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## A Portrait of Partnership Statuses in the United States between 1990 and 2017

Daeshin Hayden Ju

*Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies*

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# CLACLS

Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies

## A Portrait of Partnership Statuses in the United States between 1990 and 2017

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Latino Data Project – Report 95 – March 2022

The Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies is a research institute that works for the advancement of the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States in the doctoral programs at the CUNY Graduate Center. One of its major priorities is to provide funding and research opportunities to Latino students at the Ph.D. level.

The Center established an interdisciplinary specialization in Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies in the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program.

The Latino Data Project was developed with the goal of making information available on the dynamically growing Latino population of the United States and especially New York City through the analysis of extant data available from a variety of sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Institute for Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and state and local-level data sources.

All Latino Data Project reports are available at <http://clacls.gc.cuny.edu>

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## Executive Summary

This report examines trends in partnership status in the United States between 1990 and 2017 using data from the United States Census Bureau.<sup>1</sup> It first explores trends in the partnership status among the total population between the ages of 18 and 64 in the United States by sex and race/ethnicity. Then, it focuses on the Latino population in the same age group and examines how their partnership patterns vary by age, nativity, national subgroups, and poverty status.

For the purpose of this study, partnership status has three categories: married, cohabiting, and unpartnered. Individuals were identified as married if they reported being married at the time of the survey. Individuals were categorized as cohabiting if they were not married but were living with a partner at the time of the survey. Individuals were considered unpartnered if they were not married nor residing with a partner at the time of the survey. This study examines partnership status rather than marital status of the population because the prevalence of cohabitation as a new living arrangement has increased significantly in the past few decades. It is important to note that this report shows snapshots of partnership status of the U.S. population in the given years. Thus, individuals who were unpartnered at the time of the survey may have never been married or have previously been married (including separated, divorced or widowed).

Between 1990 and 2017, the marriage rate declined from about 60% to 50% among both men and women in the United States. There was also an increase in the share of cohabiting and unpartnered individuals among the total population. The cohabitation rate was about 4% in 1990, and that percentage rose to about 7% in 2017. In 1990, about 37% of the population between 16 and 64 years of age was unpartnered, and that percentage increased to about 45% in 2017. While there was a minimal difference between men and women, there were notable differences in partnership patterns across the four major race/ethnic groups. In 2017, Asians had the highest percentage of marriage (58% among men and 63% among women), followed by non-Hispanic whites (52% among men and 55% among women), Latinos (45% among men and 46% among women), and non-Hispanic blacks (32% among men and 28% among women). Cohabitation was more common among non-Hispanic whites (7.0%) and Latinos (7.4%) than Asians (2.7%). Non-Hispanic blacks had the highest percentages of individuals who were unpartnered (61.3%), and Asians had the lowest level of unpartnered people (39.4%).

This study also focused specifically on Latinos' partnership patterns and found four main trends. First, the percentage of Latino young adults (individuals between the ages of 18 and 34) who were married decreased significantly between 1990 and 2017.<sup>2</sup> For example, in 1990, 50% of Latinos and 59% of

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<sup>1</sup> This study uses the 5% Census for the years 1990 and 2000. For the years 2010 and 2017, this study uses the American Community Survey PUMS (Public Use Microdata Series). The datasets used in this study are released by the Census Bureau and reorganized for public use by the IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org). See Public Use Microdata Series Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 9.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V9.0>

<sup>2</sup> Focusing on young adult helps us identify whether the partnership formation postponement is the key trend among Latinos. For the full results, see Statistical Appendix.

Latinas between the ages of 25 and 29 were married. In 2017, however, only 28% of Latinos and 35% of Latinas of the same range were married. On the contrary, the levels of cohabitation and unpartnered status increased during the same period. These changes suggest that Latinos and Latinas have become more likely to choose cohabitation as a type of partnership in 2017 than in 1990.

Second, the changes in partnership patterns between 1990 and 2017 among Latinos differed by nativity status. There was a significant decline in marriage among the domestic-born while the marriage level remained relatively stable among the foreign-born. Among domestic-born Latinos, the percentage married decreased from 50% to 33% among men and from 51% to 36% among women. On the other hand, among foreign-born Latinos, the marriage level changed very little: from 60% to 58% among men and 62% to 58% among women. The percentages of cohabitation were similar between the domestic-born and the foreign-born. Domestic-born Latinos, however, had a much higher percentage of unpartnered status than foreign-born Latinos. For example, in 2017, 59% of domestic-born Latinos were unpartnered whereas 34% of foreign-born Latinos were unpartnered.

