

Fifty years after racist anti-miscegenation laws struck down

American public overwhelmingly accepting of interracial marriage

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A report released last week by the Pew Research Center found that acceptance of interracial marriage is at an all-time high in the United States.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents polled in February said that they thought interracial marriage was good for society, up from 24 percent in 2010. Another 52 percent said that they did not think it made a difference, down from 61 percent seven years prior. Only 9 percent said they thought it was bad for society, down from 13 percent.

In a likely reflection of the nefarious influence of “left” racist politics, blacks (18 percent) were more likely than whites (9 percent) and Hispanics (3 percent) to say that more people intermarrying is bad for society. White respondents (12 percent) were still more likely to oppose a close relative marrying a person of a different race or ethnicity than blacks (9 percent) or Hispanics (3 percent).

However, to put those figures into perspective, the overall share of non-black respondents who said they would oppose a close relative marrying a black person has fallen precipitously, from 63 percent in 1990 to a historic low of just 14 percent today. Among non-whites, only 4 percent oppose a close relative marrying a white person, down from 7 percent in 2000.

These results come as the number of interracial, opposite-sex marriages is at an all-time high. The Pew study looked at all opposite-sex marriages between individuals identifying as black, white, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian and multiracial.

Census data analyzed by Pew shows that the share of new marriages and number of marriages overall which are interracial has been rising consistently over the five decades since the *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court

decision, which struck down racist anti-miscegenation laws.

The survey found that 17 percent, or nearly one-fifth of all new opposite-sex marriages in 2015, were interracial, up from just 3 percent in 1967. Approximately 670,000 people entered into a new marriage with someone of a different race or ethnicity in 2015, up from 280,000 in 1980. The overall number of people who are in interracial marriages currently stands at more than 11 million, approximately 10 percent of all marriages.

The most common form of intermarriage is white/Hispanic (42 percent) followed by white/Asian (15 percent), white/multiracial (12 percent), white/black (11 percent), Hispanic/black (5 percent), white/American Indian (3 percent), Hispanic/Asian (3 percent), and Hispanic/multiracial (3 percent).

Not surprisingly, Pew found interracial marriage rates were lowest in those areas of the country that are more racially and ethnically homogenous and less densely populated.

People generally form relationships in their neighborhoods, in their workplaces, and at school, all of which have been legally racially desegregated for more than five decades following the mass Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, which united workers of every race in a struggle that finally broke the back of Jim Crow segregation.

Shifting racial and ethnic demographics are also making interracial relationships more likely, particularly in large urban areas and on college campuses where a wide range of people converge and mix.

As of the 2010 Census, those identified as non-

Hispanic whites made up 63.7 percent of the population, down from 83.5 percent at the beginning of the 1970s. Every minority group has increased its share of the population during this period, with Hispanics nearly quadrupling their share of the population from 4.4 percent in 1970 to 16.3 percent in 2010. Nearly 3 percent of Americans were identified as multiracial in 2010.

All of this has had a dramatic impact on the racial attitudes of the population and is finding one particular expression in the ever growing number of interracial marriages.

Considering other now common forms of social partnerships, including same-sex marriage and cohabitation, the number of interracial and interethnic relationships in the US is significantly higher than what is reflected in Pew's study, a number which is in the many tens of millions.

The Pew report shatters the narrative pushed by proponents of identity politics that American society is hopelessly riven by racial divisions, in which social relationships and attitudes have changed very little since the Civil War more than 150 years ago. It serves as yet another debunking of the "racist white working class" narrative pushed by the Democrats and their apologists in the aftermath of Hillary Clinton's loss to Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

In just one recent example author Michelle Alexander, speaking at a forum hosted by Haymarket Books, the publishing house of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), blamed Clinton's loss on a "whitelash" due to rising racial animosity among "whites" towards the election of Barack Obama, the first black president, in 2008. The "whitelash" theory of politics fails to explain why whites who voted twice for a black candidate refused to vote for Clinton, or why there was a significant decline in the African American vote from Obama to Clinton.

Racial and gender identity politics seeks to reinforce artificial divisions among workers and channel opposition behind the Democratic Party. It is also the form through which a ferocious fight for positions and privilege is waged within sections of the upper middle class.

The changing attitudes on race also undermine the efforts of the far right—including the Trump administration, his top advisor Stephen Bannon and the

alt-right with which the administration is associated—to revive a form of extreme nationalism based on anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Despite the unrelenting efforts to promote racial thinking from the White House to the pages of the *New York Times*, the Pew report shows that American workers are by and large not fixated on racial issues. Workers are concerned above all about the continuing attack on health care, education and pensions, along with declining wages and the absence of decent jobs.

The dramatic decline in racial animosity is one particular reflection in the US of an international process. Enforced racial and national divisions have been eroded by the rapid development of communications technology and the globalization of production.

It should perhaps be no surprise that the dramatic decline in hostility to black and other racial intermarriage arrangements which began in the 1990s coincided with the introduction and growth of the Internet. Workers interact every day with people of different nationalities and races, erasing physical boundaries and overcoming artificial divisions imposed by the ruling class to divide the working class against itself.

All of this provides fertile ground for the development of a mass movement based on the real and objective divide created by capitalist society: the division between the working class of all races and nationalities, on the one hand, and the capitalist class, on the other.



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