

University of Nevada, Reno

An Analysis of Whites' and Blacks' Attitudes Towards Interracial Marriage

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
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by

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Abstract

Although interracial marriages are growing more common in the U.S. today, some people still do not approve of interracial marriage, and approval rates likely vary by race and gender. Few studies have examined attitudes toward interracial marriage in recent decades, with the lone exception focusing exclusively on women respondents (Baars 2009). The current research used data from the General Social Survey to examine racial (black versus white) and gender-based differences in attitudes towards interracial marriages over a thirty-year period, 1972-2002. Using logistic regression, the current study tested the effects of respondent race and gender—and the combination thereof—on approval toward versus disapproval of interracial marriages, controlling for demographic factors such as region, education level, age, church attendance and political affiliation. Findings show that blacks are significantly more likely to express approval than whites, and men are more likely to express approval than women, controlling for other demographics. Also, in terms of race/gender interactions, black men, white men, and black women are all significantly more likely to approve of interracial marriage than white women, net of other factors. Independent of the effects of race and gender, there has been a significant increase in approval over the thirty-year period.

Dedication

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I would like to dedicate my thesis to three very special people in my life, Montserrat,
Vanessa, and Pepe.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere thankfulness to the honorable people who supported both my efforts and aspirations throughout this journey.

To my family who have sacrificed and struggled by my side. You have stood by me through all of the hardships gracefully and willingly always showing your support with a smile.

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Introduction

Interracial marriages have been controversial since the founding of the colonies in the U.S. and continue to be controversial today—at least among some. As recently as November 2013, a Washington Post columnist wrote, “People with conventional views must repress a gag reflex when considering the mayor-elect of New York—a white man married to a black woman and with two biracial children” (Cohen, 2013). This comment has sparked contentious discourse across the nation and was later claimed, by the author, to represent the views of cultural conservatives, not his own (Farhi, 2013).

The U.S. is a culturally diverse society with a history of struggles related to ethnic and race relations. From the founding of the colonies all the way up to present day, different cultures within our society have struggled to find their place and coexist with each other (Feagin, 2006). In particular, the histories of slavery and legal segregation in the U.S. have affected relationships between whites and blacks all the way into the twenty-first century (Feagin, 2006). But as different ethnic groups have had contact with each other, individuals have found love—or at least pursued various types of relationships—with individuals from other ethnic groups.

There are constant reports indicating that as the U.S. continues to grow and develop, interracial or interethnic relationships of all kinds are becoming more frequent and accepted especially as biracial and multiracial populations grow (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Douglas & Yancey, 2004). Interracial relationships are still a remarkable cultural spectacle (argued by some) because they often tap into deep-rooted (and possibly racist) beliefs of other individuals in society (Baars, 2009; Childs, 2008). That is because

romantic relationships, especially marriage, are the most intimate form of contact that two individuals from different groups can engage in (Allport, 1979; Gordon A. I., 1964).

The approval of intermarriages has increased at a faster rate than actual interracial marriages over the last fifty years and has left many with the impression that the social distance gap has closed considerably (Cherlin, 2008; Douglas & Yancey, 2004; Golebiowska, 2007; Gullickson, 2006). However, a considerable social distance remains between whites and blacks in the U.S. (Qian & Lichter, 2007).

Few studies have focused on differences between whites and blacks in attitudes toward interracial marriage in recent decades, with one exception: Baars (2009) examined women's attitudes towards interracial marriage using logit regression and included race as a factor. Baars (2009) found that approval of interracial marriages increased more for white women than for black women but ultimately converged over a thirty year period. The current research will build on Baars' (2009) work by using more sophisticated statistical analyses (logistic regression and predicted values) to analyze attitudes towards interracial marriage among black and white respondents, *including* men (as well as control variables that Baars does not include). It will also look at the interaction of race and gender. Finally, it will assess change over time. It will use the General Social Survey (GSS) dataset, which polls a nationally representative sample, 1972-2002.

Literature Review

Interracial relationships between whites and blacks in the U.S. are complex. Current research shows that although these relationships have grown more frequent in the last forty years, rates of interracial dating and marriage differ dramatically by racial category. Whites and blacks are least likely to interracially marry or date relative to all

other American ethnic/racial groups (Kreager, 2008). The fact that whites and blacks are least likely to be romantically involved is not surprising because the social distance—the extent to which individuals or groups are excluded or removed from participating in each other's lives (Wark & Galiher, 2007)—between these two groups is greater than between any other groups (Bratter & Tukufo, 2001; Harris & Ono, 2005; McClintock, 2010; Yancey, 1999).

Among black/white relationships, there is a vast gender discrepancy: white males in romantic relationships with black females are far less common than black males in romantic relationships with white females (Batson et al., 2006). Marriage rates are similar: there are three black males marrying a white female for every one white male marrying a black female (Batson et al., 2006). This gender discrepancy is perplexing because it is acknowledged in much of the research (Batson et al., 2006; Jayson, 2012; Kalmijn, 1993; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Zebroski, 1999) but cannot be explained by existing theories (Feliciano, Robnett, & Komaie, 2009).

Survey research shows that the majority of both whites and blacks approve of interracial relationships, suggesting that the gap between the groups is closing when compared to prior decades (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005). Some argue, however, that survey and public opinion research may be misleading, pointing out that it has simply become socially unacceptable to express negative racial attitudes, which, in turn, results in individuals expressing positive attitudes overtly while holding covert negative attitudes (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Kinder & Sears, 1981; Rabinowitz et al., 2009; Winslow, Aaron, & Amadife, 2011). Thus, individuals may not express their true attitudes, thoughts and feelings, but give socially desirable answers instead.

Regardless of the potential for social desirability bias, there appears to be high polarity in peoples' opinions surrounding interracial marriage. Herman & Campbell (2012) found that the majority of participants' attitudes were either for or against interracial relationships (considering dating, cohabitation, marriage and child-bearing) with only a small number of participants expressing attitudes in between. To gain a complete understanding of attitudes towards interracial relationships, careful consideration of the groups' history and interactions must be taken into account.

