



Interracial Marriages In Latin America: Current Trends And Prospects

Tashmatov Ibragimjan Mamajanovich

Associate Professor, Cand. of Philosophical Sciences at Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article examines the phenomenon of interethnic marriage in Latin American countries, where the mixture of cultures, languages and traditions has become an important element in the formation of national identity. The study covers the historical roots, socio-cultural aspects and current trends of this phenomenon, as well as the impact of globalization processes on interethnic relations in the region.

Keywords: Interethnic marriages, Latin America, culture, identity, mestizaje, family, marriage, divorce, nation, race.

INTRODUCTION: Latin America represents a unique region where, for centuries, there has been active interaction among diverse ethnic and cultural groups. The result of this process has been the formation of a distinctive cultural phenomenon - mestizaje, or the mixing of races and cultures. Interethnic marriages have played a key role in shaping the social structure and national identity of most Latin American countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies of interethnic marriages in Latin America are highly interdisciplinary, encompassing sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, and history. Most modern scholars agree that the phenomenon of mestizaje (cultural and racial mixing) has become a key factor in the formation of Latin American identity. Research published under the auspices of UNESCO (2022) emphasizes that the region's cultural diversity is the result of centuries of interaction among European, African, and Indigenous peoples. These studies highlight those interethnic marriages played a central role in creating a unique social and cultural structure.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank

(2021), social integration through interethnic marriage is viewed as an important tool for strengthening civic solidarity and reducing ethnic inequality. The Bank also notes that trends in recent decades indicate an increase in interethnic unions, especially in urbanized areas. Similar conclusions are presented in World Bank reports (2020), which emphasize the influence of economic mobility and educational factors on the formation of mixed families.

Research by CELADE (2019) provides a demographic perspective, showing that in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Peru, the rate of interethnic marriages is steadily increasing, particularly among young people and urban residents. These data indicate a gradual decline in the importance of ethnic barriers and a rise in cultural tolerance. At the same time, as noted by Latinobarómetro (2023), social attitudes toward marriages between representatives of different ethnic groups remain heterogeneous: in some countries such unions are viewed positively, while in others they provoke debate and resistance from traditionalists.

Summarizing existing research, it can be noted that most authors consider interethnic marriages a reflection of the deeper processes of globalization and cultural synthesis. However, along with positive trends, problems persist the discrimination based on skin color, social inequality, and differences in cultural capital between partners. These issues require further study in the context of modern migration and social mobility processes.

METHODS

The article employs commonly accepted sociological methods such as observation, interviews, surveys, as well as statistical and archival materials. It is based on generally recognized scientific methods comparative-logical analysis, historical analysis, consistency, objectivity, and a dialectical approach to social phenomena.

RESULTS

The history of interethnic unions in Latin America begins with the colonial era of the 16th century, when the Spanish and Portuguese arrived on the continent. Contact with Indigenous peoples led to the first mixed marriages between Europeans and Native Americans. Later, with the arrival of African slaves, the ethnic composition of the population became even more diverse. In countries such as Brazil and Cuba, the influence of African culture became one of the defining elements of national identity. The history of interethnic unions in Latin America begins with the colonial era of the 16th century, when the Spanish and Portuguese arrived on the continent. Contact with Indigenous peoples led to the first mixed marriages between

Europeans and Native Americans. Later, with the arrival of African slaves, the ethnic composition of the population became even more diverse. In countries such as Brazil and Cuba, the influence of African culture became one of the defining elements of national identity.

The ideology of mestizaje (mixing) became a central element of national consciousness in the 19th and 20th centuries. Unlike the racist policies characteristic of some other regions, in Latin America the idea of mixing was often viewed as a path toward social unity. However, in practice, social and economic differences between the descendants of different ethnic groups persisted.

