

Interracial Marriage Between Blacks, Whites On The Rise

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Black-white marriages are on the rise. According to scientists this phenomenon is evidence that racial barriers between the groups are starting to crumble, but the numbers still lag behind the rate of mixed-race marriages between whites and other minorities.

The study, published in the October edition of the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, finds that in 2008, 10.7% of blacks who married in the past year married whites, compared with 3% in 1980.

Blacks who have completed higher levels of education are more likely to marry whites because they have a greater chance of interacting with them in school, the workplace and neighborhoods where they live. This is a fact that has been true for other groups for a while but not for blacks, says Zhenchao Qian, a sociology professor at Ohio State University and lead author of a new study on interracial marriages.

But we still have a ways to go.

"This doesn't imply that we've moved into a post-racial society," says Daniel Lichter, director of the Cornell Population Center and study co-author. "Even though there's been a rapid increase (in black-white unions), it's still very low."

The study also found:

- The share of Hispanic newlyweds who married non-Hispanic whites grew slightly since 1980, but at a slower rate this decade than in previous years.
- The percentage of Asians who married whites also dropped.
- Black men are much more likely to marry white women than black women are to marry white men. "That's the least likely combination," Lichter says. The opposite is true of marriages between Asians and whites. Among Hispanics, mixed-race couplings are more balanced.
- Asians and American Indians who are part white are far more likely to marry a white person than a person of their other heritage.
- More couples are living together, a trend that is affecting all marriage rates. Without it, the rate of mixed marriages might be higher. "Cohabiting doesn't always lead to marriage," Lichter says.