History of Black/White Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships between blacks and whites have been especially controversial because of the history of slavery and Jim Crow laws. Although slavery was abolished in the nineteenth century, Jim Crow laws were created to segregate the two populations of people (Moya & Markus, 2010). These laws stated that people were "separate but equal." Blacks lived in segregated neighborhoods, went to segregated schools and were not allowed to use the same facilities (e.g. bathrooms) as whites (Moya & Markus, 2010).

History has shown that these two groups were historically far from equal. That is, whites earned more money, received better jobs, better education and, overall, accumulated more wealth and resources such as better interest rates for their mortgages (Moya & Markus, 2010). One of the ways of segregating people was through the "one drop rule." This rule stated that any person with any one Black ancestor was considered Black (Hickman, 1997). Hickman (1997) also notes that some individuals continue to utilize this rule informally today. That is, if a person's appearance or ancestral heritage reveals some non-European heritage they will be classified as non-white. Again, for

some, biracial and multiracial children with black parents or ancestors are still considered black even though they have white parents or ancestors.

In 1998, a proposition in South Carolina was proposed to drop its anti-miscegenation passage from the state constitution; 38 percent voted against the proposal (Yancey, 1998). As Yancey (1998) points out, this anti-miscegenation ban is only symbolic but reveals attitudes not necessarily affected by social desirability bias. Alabamans were voting to overturn the same symbolic ban in their state in November of 2000 (Romano, 2003).

Anti-miscegenation laws were created to ensure slave status corresponded with race and to abolish black resistance to the slavery system; this included prevention of interracial relationships between blacks and whites (Feagin, 2006). Anti-miscegenation laws were established at the state level and were ultimately declared unconstitutional and abolished by the Supreme Court in the *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967 (Romano, 2003). Not every state had these laws and of those that did, most have been repealed before the Supreme Court decision. There were sixteen states with these laws in effect at the time of the 1967 decision, most of which were in the South (Kaba, 2011).

The Supreme Court decision occurred simultaneously with the Civil Rights Movement where individuals protested to reduce structural inequalities for blacks (Jenkins & Form, 2005). Thus, the decision of the Supreme Court highlighted changing attitudes in race relations across America, the weakening of group boundaries and growing acceptance of interracial relationships (Qian & Lichter, 2007).

Marriage and Dating Trends between Whites and Blacks

In 1980, thirteen years after the repeal of anti-miscegenation laws, only three percent of marriages in the U.S. were interracial (Jayson, 2012). In 2010, however, there were signs of greater exogamy according to some researchers. The 2010 Census reported that across all races, eight percent of all marriages were interracial (Jayson, 2012). With respect to the black population, we saw that twenty four percent of black males marry outside of their race while only nine percent of black females out-marry (Jayson, 2012).

Although, the interracial marriage rates have increased, researchers note that they remain low due to structural constraints like geographic location (Kalmijn & Flap, 2001). That is, many whites may be willing to engage in a romantic relationships with blacks but lack the opportunity because blacks make up only about 12 percent of the U.S. population. Others, however, argue that many of these findings are based on one national marriage market (Harris & Ono, 2005). Harris & Ono (2005) divided the U.S. into 757 marriage markets, computed the odds ratio for engaging in an exogamous vs. endogamous marriage for each market. They also created a hypothetical scenario where each group (by race and gender) would have an equal number of participants. What they found was that individuals were still 2,820 times more likely to engage in a same-race marriage than than interracial marriage. Structural factors do play a part; however, cultural factors may play a more significant role.

Studies have found that dating relationships between blacks and whites tend to be higher than marriages between the two groups (Qian & Lichter, 2007). The reasons why dating is more popular than marriage among interracial couples vary. Some research has alluded to the fact that dating someone of a different race may be more acceptable

compared to marrying them (Joyner & Kao, 2005; Raley & Sweeney, 2007; Yancey, 2007).

Social Attitudes and Gender Trends in Romantic Interracial Relationships

In general, between 1997 and 2007, 67 to 75 percent of whites and 83 to 85 percent of blacks stated that they approved of interracial relationships (Carrol, 2007). However, Yancey (2009) found these rates to be much closer to 50 percent of whites and 60 percent for blacks. Other research presents conflicting results when looking at racial preferences of internet daters (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011). These authors found that 91 percent of whites excluded Blacks from their dating preferences.

In terms of gender, whites' approval of interracial relationships as of 2005 did not show any gender differences (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005). Blacks, however, differ a bit from their white counterparts. Yancey (2009) found that black males were more open to crossing racial boundaries than black females. At least for internet daters, 76 percent of black females excluded white males, compared to black males where 71 percent excluded white females (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011).

A qualitative study conducted by Childs (2005) found that black women hold animosity towards the black male/white female relationships because it communicates to them a rejection of the black woman as a partner. They acknowledge that skin color stratification exists in the Black community. Black women with lighter skin tones tend to be considered more attractive than those with darker skin tones and white females get rated as more attractive than black females (Childs, 2005; Lewis, 2012).

Childs (2005) also found that there is a general opposition to interracial relationships from within both black families and communities. Although Childs' (2005)

study was qualitative and not generalizable, it contradicts public opinion research on blacks' acceptance of these relationships (e.g., Carrol, 2007).

The black women Childs (2005) studied reported being open to dating white men but that social consequences and racism prevent them from finding a suitable partner. That is, the black females held perceptions that white men want to cross over racial boundaries but are afraid of social criticism from others. Miller et al. (2004) found that females experience disapproval from family and friends at higher rates for crossing racial boundaries than males. Thus, the claim from Childs's (2005) participants may be unfounded.

