups are not included; these unions are not prohibited by the law which is only concerned with the "purity" of the white ruling group. Even of the illicit miscegenation between whites and non-whites, it may safely be assumed that the great majority of such cases are never prosecuted, either because they escape detection, or because they are suppressed, through bribery or otherwise, before they reach courts. The proportion of actual cases being tried, and the selective factors operating are entirely a matter for speculation.

<sup>21</sup> J. Lewin, "Sex, Colour and the Law", *Africa South*, IV, p. 67. As will be seen from our sample, a number of those cases involve foreign sailors in Durban and Capetown.

For purposes of this study all "immorality" cases reported in a non-European weekly newspaper between January 1958 and April 1960 were analysed. This procedure yielded a sample of 175 cases.<sup>22</sup> While the newspaper does not report all immorality cases tried in court, it probably has a more extensive coverage than any other paper in the country. According to the editors, most cases tried in the large cities, particularly in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, are covered, while most rural cases are not published. This urban bias does affect some of the findings and must therefore be kept in mind. Due to the elusive nature of the universe in this instance, one has to be content with a sample, however open to question that sample may be.

Of 175 cases, 13 involved European women, and 162, European men. As in the case of interracial marriage, hypergamous (or better, "hypergenous") unions are overwhelmingly more frequent than "hypogenous" relationships. The complete breakdown by race given in Table VI reveals that the Coloureds are heavily overrepresented (64 cases but of 175, i.e. 36.6% of all unions for a group which represents only 9% of the total population). The small number of cases involving Indians does not permit any reliable conclusions. Africans are correspondingly underrepresented. These findings corroborate

TABLE VI

*Racial Distribution of a Sample of Persons Involved  
in "Immorality" Cases, 1958-1960.*

		Race of Male Partner				
		White	Indian	Coloured	African	Total
Race of Female Partner	White . . . . .	0*	3	4	6	13
	Indian . . . . .	11	0	0	0	11
	Coloured . . . .	60	0	0	0	60
	African . . . . .	84	0	0	0	84
	"Non-white" . .	7	0	0	0	7
TOTAL . . . . .		162	3	4	6	175

\* All cells with a frequency of zero do not fall under the legal definition of "immorality", and hence are not prosecuted.

<sup>22</sup> A "case" is defined here as an actual or an attempted sexual relationship between a white and a non-white, insofar as at least one of the two parties involved was tried in a court of law. Whenever one party had relations with more than one person, each dyadic relationship was treated as a case. We are indebted to the staff of the "Golden City Post" for giving us full access to their newspaper's files.

the intermarriage data which likewise show that relations tend to take place between racial groups of adjacent status in the colour scale. However, the tendency is not nearly as clear-cut as for the intermarriage data. Whereas, in 1945, only 0.5% of the *mixed* marriages occurred between whites and Africans, in 1958-1960, 51.4% of the non-marital unions in our sample took place between these two extreme groups on the South Africa colour scale.

Many South Africans believe that, of the two main white language groups, Afrikaners are overwhelmingly overrepresented in "immorality" cases. Table VII shows that this is not the case in the present sample. Of the 79 white South African nationals whose language group could be determined, there are 50 Afrikaners (63.3%) and 29 English-speaking whites (36.7%), i.e. a close approximation to the proportion of these two groups in the white population.<sup>23</sup> Many more aliens were convicted under the Act than one would expect on the basis of their proportion in the white population. Of the 43 cases, however, 32 involved transient foreign sailors in the harbours of Cape Town and Durban, some of whom were ignorant of the law.<sup>24</sup>

TABLE VII

*Language and Nationality  
of White Partners in "Immorality" Cases, 1958-1960.*

	Male	Female	Total
Afrikaans-speaking South Africans . .	45	5	50
English-speaking South Africans . . . .	28	1	29
Aliens . . . . .	43	0	43
Policemen on "trap" duty . . . . .	27	0	27
Not ascertainable . . . . .	19	7	26
TOTAL . . . . .	162	13	175

<sup>23</sup> A person was classified as belonging to one of the two language groups if *all* of his names were of that language. When given names and surnames were not of the same language, the case was classified as doubtful. This classification does not exclude any possibility of error since a number of persons with Afrikaner names are fully anglicized, and the reverse also happens, though more rarely. The urban bias of the sample may account in part for the results, as over 80% of the white *rural* population are Afrikaans-speaking. Since some 80% of the *total* white population are urban, however, it is unlikely that the relative numerical position of the two groups would be greatly altered in an unbiased sample. Another indication that miscegenation is not confined to Afrikaners is that many, though not most, Coloureds have English surnames, particularly in Natal.

