

BY WILLIAM H. FREY

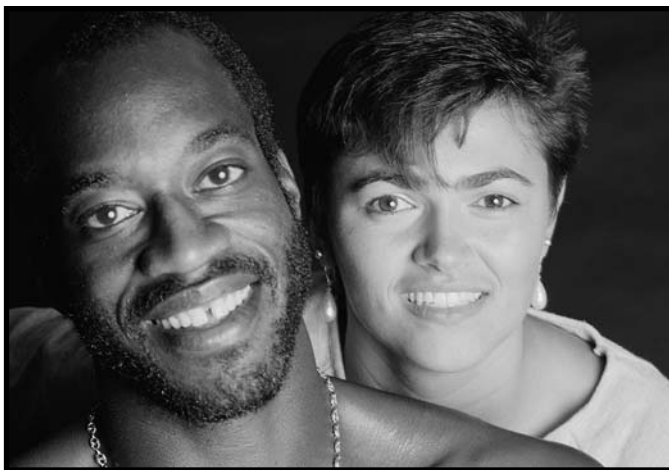
## Fresh census numbers on mixed-race marriages

give new life to the hoary idea that opposites attract. Although we are far from the goal of a color-blind society, biracial unions did increase 65 percent between 1990 and 2000, according to my analysis of newly released data. Interracial couples now comprise one in 15 marriages in the U.S. – up from one in 23 in 1990.

### COLOR LINE MELTDOWN

The rise in mixed-race marriages coincides with exploding immigrant populations of Latinos and Asians – note that we treat Latino as a racial category. Nearly three out of 10 marriages involving Latinos or Asians is a mixed-race marriage. Indeed, nearly half (1.8 million) of the 3.7 million interracial marriages in the country include a Latino.

Interracial marriages involving African-Americans are much rarer, despite the fact that blacks comprise a similar share of the U.S. population as Latinos, and are about three times more numerous than Asians. Only about one in eight marriages involving African-Americans are of mixed-race. At the other end of the spectrum, nearly three of four marriages involving Native Americans, Eskimos and Alutes are interracial.



### MIX AND MATCH STATES

Not surprisingly, the “melting pot” states tend to have the highest prevalence of mixed-race marriages.

Almost one-third of marriages in Hawaii are so classed. In eight other states – Alaska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Nevada, California, Arizona, Colorado and Washington – at least one out of 10 fit the billing.

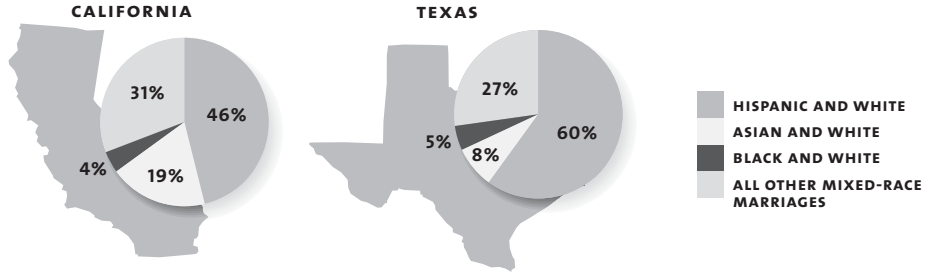
The large Eskimo and Aleut populations in Alaska, as well as the Native American populations in Oklahoma, account for the high proclivity of mixed-race marriages in these

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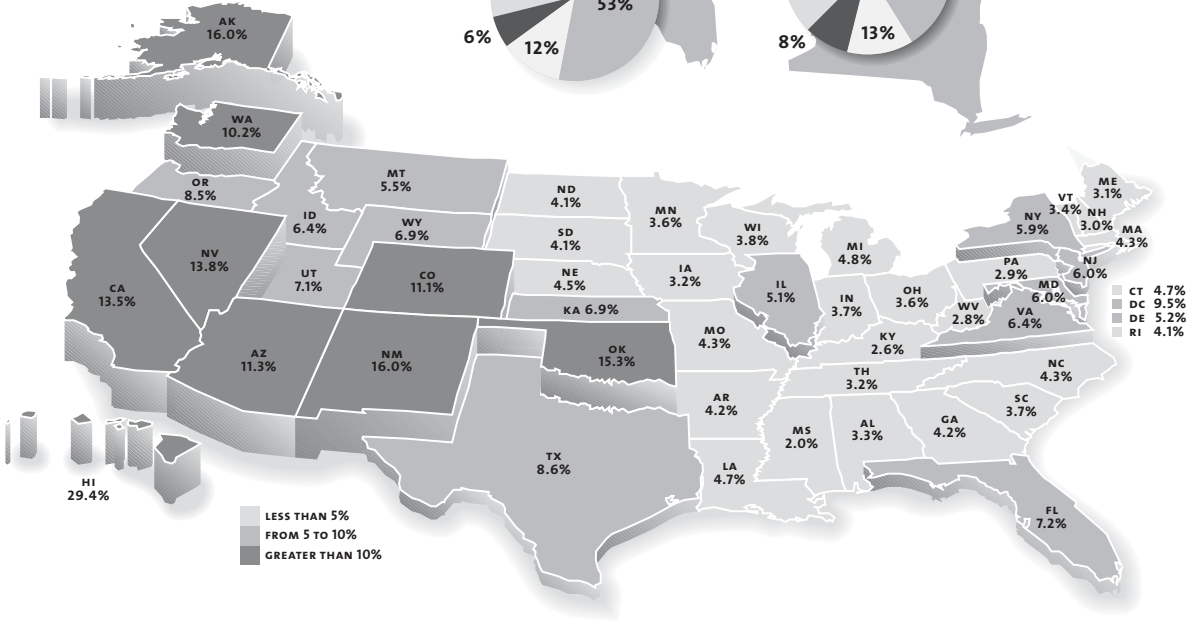
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**CHARTICLE**