One factor given by the black females in the Childs (2005) study was that white racism affects their chances of finding a suitable partner. Males, in general, when compared with females, show less favorable racial attitudes in crossing racial boundaries (Johnson & Marini, 1998). Thus, black females may interpret white male behavior as racist even if it is not the case (Von Robertson, Mitra, & Van Delinder, 2005). Furthermore, other research supports the idea that even though whites generally communicate positive, egalitarian racial attitudes in survey research, negative stereotypes about blacks from whites (including biological inferiority) still tend to manifest when government intervention towards egalitarian policies is addressed (Bobo & Charles, 2009; Hirschman, 1983; Morning, 2009; Phelan, Link, & Feldman, 2013; Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

Education and Interracial Relationships

Education has been noted to have a significant impact on racial attitudes in general (Baars, 2009; Fu & Heaton, 2008; Golebiowska, 2007; Gullickson, 2006;

Kalmijn, 1993). Allport's (1979) contact hypothesis postulates that under certain circumstances interracial contact can be shown to increase favorable attitudes towards other racial groups. Johnson and Mooney Marini (1998) found that females showed more favorable attitudes towards general interracial interaction than did males at the high school level (this did not include interracial romance). If education does have a large impact on racial attitudes, then individuals who are attending college and are college educated should show more favorable attitudes towards interracial interaction compared to individuals with only a high school education.

Some research has found that this is not the case for all groups (Stearns, Buchmann, & Bonneau, 2009). Stearns et al. (2009) found that whites' transition into college increased their interracial friendship network significantly during their first year of college, but still remained lower than Latinos, Asians, and blacks. On the other hand, they found that blacks actually showed a decline in interracial friends during their first year of college.

In regards to romantic relationships in college the results appears to mimic that of friendships. In general Datzman & Gardner (2000) found that 66 percent of college students reported supporting interracial relationships, but only seven percent said they had engaged in an interracial date. However, much research has shown that those who are more educated tend to cross racial boundaries more easily. A recent study found that minority parents in exogamous marriages were more highly educated, lived in more diverse neighborhoods and had more frequent contact with whites (Kalmijn, 2010).

There is an exception, however, for black females (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Joyner & Kao, 2005; Kaba, 2011; Kalmijn, 1993; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Rosenfeld,

2008; Yancey, 2002), who tend to postpone marriage if they marry at all. Kalmijn (1993), notes that blacks with a college degree are less likely than blacks with only some college to intermarry but more likely than those with less than a high school education. His results are based on marriage licenses issued in thirty three states, however, not derived from surveys of individuals.

Other research found that white spouses' education failed to show a consistent positive or negative effect on the probability of intermarriage (Gullickson, 2006). Rosenfeld (2008), using the Census microdata from the 1940 and 1960-2000 censuses, found that educational endogamy was highest among the least educated and the most educated. Thus, those between thirteen years and sixteen years of education should show more favorable attitudes towards exogamous relationships than those with only twelve years or those with seventeen to twenty years of education.

Region and Interracial Relationships

The interracial relationship literature notes that attitudes and marriage rates between races differ greatly across the country (Baars, 2009; Bratter & Tukufu, 2001; Douglas & Yancey, 2004). More specifically, much of the research points to differences between the Southern, Northern and Western parts of the U.S. (Baars, 2009; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Yancey, 2007). Some researchers support this notion by noting that the South has a distinct culture when compared to the North and that it may be more acceptable to hold stronger negative attitudes towards different races (Griffin & Hargis, 2008; Kuklinski, Cobb, & Gilens, 1997; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Yancey, 2007).

The West differs from both the North and the South in that racial attitudes tend to be more positive and intermarriage rates tend to be higher among blacks and whites

(Berkowitz King & Bratter, 2007; Yancey, 2002). This may be in part because the West may have more of an independent culture and may allow for a variety of behaviors compared to other parts of the country (Kitayama et al., 2006). Some qualitative research by Yanick (1998) revealed that this was not the case for one particular southwestern city. His research highlighted that some whites and blacks were very resentful and vengeful when they saw an interracial couple (Yanick, 1998). Likewise, Killian (2003) suggests that many interracial couples report experiencing negative interactions from strangers based on their relationship to someone of another race.

Group size within a region, however makes a difference. The larger the group in a particular region, the more likely an individual will marry someone from within their group; it has been observed that blacks marry more often within their group when the group size is larger regardless of whether or not they live in the South (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010). Nevertheless, the majority of research does point to the fact that interracial relationships tend to be most accepted in the West.

Church Affiliation and Attitudes toward Intermarriage

Another area of great importance is religious affiliation. Many studies have shown that religious tradition and attending church are key characteristics in explaining varying attitudes towards racial exogamy (Herman & Campbell, 2012; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Kalmijn, 1998; Perry, 2013; Yancey, 1999). Hall, Matz, & Wood (2010) found in a meta-analysis that religious congregation members reported higher levels of racism than those who did not attend church or claimed agnostic beliefs.

Kalmijn (1998) posits that there are three major institutions that impose sanctions on mate selection (and also attitudes towards mate selection) which are the family, the

church and the state. He further suggests that the church tries to control mate selection and denounces interfaith marriage because they are competing for members. Other research supports this notion by adding that preventing interfaith marriages potentially significantly reduces the chances of marrying an individual from another race (i.e. Catholics very unlikely to choose a black mate) (Berkowitz King & Bratter, 2007).

Other research shows that the homogeneous or heterogeneous climate of the congregation makes a difference in members' racial tolerance (Perry, 2013). Individuals in racially diverse congregations are more likely to come from backgrounds and social environments that were racially diverse (Emerson et al. 2002; Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Marti, 2005). In their meta-analysis of religious racism, Hall et al. (2010) also recognize that, as of 1998, only about 12 percent of the churches in the U.S. are classified as racially diverse. Thus, the more religious an individual is, the more they typically show higher levels of racism compared to non-religious individuals.

Perry (2013) found similar results showing that church groups (i.e. Protestants, Catholics, Other religious groups) showed more aversion towards interracial marriage than those who were not affiliated with church at all. Interestingly, he also found that those who prayed and read their sacred texts were significantly more likely to express tolerant attitudes towards intermarriage than all nonwhite groups. He suggests that those who pray and read their sacred texts more often may internalize the teachings of their religion and hold more egalitarian attitudes.

Thus, there may be a difference between those who attend church but do not pray or read their sacred texts often. On the other hand, research has shown that individuals show a preference for selecting mates who are culturally similar to themselves; in some

cases this preference overrides economic attractiveness (Kalmijn, 1998). Likewise, Killian (2003) declares that culturally, homogamy is the dominant principle by which mate selection occurs in the U.S.

