

Asian American Intermarriage- From the Fringes to the Forefront





Introduction

- “Today Asian Americans have the **highest outmarriage rates** among all racial and ethnic groups in the country” (Xie & Goyette, 1997).
- Largely due to (Saenz, et al 1994):
 - The repeal of **anti-miscegenation laws** in 1967.
 - The **Korean war** in the 1950s and the **Vietnam war** in the 1970’s.



Purpose of this Study

- To identify the unique issues, attendant challenges, and benefits of Asian American interracial marriages.
- To examine the racial identification and experiences of Asian American biracial individuals.

Facts and Figures



- Asian Americans account for **3.5 %** of the USA population (Qian, Blair, & Ruf, 2001).
- Asian immigrants make up **61%** of the Asian American population (Qian, Blair, & Ruf, 2001).
- Each **successive generation** intermarries at a higher rate (Root, 1998).
- The **educational and socioeconomic** mobility of Asian Americans has increased intermarriage (Qian, Blair, & Ruf, 2001).

Facts & Figures



- Most likely to intermarry (Qian, Blair, & Ruf, 2001) -
 1. Japanese and Filipino Americans.
 - Japanese are the most assimilated
 - High acceptability of exogamy amongst Japanese
 - Number of biracial Japanese children = monoracial children
 2. Chinese and Korean Americans.
 3. Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese and Malay)
 4. Lastly, Asian Indians.

Factors like Education, Nativity, SES, Assimilation, & Gender

- Asian Americans more likely to intermarry (Saenz, et al, 1994) -
 - Those who are **native-born**.
 - Who come from a country with a **colonial past**.
 - Who have a **high English proficiency**.
 - High **SES** and **education**.
 - **Women** (72% of Asian-White marriages with Asian women).
- **Awareness Hypothesis** (Xie & Goyette, 1997) -
“reverse assimilation”.



The Racial Identification of Biracial and Individuals

According to Saenz, et al (1995):

- In 1990 **half a million** children had one Asian parent.
- 53% of Asian biracial children categorized as “**Anglo**” [**White/Caucasian**].
 - Individual more likely to be identified as “Asian” if-
 - **Chinese or Filipino**
 - **The father is Asian (surname as cultural marker)**
 - **Foreign-born**
 - **Speaks an Asian language at home**
 - **Looks more Asian.**

The Socialization of Biracial Individuals

- Positive Aspects (Root, 2001):

- New studies claim “well adjusted and use effective coping strategies”
- Consider their hybridity an asset (“best of both worlds”).

- Negative Aspects (Root, 2001):

- *Pass* – out of insecurity and to claim gains.
- Want to look more White.
- Poor self-esteem and delinquency.
- “What are you?” questions and objectification.
- *The dating dilemma.*

The Dynamics of These Intermarriages

- **Current Generation** - 91% of Generation Y'ers approve of interracial dating (Chu-Miniter, 2007).
- **Intermarriage attrition rate**- 41% vs. Same-race rate 31% (<http://isteve.blogspot.com/2005/12/interracial-divorce-statistics.html>).
- **Attitude**- Asian women tend to think Asian men “too traditional” and Asian men resent this (Chu-Miniter, 2007).
- **Parental Attitude**- “What did I do wrong? “ attitude. Also denial or disowning (Root, 2001).
- **Physical Appearance**- Asian women’s petiteness considered feminine while Asian men’s smaller frame less masculine (Root, 2001).
- **Media**- Movies like “South Pacific” and “Mississippi Masala” send the message that interracial dating is “doomed or dangerous” (Root, 2001).



- The birth of a grandchild can help improve the strained relations between a biracial couple and their parents:
 - *“While hate, fear, and anger are common responses to interracial marriage and have powerful short-term effects, love has proved a formidable opponent”* (Root, 2001).



Music of the Heart

- <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=fqqvXwSVgXg&feature=related>
- http://www.spout.com/films/Mississippi_Ma_sala/22917/1867/trailers.aspx
- <http://www.asian-nation.org/interracial.shtml>



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