Argentina is one of the most immigrant-rich countries in Latin America. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, large numbers of Europeans - Spaniards, Germans, Italians, French, Poles, Jews and later immigrants from other Latin American, Middle Eastern, and Arab countries, which settled there. This led to the formation of a society where national and ethnic diversity is historically regarded as normal.

Interethnic marriages in Argentina are perceived positively. Argentinians are an open-minded people who embrace cultural diversity, which is reflected in family relations. Marriages between representatives of different ethnicities and races do not cause social tension. Foreign spouses are often students, migrants, tourists, and laborers.

The country's legislation allows marriages between people of different religions. Marriage registration does not require religious ceremonies, and the ethnic origin of partners has no legal significance. About 60% of Argentinians have Italian roots, and around 30% have Spanish ancestry.

Argentinian culture actively absorbs family traditions and culinary elements from various nations, making it particularly diverse and open to international unions. Mexicans most often marry citizens of the United States. This is due to geographical proximity, active migration, a shared border, and developed tourism between the two countries.

Other popular countries for marriages with Mexicans include:

- Canada - due to emigration, labor migration, and educational programs.
- Spain - because of linguistic and cultural closeness.
- Peru, Colombia, Argentina shared Latin American identity and cultural ties foster interethnic marriages.
- Japan and South Korea - marriages mainly

occur among students and employees of international companies.

- Germany, France, Italy - frequent contacts through tourism, education, and internships.
- Russia and Ukraine - mainly marriages between Mexican men and women from these countries, formed through online dating, work, study, or travel.

The main reasons for international marriages are globalization processes: the development of the internet and social networks, online dating, studying abroad, and student or cultural exchanges. Many couples meet at universities or resorts, especially popular ones such as Cancun, Tulum, and Los Cabos. International companies operating in cities like Mexico City (CDMX), Guadalajara, and Monterrey also play a significant role. Love, cultural curiosity, and the openness of Mexican society remain key factors.

Before the pandemic, about 4-5 thousand marriages with foreigners were registered annually in Mexico. Most of these unions were in the states of Mexico City (CDMX), Quintana Roo (Cancun, Tulum), Jalisco, and Nuevo León.

In Brazil, racial mixing mainly occurred between Black or mulatto women and Portuguese men. In the early years of colonization, the shortage of white women led white men to form relationships with women of other races. Many local women became concubines: 52.1% of them were African, 35.1% were Creole or mestizo, and only 11.8% were white. For Black and mulatto women, such relationships with white men were often advantageous, as they could gain freedom and escape slavery.

Currently, approximately 30% of all marriages in Brazil are between individuals of different races. Nonetheless, this number is likely understated because of the large share of the nonwhite population and the belief in "racial democracy." Approximately 70% of unions continue to take place within the same racial group.

In the 20th century, with urbanization and the expansion of education, the number of interethnic marriages increased significantly. According to the Latin American Demographic Center (CELADE), about 40% of marriages in Brazil in the 2010s were interethnic. In Mexico and Peru, this figure was around 25-30%. Modern marriages between people of different ethnic backgrounds have become a reflection not only of cultural but also of economic convergence.

Interethnic marriages contribute to the formation of a tolerant society and intercultural dialogue. They reduce

levels of ethnic segregation, creating conditions for the integration of different communities. In Caribbean countries, such marriages are especially common and are perceived as a natural part of social life. At the same time, in some Andean regions, traditional notions of belonging to a specific ethnic group persist, sometimes leading to generational conflicts.

In the context of globalization and migration, the population of Latin America continues to mix actively. Increasing mobility, the development of social networks, and the rise in educational levels foster a new model of family where ethnic origin loses its former significance. However, challenges remain discrimination based on skin color or origin still occurs in some countries, especially in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

Interethnic marriages in Latin America represent not merely a social phenomenon but a fundamental element of the region's cultural and historical development. It has been contributed the formation of a new ethnocultural identity and a unique social structure. Today, interethnic unions remain an important factor in integration and mutual understanding among people.

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