Berkowitz & Bratter (2007) found that interracially married women were less likely to have identified as Protestant during adolescent years, but somewhat more likely to have identified as Catholic or not affiliated to the church. The authors also suggest that the population of women who intermarry is likely a subset of the population of those who have had premarital sexual experience. While this suggestion is somewhat vague, many major religions in the U.S. have doctrines opposing premarital sex and in some cases impose punishments and social sanctions for such behavior. This subpopulation may embrace a counter culture that opposes majority values including bias toward intra-racial partners.

Political Affiliation and Attitudes towards Intermarriage

Political affiliation is also a strong predictor of attitudes toward interracial relationships (Eagly et al., 2004; Eastwick et al., 2009; Yancey, 2002). The consensus in the literature is that conservatives are more likely to express more traditional attitudes than liberals. Conservative views tend to be associated with greater religiosity and opposition to exogamous relationships while Non-church attendees tend to be more liberal politically (Hall et al. 2010; Yancey, 1999). Thus, political orientation needs to be considered when understanding attitudes towards interracial relationships.

Aversive and symbolic racism theories postulate that whites who do possess racial animosity towards blacks may use conservative political ideologies to mask their hostility

(Kinder & Sears, 1981; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996). Hall et al. (2010) found that white men increasingly self-identified as conservative from the 1970s through the 1990s.

Contrary to males, females tend to show lower levels of contemporary racism and also tend to self-identify as liberal more than males (McClelland & Linnander, 2006). Eagly et al. (2004) found that females were only more liberal on social equality issues like social compassion attitudes and showed more conservative attitudes towards morality issues. The female view of interracial marriage may depend on whether the question is framed in the context of social equality or morality.

In a speed dating study, Eastwick et al. (2009) found that liberals were just as likely to show in-group favoritism (in regards to racial dating partners) as conservatives. These results are congruent with aversive racism theory which holds that liberals profess egalitarian views while still holding implicit negative attitudes towards blacks (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005).

Limitations of Previous Research; New Directions

Favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward interracial marriage can be assessed by one main question: Does an individual favor anti-miscegenation laws? One possible limitation of the research is that assessing attitudes by asking whether an individual supports laws banning interracial marriage is not exactly the same as opposing interracial marriages. That is, one can oppose the laws and yet oppose the relationships at the same time. However, it does give us a sense of the social distance between the two groups and therefore, is a close approximation of attitudes towards interracial marriages.

There is debate among social scientists as to how strong of a role social desirability bias plays in race-related survey questions (Bobo & Charles, 2009; Feliciano

et al., 2009; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Sidanius et al., 1996). Sniderman & Tetlock (1986), however, postulate, in their objection to symbolic racism theory, that individuals are still very open to communicating their support for anti-miscegenation laws. Likewise, Yancey (1998) found that 38 percent of voters in 1998 supported a proposal to keep anti-miscegenation statements in the South Carolina State Constitution. Likewise, Herman & Campbell (2012), in measuring white attitudes, were able to ask straightforward questions and obtain accurate results. Therefore, self-presentation and cognitive dissonance cannot be completely ruled out, but likely have minimal impact.

Another limitation is that the way in which race is queried in surveys has changed over the years. Some studies like the Qian & Lichter (2007) study use the U.S. census data from 1990 and 2000. One of the big limitations is that participants, who could only self-identify as one race in 1990, could self-identify as multiracial in the 2000 census (p. 89). Thus, some individuals who were self-identified as a particular race in 1990 may have self-identified as a different race in 2000.

Survey research and opinion polls also have their limitations. Most racism today is different than it was forty years ago. In the 1960's and 1970's racism was overt and more widely accepted (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Moya & Markus, 2010; Rabinowitz et al., 2009). Today, however, many researchers argue that racism still exists, but that it is covert and socially unacceptable to express in most circumstances (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Feagin, 2006; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Kinder & Sears, 1981; Winslow et al., 2011).

Other research has been limited in the fact that it excluded a major part of the sample (e.g., Baars 2009). Likewise, continuous variables have been collapsed into categorical variables (e.g. education level into less than high school, high school, more

than high school) and thus ran the risk of losing data and biasing the results (Treiman, 2009).

Previous research has also been limited by assessing region as a dichotomous variable comparing only the South and non-South (Golebiowska, 2007; Kalmijn, 1993). Allowing for more categories (e.g. the Northeast, the West, and the Midwest), will demonstrate a more detailed picture of attitudes across the U.S (Bratter & Tukufu, 2001).

Research Question and Hypotheses

The current research project will extend Baars' (2009) study on tolerance towards interracial marriage and add to the current literature by comparing men with women in the model. The current research will also add two new variables, religious attendance and political affiliation (Conservative or Liberal). Baars (2009) found that tolerance increased between 1972 and 2002 more for white females than for black females. Females, who are more educated, living outside of the South and in urban environments vs. rural environments, were also more likely to be more tolerant of interracial marriages.

For males, I hypothesize that the increase in tolerance towards interracial marriage will be greater for well-educated white males when compared with well-educated Black males. Males living outside of the South, in urban settings and who are well-educated will show a greater increase in tolerance. When comparing males with females, however, white males will be less tolerant than white females. 76 percent of black-white marriages tend to consist of a black male/white female. Some research suggests that white males are not willing to cross racial boundaries while others point to black females being unwilling to cross racial lines.

Research Methods

Sample. The data for the current research comes from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a nationally representative opinion survey that began polling opinions in 1972, with data as recent as 2012. The survey was asked every year between 1972-1978 and 1983-1993. The years in between the dates previously listed and since 1994 were conducted biannually.

The data is collected by interviewers who conducted ninety-minute face-to-face interviews. The data is limited to non-blacks and blacks because the GSS for many years only used three racial categories: “white,” “black,” and “other”. Participants were usually classified by the interviewer. If the interviewer was uncertain, then they would be instructed to ask. Beginning in 2002, participants were asked to self-identify and were able to list up to three categories. Collapsing the “white” category with “other” category into a single “white” or, effectively, “non-black” category will help in preserving data without biasing the results (Treiman, 2009).