**BREAKOUT OF MIXED-RACE COMBINATIONS IN SELECTED STATES**



**PERCENTAGE OF MARRIAGES THAT ARE MIXED RACE**



two states. Hispanic and Asian populations tend to dominate in the remaining mixed-race marriage havens.

In 27 states, including much of New England, the Midwest and the Great Plains, less than 5 percent of all marriages are interracial. This is also the case in much of the South, where African-Americans comprise a significant

share of the non-white population.

But race barriers are becoming more porous almost everywhere: Interracial marriage increased in Tennessee by 133 percent in the 1990s, with Nevada a close second at 120 percent. Even largely white states like West Virginia and Vermont showed a doubling in mixed-race marriages.

CHARTS: BRUCE SANDERS AND MAX HARLES

**MIXED-RACE SHARE OF  
ALL MARRIAGES**

1990  
4.4%

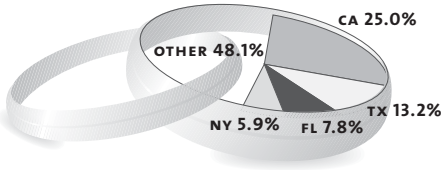
2000  
6.7%



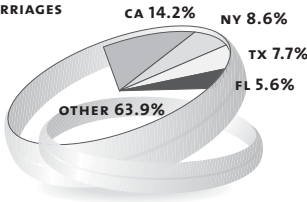
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**STATES OF THE UNIONS**

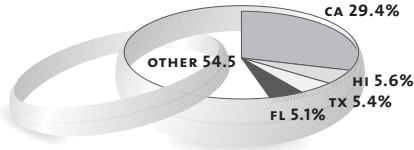
**HISPANIC MIXED-RACE MARRIAGES**



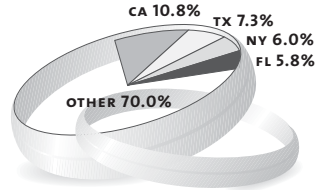
**BLACK MIXED-RACE MARRIAGES**



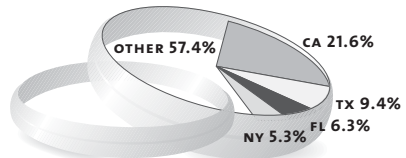
**ASIAN MIXED-RACE MARRIAGES**



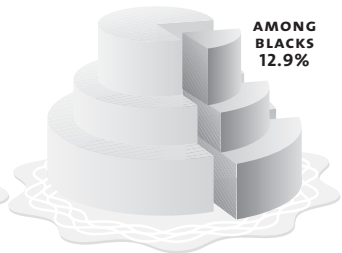
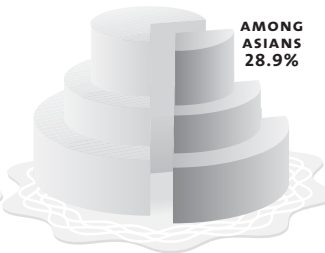
**ALL MARRIAGES**



**MIXED-RACE MARRIAGES**



**PREVALENCE OF MIXED-RACE MARRIAGES**



**MIXED-RACE MARKET SHARE**

Most mixed-race couples reside in California, Texas, Florida and New York. The Golden State is home to only about one in 10 married couples, but more than one in five interracial couples – which reflects the melting pot tendencies of regions with large Latino and Asian populations. Indeed, California is home to one in four of all mixed-race marriages involving Latinos, and nearly one in three involving Asians.

**LOCAL ATTRACTIONS**

Nationally, more than 1.5 million of America’s mixed-race marriages are Latino-white. And in heavily Latino states such as California, Texas and Florida, Latino-white marriages account for well over half of all mixed-race marriages.

Nearly one-half of Oklahoma’s mixed-race marriages is an American Indian-white combination, while in Hawaii Asian-white combinations far outdistance others. **M**