

## **Cross-cultural marriage rates falling; Big influx of immigrants makes them more likely to wed among themselves**

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### **Body**

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The USA's growing diversity is cooling the melting pot in at least one way: **marriage** across racial and ethnic lines.

The share of Hispanics and Asians married to whites dropped between 1990 and 2000 after two decades of steady growth, new research shows.

The sheer number of **immigrants** who arrived last decade has made it **more likely** for them to marry **among themselves**, according to findings published this month in American Sociological Review.

Recent minority **immigrants** are disproportionately less educated than the native-born, earn less, do not speak English well and tend to live in segregated neighborhoods -- major factors that discourage **marriage** outside racial or ethnic groups, says Zhenchao Qian, sociology professor at Ohio State University and co-author of the report. The researchers studied married couples between the ages of 20 to 34.

The 2000 Census is the most recent data that include enough cases to examine intermarriages at the national level, he says. "That kind of trend is **likely** to continue because **immigrants** still are coming in," Qian says. "We see **immigrants** as **more likely** to marry **among themselves**."

In contrast with the decline in intermarriages **among** whites and Asians and Hispanics, the **rate** of **marriages** between blacks and whites rose significantly from 1990 to 2000, although it continues to lag far behind those of other minorities.

The arrival of **more** than 11million **immigrants** in the 1990s created a larger **marriage** pool for Hispanics and Asians, including those born here. **Immigrants** who were younger than 20 when they arrived and U.S.-born Hispanics and Asians -- mostly the less educated -- were **more likely** to marry **among themselves** in 2000 than in 1990.

The decline in the **rate** of intermarriages in the fastest-growing minority groups could indicate that **immigrants** are reinforcing their **cultural** identity, says Daniel Lichter, co-author of the report and a sociology professor at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

If history repeats itself, the children of **immigrants** will be better educated, earn **more** and live and work in **more** diverse areas than their parents. That could lead to **more marriages** outside their groups, Qian says.

The unprecedented number of new **immigrants** helps explain the decline in intermarriages, says Jeffrey Passel, demographer at the Pew Hispanic Center. **More** than half of adult Hispanics and about three-fourths of adult Asians are **immigrants**. "Basically, there's a larger pool," Passel says.

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## Graphic

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