The total sample consists of 29,659 participants who were asked whether they supported anti-miscegenation laws. However, after filtering all missing data, the sample was reduced to 25,664 participants. There are 11,376 (44 percent) male participants and 14,288 (56 percent) female participants. The male sample consists of 10,246 (40 percent) non-black males and 1,130 (four percent) black males. The female sample consists of 12,376 (48 percent) non-black females and 1,912 (seven percent) black females.

Variables. The dependent variable is support for laws preventing interracial marriages between whites and blacks. The GSS asked the question, “Do you think there should be laws against marriages between (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) and whites?” This question was asked of whites every year the survey was administered

between 1972 and 2002. It was asked of blacks every year the survey was administered between 1980 and 2002.

The response to the question consisted of four responses: yes, no, don't know and no answer. Less than 1,000 participants answered don't know and no answer, therefore, their answers were turned to missing. "Yes" answers were given a value of 0 and "No" answers were given a value of 1. This is reverse coded from the GSS where "Yes" answers were previously given a value of 1. Therefore, the results of the current study will be discussed in terms of those "approving of" interracial marriages. As previously mentioned this method may not tap directly into attitudes towards interracial marriage but can serve as a close proxy (Baars, 2009; Treiman, 2009).

The independent variables will include race, age, education, urbanicity and geographic region, church attendance and political affiliation (Conservative vs. Liberal). Race will be dichotomized as black/non-black (white). Many researchers argue that the division in the U.S. in attitude research is a black/non-black divide where other minority group more closely express attitudes similar to those of whites compared to blacks (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Fu V. , 2007; Treiman, 2009). Another reason for this categorization concerns sample size. Treiman (2009) suggests that since the category "other" in the GSS only contains 927 participants, their attitudes should not have a drastic effect on the results. He also notes that whenever possible, it is better to preserve as much data as possible and creating the black/non-black divide is more efficient than turning the data to missing.

Age and education level will be kept as continuous variables: 18-89 for age, and 0 years (No formal education) to 20 years for education. Those who answered "Don't

Know or No Answer” were originally coded 98/99 in the GSS for both variables and will be turned to missing data for the current study.

Urbanicity will be categorized into rural, suburban, and urban. The urban, suburban and rural categories were adjusted until they approached Baars (2009) study. The original data was compiled by Smith et al. (2011) who described their process of classifying the population size where the interviews were conducted and can be found in Appendix A. An initial replication of Baars (2009) yielded similar results where all of her coefficients fit within the 95% CI intervals and therefore, the same coding scheme will be used for the current study.

Region of the U.S. will be split into four dichotomous variables, South, West, Northeast, and Midwest. This will allow a comparison of the western region of the U.S. to the North and South rather than the tradition South/non-South divide (Kitayama et al., 2006). The regions were divided according to regional breakdown used by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Church attendance will also be transformed from a categorical to a continuous variable ranging from .25 (never attends) to 80 (attends multiple times per week). Political affiliation will also be transformed into a continuous variable. Rather than using party identification, the current research will use political views ranging from 0 (Extremely Conservative) to 100 (extremely Liberal) with Moderates scoring a 50. This may be more beneficial as individuals may hold conservative views in some areas while holding liberal views in others.

Likewise, the variable YEAR in the GSS will be transformed from 1972-2002 to 0-30. This will allow easier interpretation of the analysis. A new variable, “sample” will

also be created to filter all missing responses. All missing responses on each variable will be assigned a “0” value and those with a response will be assigned a value of “1”.

To analyze the data, I will begin by conducting a cross-tabulation in order to compare the overall groups. Next, a multi-level multivariate logistic regression analysis will be utilized to assess the level of tolerance of individuals based on each predictor variable while controlling for all other variables. The final step in the analysis will consist of analyzing the predicted values from the sample to the population.

Results

Table 1 shows the overall responses of both males and females to the dependent variable question. In the total sample, 78 percent of females and 80 percent of male participants say they approve of interracial marriages. Likewise, 94 percent of blacks said they would support interracial marriages compared to only 77 percent of non-Blacks.

Table 1: Men & Women’s Responses to Supporting black/white Marriages 1972-2002

Characteristic	No	Yes	(n)
Gender			
Males	20%	80%	11,376
Females	22%	78%	14,288
Race			
Non-Black	23%	77%	22,622
Black	6%	94%	3,042
Education			
No Education	54%	46%	52
4th Grade	58%	42%	126
8th Grade	53%	47%	1,354
12th Grade	23%	77%	8,206
4yrs. Of College	6%	94%	2,925
8yrs. Of College	4%	96%	455
Age			
18 yrs old	6%	94%	77
28 yrs old	10%	90%	634

38 yrs old	13%	87%	584
48 yrs old	20%	80%	424
58 yrs old	33%	67%	350
68 yrs old	40%	60%	291
78 yrs old	48%	52%	166
88 yrs old	50%	50%	36

As noted above, education level was transformed into continuous variable in the model and table 1 illustrates the cross-tabulations for six comparison groups (i.e. no formal education 4th, 8th 12th grade, 4 yrs and 8 yrs of education respectively). The average education of the sample is 12.49 years with a standard deviation of 3.12 years.

Roughly 50 percent of those who have zero to eight years of education are tolerant towards interracial marriages. What is interesting is the drastic change from 12th grade (77 percent) to 20 years of education (96 percent). Thus, the majority of those at the mean education level or higher express positive attitudes towards exogamy.

Just as with education, age was also a continuous variable in the model. The mean age of the participants is 45 with a standard deviation of 17.5 years. Table 1 highlights eight different age groups to emphasize the differences between older and younger individuals. Thus, consistent with the literature, younger individuals expressed tolerant attitudes towards interracial marriage more often than older individuals did. Over 90 percent of those who are 18-28 years old expressed tolerant attitudes towards interracial marriages. Compared to younger individuals, the majority of those 58 and older communicated intolerant attitudes.