<sup>24</sup> One sailor pleaded that, although he had been warned about the Immorality Act, he thought that his shipmates had played him a joke.

Insofar as possible, the nature of the sexual relationship was determined as shown in Table VIII. In 27 cases, white policemen acted as "decoy" to trap non-white prostitutes. Fifteen cases involved sexual assault or "improper advances" without the consent of the women. In the 42 above cases, only one of the parties was tried. There was insufficient evidence to determine the nature of the relationship in another 46 cases. Of the remaining 87 instances, 70 cases involved short-term, casual relations, either of a mercenary nature with prostitutes, or of an exploitative nature between masters and servants. Evidence of a deeper, long-standing relationship existed in only 17 cases. In only five out of these 17 cases did one or more children result from the relationship, thereby indicating the largely sterile character of non-marital miscegenation under recent South African conditions.<sup>25</sup> Although the small number of white women involved does not permit any definite statistical conclusions, it seems that such relations tend to be of longer duration than cases involving white men. This finding is to be expected since the racial structure of South Africa makes for few European prostitutes, and the few who exist restrict their practice principally to the more profitable white clientele.

TABLE VIII

*Type of Relationship between Partners in "Immorality" Cases, 1958-1960.*

Type of Relationship	White female- non-white male	White male- non-white female	Total
Long-term .....	4	13	17
Short-term .....	1	69	70
One-sided, assault .....	3	12	15
One-sided, police trap ....	0	27	27
Not ascertainable .....	5	41	46
TOTAL .....	13	162	175

Sentences imposed under the Immorality Act, though stringent by normal Western standards of equity, are well below the maximum of seven years that the law establishes. The bulk of the sentences lies between 3 and 6 months in prison. The most salient conclusion from Table IX is that non-Europeans tend to be sentenced more heavily than Europeans. A greater proportion of non-whites are

<sup>25</sup> Some of the women may have been pregnant at the time they were tried, but it is doubtful that this factor affects the conclusion about the sterility of most unions.

given prison terms and these prison terms are longer than for the whites on the average. Out of the 67 cases where both parties were convicted, the non-European partners received a heavier sentence in 24 cases, both partners received equal sentences in 34 cases, and the Europeans were more heavily sentenced only 9 times. These findings will, of course, not surprise anyone familiar with the South African system of government.

TABLE IX

*Types of Sentences Imposed on Persons Accused of "Immorality", 1958-1960.*

Type of Sentence	Whites	Non-Whites	Total
Physical punishment only . . . . .	12	0	12
Fine . . . . .	1	1	2
Suspended prison term . . . . .	17	5	22
1 to 3 months in prison . . . . .	15	14	29
4 to 6 months in prison . . . . .	40	57	97
Over 6 months in prison . . . . .	4	6	10
Deportation . . . . .	0	8	8
Case dismissed . . . . .	17	18	35
Not charged (one-sided case) . . . . .	30	12	42
No information . . . . .	39	54	93
TOTAL . . . . .	175	175	350

The occupational distribution of the European males and non-European females is given in Table X.<sup>26</sup> On the female side, prostitutes are by far the largest group thereby confirming our previous finding on the transitory and mercenary character of much non-marital miscegenation in our sample.<sup>27</sup> The second most frequent female occupation is that of servant. Among white males, farmers are probably underrepresented because of the urban bias of the sample. The male distribution is slanted towards the lower prestige occupations, as but not as exclusively is generally believed. A few prominent business and professional men were involved, including a physician, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and the brother of the Prime Minister's son-in-law. It may, of course, be cogently argued that cases involving prominent persons are given more publicity, and hence that they are overrepresented in our sample. The prominence of the police and civil service (including the state railways) among

<sup>26</sup> Occupation was given in only one case involving a European woman (prostitute), and in only 3 cases of non-European men (one policeman, two servants).

