

Patterns of Panethnic Intermarriage in the United States, 1980-2018

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Intermarriage among ethnic groups belonging to the same panethnic category (e.g. Asian, Latino) is an important indicator of the strength of panethnicity. Yet, most of the work on panethnic intermarriage uses older samples with significant data limitations. In this article, I use data on recently married couples from the American Community Survey 2014-18 and Census 1980 to analyze the likelihood of ethnic exogamy within the panethnic categories of Latino, East/Southeast Asian, and South Asian. I utilize a counterfactual marriage model that accounts for group size within local marriage markets, eliminates immigrants married abroad from analysis, and controls for birthplace and language endogamy. The results show that birthplace and language diversity are significant barriers to ethnic exogamy among Asians but not Latinos. Once birthplace and language endogamy are held constant, panethnic intermarriage is far more likely among Asians than among Latinos. East/Southeast Asian ethnic exogamy has increased over time, while Latino ethnic exogamy has not. Furthermore, East/Southeast Asian and South Asian intermarriage remains rare, suggesting that panethnic intermarriage among Asians occurs within two separate melting pots.

Keywords: panethnicity; intermarriage; assortative mating, ethnic exogamy; immigration

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