Multivariate Logistic Regression

Following the cross-tabulation, a multi-level multivariate logistic regression was performed to assess the effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

Logistic regression was used because the dependent variable was dichotomous with responses of 0 “No” and 1 “Yes.” Table 2 (below) shows the unstandardized coefficients, and odds ratios output for the regression models. All independent variables reached a significance at the $p < .001$ level except for female ($p < .002$) in Model 3, Religiosity ($p < .006$) in Models 3 & 4, and White males ($p < .006$) in Model 4.

Table 2: Multivariate Regression on Tolerance Towards Black/White Marriages 1972-2002

VARIABLES	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR
Black Female							1.831*** (.115)	6.243
Black Male							2.212*** (.158)	9.136
White Male							.104** (.038)	1.110
Female	-.162*** (.033)	.850	-.123*** (.037)	.884	-.115** (.037)	.892		
Black	1.396*** (.082)	4.037	1.945*** (.094)	6.991	1.930*** (.095)	6.888		
Year	.056*** (.002)	1.057	.054*** (-.001)	1.056	.054*** (.002)	1.056	.054*** (.002)	1.056
Education			.222*** (.007)	1.248	.225*** (.007)	1.253	.226*** (.007)	1.253
Age			-.033*** (-.001)	.968	-.032*** (.001)	.969	-.032*** (.001)	.969
Northeast			1.138*** (.053)	3.121	1.105*** (.053)	3.019	1.105*** (.053)	3.020
Midwest			.829*** (.045)	2.291	.812*** (.045)	2.252	.812*** (.045)	2.253
West			1.331*** (.059)	3.783	1.297*** (.059)	3.660	1.297*** (.059)	3.660
Urban			.496*** (.049)	1.642	.475*** (.049)	1.608	.476*** (.049)	1.610
Suburban			.363*** (.042)	1.437	.356*** (.042)	1.427	.356*** (.042)	1.427
Religiosity					-.002** (.001)	.998	-.002** (.001)	.998
Liberal					.006*** (.001)	1.006	.006*** (.001)	1.006
Pseudo R2	.058	.058	.241	.241	.243	.243	.243	.243
Obs.	25,664	25,664	25,664	25,664	25,664	25,664	25,664	25,664

Standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Model 1 (Table 2) measured the effects of gender, race and the year the survey was administered, on tolerant attitudes towards interracial marriage. The results reveal that blacks are 4.037 times more likely to express tolerant attitudes towards interracial marriage when compared with non-blacks (reference group). In terms of gender, females are .850 times less likely to express approval of interracial marriage than males (reference).

Not surprisingly, the regression model shows an increase in tolerant attitudes with each year the survey was administered. Year of survey was the year the survey was issued between the years 1972-2002. While controlling for all other variables the model highlights that with each increase in year the survey was administered, participants were 1.057 times more likely to express tolerant attitudes.

In model 2, education level, age, region, and population size (i.e. suburban, urban, rural) were added. After controlling for all of these variables, the patterns found in Model 1 remain for both race and gender: blacks are significantly more likely, and females significantly less likely, to express approval for interracial marriage than whites and males, respectively. Indeed, for some of these relationships, the impact appears to be stronger with the addition of these control variables. For instance, for blacks, the odds ratio increased to 6.991 (versus 4.037 in Model 1).

When looking at the control variables, as expected from the literature, education is positively correlated with tolerance. With each increase in year of education, participants were 1.248 times more likely to express tolerant attitudes towards intermarriages. Postsecondary education has risen drastically in recent years and tends to

promote egalitarian views as well as more frequent contact with various racial groups (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005).

The effect of age on tolerance went in the expected direction, also. Age is negatively correlated with tolerance towards interracial marriages. Thus, as the demographic in the U.S. continues to change and become more multiracial, it is very possible this negative correlation may become positive (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Gordon M. , 1964).

In regards to region, participants in the West by far hold the most positive attitudes towards interracial marriages. The West consisted of about 19 percent of the total sample size. Results show that the West is 3.783 times more likely to express tolerant attitudes compared to those in the South. The Northeast, which made up 20 percent of the total sample, follows the West with an odds ratio of 3.121 times more likely compared to Southerners, and finally, the Midwest (27 percent of the total sample) were 2.291 times more likely compared to the South. These findings are consistent with the literature and support the notion that individuals living outside of the South hold more positive views towards intermarriage.

Like region, urbanicity was also considered in the model. The total sample was made up of about 40 percent rural, 33 percent suburban and twenty seven percent rural. Suburban participants were 1.437 times more likely to express tolerance towards intermarriage compared to those in rural areas. Urban participants were 1.642 times more likely highlighting previous research that suburban and urban populations tend to have more frequent contact with racially diverse groups and are more likely to express egalitarian attitudes (Emerson et al., 2002).

In Model 3 two new variables were added to measure the effects of church attendance and political views on attitudes towards intermarriage. The mean church attendance was about twenty two times per year with a standard deviation of 25.40. Church attendance had a minute but negative effect (odds ratio .998, $p < 0.009$). This finding is contrary to the literature but was ultimately determined to be insignificant because its effect was so small in such a large sample.

Likewise, Model 3 demonstrates a diminutive but positive effect on tolerant attitudes for political affiliation with the odds ratio of expressing a tolerant attitude increasing 1.006 with each shift from extremely conservative to extremely liberal. The mean for political affiliation was 48.82 with a standard deviation of 22.53. Thus, 96 percent of the sample identified somewhere between slightly conservative and slightly moderate.

While this effect is miniscule, it did reach significance at the $p < .001$ level. It is unclear why this effect is so small considering that conservatives tend to hold more traditional views compared to liberals (Bobo & Charles, 2009). These findings may support the theoretical framework postulating that white liberals even in predominantly liberal areas tend to oppose interracial unions (Feagin, 2006).

Last, in Model 4 the interaction of race and gender—or the combination thereof—is examined. The results show that black men, non-black men, and black women all express significantly more approval toward interracial marriage than non-black women (reference category). The odds ratio scores show that black males were 9.136 times more likely to approve of interracial marriages than non-black women; black women were 6.243 times more likely to approve of intermarriages than non-black women. Non-black

males were only 1.110 times more likely to approve and only reached significance of $p < .006$. The other control variables remained consistent through all four models.