<sup>27</sup> The urban bias of the sample may account in part for this finding.

the occupations is noteworthy.<sup>28</sup> This fact lends indirect support to Lewin's contention that non-marital miscegenation is found more frequently among highly prejudiced Europeans who treat non-whites as tools for the white man's convenience, than among liberals preaching racial equality.<sup>29</sup> Since the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948, the civil service has been increasingly recruited among government supporters who are most likely to be strongly prejudiced against non-Europeans. Policemen and railway workers come predominantly from the Afrikaner lower class among whom racial prejudice is deeply rooted.

TABLE X  
*Occupational Distribution of White Males  
and Non-White Females in "Immorality" Cases, 1958-1960.*

Occupation	White males	Non-white females	Total
Business and professional .....	4	0	4
Semi-professional .....	4	3	7
Farming .....	3	0	3
Police and civil service .....	24	0	24
Other clerical and white collar .....	7	1	8
Sailors .....	32	0	32
Domestic servants .....	0	12	12
Prostitutes .....	0	83	83
Other manual .....	11	0	11
Retired or unemployed .....	8	0	8
Police trap .....	27	0	27
No information .....	42	63	105
TOTAL .....	162	162	324

Table XI summarizes the data on age. As might be expected, the men are 9 years older than the women on the average. Only 16.6% of the women are 30 years of age or more, compared to 56.3% of the men. A different picture emerges, however, if one separates the cases involving white men from those involving white women. Now it appears that the white partners, whether male or female, are older than the non-white partners. One third of the white women (4 out of 12) are 40 or above, compared to 5% of the non-white women

<sup>28</sup> These cases do not include the policemen on trap duty who are listed separately.

<sup>29</sup> Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 70.



(5 out of 102). Those white women in their forties all had non-white lovers in their twenties and thirties. Conversely, only 2 of the 27 white men of age 40 or above had affairs with non-white women older than themselves. Conclusions drawn on such a small and selective sample must, by necessity, be highly tentative. However, this age differential suggests the hypothesis that the white partner, whether male or female, is dominant in the relationship, and is the "sexual exploiter" of the non-white partner.

TABLE XI

*Mean Age in Years by Sex for Partners in "Immorality" Cases, 1958-1960.*

Cases involving:	Mean age of:		Total
	Males	Females	
White female and non-white male . . .	28.4	30.2	29.3
White male and non-white female . .	34.4	24.2	29.0
Mean for total . . . . .	33.8	24.8	29.1

## SUMMARY

The feeling of aversion that most white South Africans manifest at the mere mention of miscegenation did not exist before the 19th century. Previous to that time, interracial concubinage between white men and women of colour was not only common, but also viewed with tolerance and amusement.

Beginning in the 19th century, and becoming even more sharply defined in the 20th century, a new and much more virulent phase of race relations was entered in South Africa. One aspect of that new phase was the spreading of anti-miscegenation attitudes. More and more stringent legislation against interracial sexual relations, whether marital or non-marital, is one of the indices of this change in attitudes.

The data on interracial marriage show that:

(1) All four "racial" groups are almost entirely endogamous. Less than 1% of all marriages take place across colour lines.

(2) The Europeans are the most endogamous of the four groups, and the Coloureds the least so. This finding is not consistent with the numerical size of these groups in the total population.

(3) Interracial marriages increased somewhat faster than the total population between 1925 and 1946, but the increase was due almost entirely to African-Coloured marriages.

(4) Marriages between whites and non-whites showed a consistent downward trend long before they became illegal.

(5) White-non-white unions tend to be predominantly hypergamous (i.e. between white men and non-white women).

(6) Intermarriage is almost entirely (98%) confined to persons belonging to groups of adjacent or equivalent racial status, according to the South African "pigmentocracy". African-Coloured marriages alone account for over 3/4 of mixed unions in 1946.

The data on non-marital miscegenation show as marked an hypergamous (or better "hypergenous") trend as the intermarriage statistics. Non-marital relations also show a tendency to occur more frequently between members of adjacent colour groups, but not nearly to the extent that intermarriage does. The vast majority of non-marital relations across colour lines is of a short-term and mercenary nature. Such relations also tend to be sterile; children resulted in only 5 out of 175 cases. The European men involved are of low occupational status on the average, but not exclusively so. The police and civil service are heavily represented among male occupations. Non-European females are overwhelmingly prostitutes and domestic servants. Afrikaners are not significantly overrepresented in relation to English-speaking whites. European men are 10 years older than non-white females on the average, whereas European women are 2 years older than their male non-white partners.