Predicted Values

In the final step of the analysis, the logistic regression models were used to analyze predicted values for the population. Within Stata12 a user-defined program, Eval4, was run. Eval4 was used to predict values for both genders in 1972, 1982, 1992, and 2002 in order to analyze how the attitudes of the population have changed over three decades.

Table 3 highlights the predicted values for both males and females. There was about a two percent difference between males and females in 1972. About 68 percent of males supported interracial marriage while only about 66 percent of females did so. By 2002, 88 percent of males and 87 percent of females approved of intermarriages. There are two points of interest here. First, the predicted values show that both male and female approval increased by twenty and twenty one percent. Second, females' approval increased slightly more than males.

Table 3: Predicted Values 1972, 1982, 1992, 2002 for Males and Females

	Tolerant Towards Intermarriage	s.e.
1972		
Males	68.64%	0.012
Females	65.88%	0.012
1982		s.e.
Males	75.95%	0.009
Females	74.45%	0.009
1992		s.e.
Males	82.8%	0.007
Females	81.59%	0.007
2002		s.e.
Males	88.14%	0.006

Females

87.22%

0.006

Table 4 below illustrates about a two percent difference between non-Black males and non-Black females at 77 percent tolerant for males and 76 percent for females.

Furthermore, the predicted values show a similar pattern for black males and females where about 94 percent of males and 93 percent of females express tolerant attitudes.

Table 4: Predicted Values By Gender and By Race

Males	Tolerant Towards Intermarriage	s.e.
Non-Black	77.01%	0.008
Black	93.77%	0.008
Females	Tolerant Towards intermarriage	s.e.
Non-Black	75.58%	0.008
Black	93.18%	0.009

Table 5: Predicted Values By Race and By Age

Non-Black	Tolerant Towards Intermarriage	s.e.
Age		
18 years old	87.71%	0.006
28 years old	84.47%	0.007
38 years old	80.64%	0.008
48 years old	76.22%	0.009
58 years old	71.22%	0.010
68 years old	65.71%	0.011
78 years old	59.79%	0.013
88 years old	53.60%	0.014
Black	Tolerant Towards Intermarriage	s.e.
Age		
18 years old	96.62%	0.006
28 years old	95.83%	0.006
38 years old	94.88%	0.006
48 years old	93.72%	0.007
58 years old	92.35%	0.009
68 years old	90.72%	0.013
78 years old	88.82%	0.018
88 years old	86.60%	0.03

Table 5 highlights the predicted values by race and by age. For those who are non-Black at age eighteen, it is predicted that close to 88 percent are tolerant of interracial marriages compared to those at age 88 where only 54 percent are predicted to be tolerant. For blacks in the population it is predicted that at age eighteen, 97 percent will express tolerant attitudes compared to those at age 88, where only 87 percent are predicted to express tolerant attitudes. It is important to note that the predictions in tolerance decrease by a total of 34 percentage points for the non-Black population and decrease ten percentage points for the black population between the ages of eighteen and 88.

Table 6: Predicted Values By Race and By Education

Non-Black	Tolerant Towards Intermarriage	s.e.
Years of Ed.		
No formal Education	24.42%	0.017
4 th Grade	41.35%	0.016
8 th Grade	60.01%	0.013
12 th Grade	76.00%	0.009
4 Years of College	87.22%	0.006
8 Years of College	94.00%	0.004
Black	Tolerant Towards Intermarriage	s.e.
Years of Ed.		
No formal Education	66.01%	0.039
4 th Grade	80.37%	0.020
8 th Grade	89.94%	0.011
12 th Grade	95.30%	0.008
4 Years of College	97.93%	0.008
8 Years of College	99.12%	0.007

The final table, Table 6, shows the predicted values by race and by education. As discussed above, education has a large effect on attitudes towards intermarriage. Only 24 percent of those with no formal education are predicted to support interracial marriages.

We know that the average education in the sample is right around 12th grade. Therefore, beginning with twelve years of education eval4 predicts that 77 percent of the population will support intermarriage and that percentage will rise to 95 percent by twenty years of education.

For the black population, 66 percent of those without any formal education are predicted to express tolerant attitudes. By twelve years of education that percentage rises to 95 percent and to 99 percent by 20 years of education. The total range of predictions for the non-Black population runs from 24 percent to 95 percent. That is an increase of 71 percent. For the black population the increase is about 33 percent increase from 66 percent to 99 percent.

Summary of Findings

Between 1972 and 2002 the U.S. saw drastic changes in racial attitudes. More specifically, attitudes towards interracial marriages became significantly more tolerant. Although, overall tolerance towards intermarriage has increased, the current research highlights significant gender differences where males appear to be more tolerant than females. White females' attitudes increased more than all other groups. However, they still remain the least tolerant of all groups.

The most significant predictor of tolerance towards intermarriage was race, with blacks expressing far greater approval than whites. In terms of race/gender interactions, even after controlling for all other independent variables, black males were almost ten times more likely to express tolerant attitudes compared to non-black females. Likewise, black females were almost seven times as likely compared to non-black females. Non-

black males, however, were only slightly more likely to express tolerant attitudes towards intermarriage relative to white females.

Time also showed a positive influence on attitudes. Although it was only a slight increase with each year the survey was administered, the model highlights that as we continue to move into the 21st Century, we can expect attitudes (at least expressed), to continue to become more tolerant towards interracial marriages.

Church attendance yielded an effect in the expected direction based on the interracial marriage and attitude literature. However, this effect was much smaller than results reported in the previous research. Ultimately it was determined to be insignificant at the $p < .001$ level because of the large sample size. There are other questions regarding religious beliefs and practices that may better assess the relationship between religion and attitudes towards exogamy.

Political affiliation, on the other hand, had a small but positive effect and reached significance at the $p < .001$ level. The effect was also much smaller than expected based on previous findings. It is important to note that just over 38 percent of the sample identified as moderate. About 28 percent identified as liberal and 34 percent identified as conservative. With such a large portion of the sample identifying as neither conservative nor liberal, the effect of political affiliation may indeed be larger what was found in the current study. Other questions about political orientation may tap into attitudes towards interracial marriages more effectively.

Overall, and consistent with previous research, the current study found that younger generations, and those who are well-educated tend to express the most tolerant views. Also, consistent with the literature, those in rural settings and in the South express

significantly less tolerant views than those in urban settings and other regions of the U.S (especially the West).

Discussion

Romantic relationships and marriage rates between different racial groups have long been one avenue to measure social distance between groups within a society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Douglas & Yancey, 2004; Emerson et al., 2002; Gordon A. I., 1964). Interracial marriage rates have increased over the years but still only account for about eight and a half percent of total marriages in the U.S. as of 2010 (Jayson, 2012).

Similarly, research shows that approval of intermarriages has increased drastically between the 1960s and 2012 (Carroll, 2007; Douglas & Yancey, 2004; Herman & Campbell, 2012). Most research points to factors such as age, education, region and population size to explain tolerant attitudes (Baars, 2009; Bratter & Tukurfu, 2001; Byars et al., 2012; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Qian & Lichter, 2007).

While these factors (e.g. age, education...) do influence attitudes towards intermarriage, the most influential predictor is race. In fact, the current research shows the effect of race on tolerant attitudes increased across models even while controlling for all other predictors. Blacks are significantly more likely to approve of and support interracial marriages compared to non-blacks. This supports the idea that there remains a black/non-black divide in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Feagin, 2006; Feliciano et al., 2009; Fu V. , 2007; Yancey, 2009). The current results also support the notion that non-blacks (whites in particular), continue to express negative views towards interracial unions with blacks. The claim that the U.S. is a “post racial” society may not be as substantiated as some propose.

The literature on interracial marriages notes that there is a gender asymmetry in marriage rates between blacks and non-blacks with about 76 percent of the exogamous relationships consisting of a black male and non-black female (Jayson, 2012; Kaba, 2011). Consistent with this literature the current research posits that black males are indeed the most tolerant followed by black females and then non-black males. Non-black females, however, are actually the least tolerant towards interracial marriages. This is contrary to previous research finding that males are less tolerant.

The fact that females are less tolerant might possibly be explained by research showing that females are more closely monitored in their social relationships and are not afforded as much freedom to engage in interracial relationships as males (Miller et al., 2004). Furthermore, while white females were the least tolerant overall, they enter into romantic relationships with black males significantly more than white males do with black females. Therefore, there are many white females who fervently disagree. Another explanation that has been postulated in previous research is that the discrepancy between overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards interracial marriages and actual marriage rates, may stem from the fact that certain groups (i.e. black females) may only support interracial marriages in theory but not in practice (Yancey, 2009).

The findings of the current research regarding the effect of race and gender on tolerant attitudes are consistent with both Systemic Racism Theory and Aversive Racism Theory. Non-black males and females are significantly less likely to approve of interracial marriages. According to Systemic Racism Theory, non-blacks' negative views of African Americans stem from fear of blacks crossing the line in intimate relationships such as dating and marriage (Feagin, 2006). Specifically, Feagin (2006) notes that even

some whites that live in “reputedly liberal areas” cleave to negative feelings about exogamous romantic relationships (p. 236).

The implications of the current research are that even moving into the 21st Century, race continues to have an influential presence on social attitudes. While attitudes have become more tolerant over time, with increased education and with greater contact in suburban and urban areas, the gap between intermarriage rates and attitudes towards intermarriage rates might be explained by non-blacks trying to maintain the status quo and social hierarchy that has been perpetuated throughout the history of the United States in various forms.

While some individuals may claim that blacks are actually less willing to cross the racial lines in dating and marriage, the current research supports the literature that it is actually non-blacks who are less willing to engage in romantic relationships with blacks (Childs, 2008; Childs, 2005; McClintock, 2010; Yancey, 2007).

Limitations

There are a few of important limitations to the current research that must be acknowledged. First, the dependent variable may not have directly measured participants' attitudes towards intermarriage. The argument can be made that an individuals can oppose laws against intermarriage and also oppose intermarriage at the same time. Thus, the dependent variable may only approximate individual attitudes. The dependent variable was a dichotomous variable with yes or no responses. Whenever possible, it is more efficient to use interval- or ratio-level variables as dependent variables in order to capture a stronger effect. There is also the issue of social desirability bias. Many individuals may have replied no to the question of interest in order to not appear racist.

A second limitation to the current research involves the limitation of understanding the true effects of race on attitudes. As mentioned before, between the years of interest for the study, individuals were classified as “white”, “black”, or “other” by the interviewer. He/she was only instructed to ask if he/she wasn’t sure. Furthermore, there is no way to tell how multiracial individuals were classified.

Finally, the study is limited in that the model of analysis did not include all variables that can potentially impact attitudes towards intermarriage. Thus, future research should explore other variables that may have a strong impact as well. Marital status or parenthood, for example, may drastically affect one’s attitudes towards intermarriage.

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Appendix A

Explanation from Smith et al. (2011) on how the urban, suburban and rural populations were coded:

“This code is the population to the nearest 1,000 of the smallest civil division listed by the U.S. Census (city, town, other incorporated area over 1,000 in population, township, division, etc.) which encompasses the segment. If a segment falls into more than one locality, the following rules apply in determining the locality for which the rounded population figure is coded. If the predominance of the listings for any segment are in one of the localities, the rounded population of that locality is coded. If the listings are distributed equally over localities in the segment, and the localities are all cities, towns, or villages, the rounded population of the larger city or town is coded. The same is true if the localities are all rural townships or divisions. If the listings are distributed equally over localities in the segment and the localities include a town or village and a rural township or division, the rounded population of the town or village is coded. The source of the data is the 1970 U.S. Census population figures published in the PC (1)-A series, Tables 6 and 10. For cases from the 1980 and 1990 frames analogous tables from the 1980 and 1990 Censuses were used.”