Third, there were differences in partnership status across the five largest Latino nationalities in the country. In 1990, Cubans had the highest percentage of marriages, followed by Mexicans, Dominicans, Salvadorans and Puerto Ricans. While all Latino subgroups experienced a decline in marriage between 1990 and 2017, Cubans had the largest decrease in marriage rates (from 60% to 45%) followed by Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans. During the same period, Cubans witnessed the largest increase in cohabitation and unpartnered rates. Among Cuban men, the cohabitation rate increased from about 4% in 1990 to 9% in 2017. Among Cuban women, the cohabitation rate increased from about 3% in 1990 to 9% in 2017.

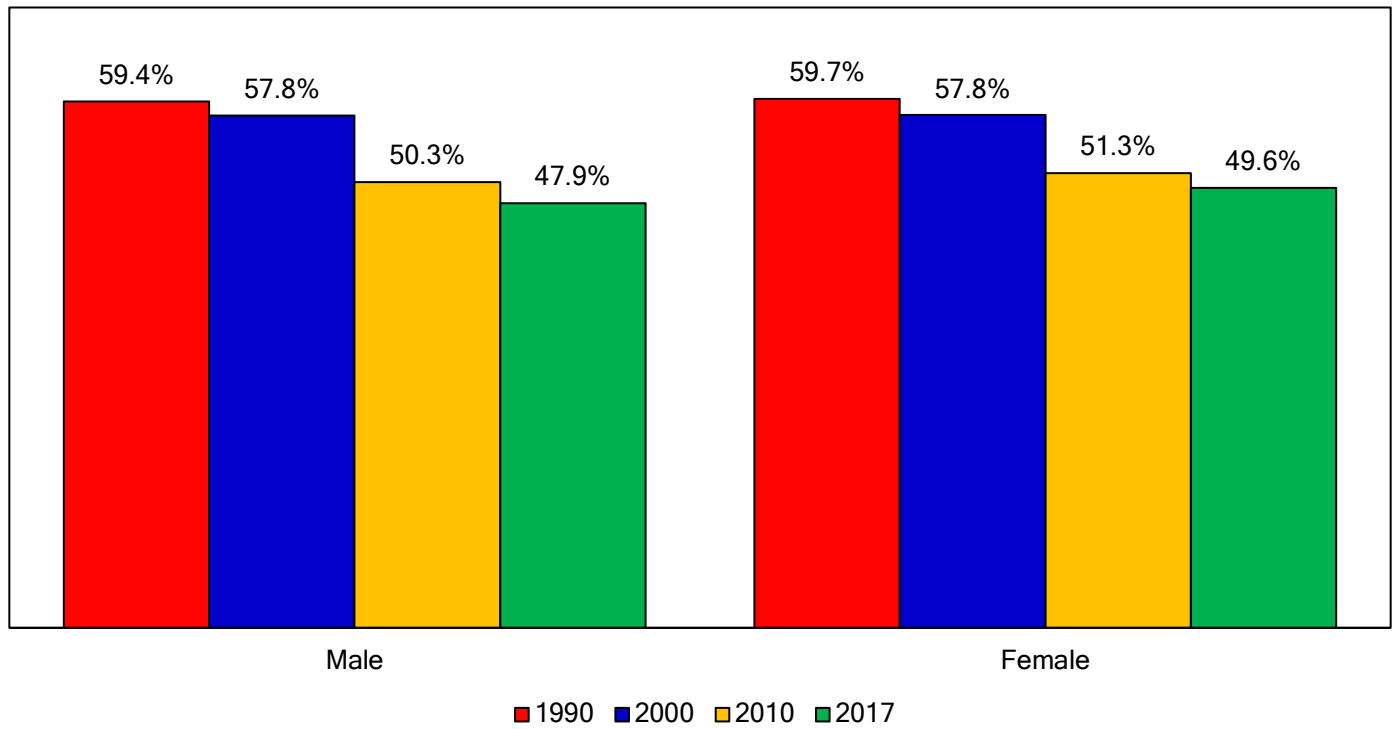
Lastly, poverty status was closely associated with partnership status. In 2017, Latinos who were not in poverty had a higher marriage rate (48% among men and 52% among women) than those who were in poverty (38% among men and 28% among women). Latinos in poverty were more likely to be cohabiting or unpartnered than those not in poverty. The difference in partnership status by poverty status was more pronounced among Latinas than Latinos. In 2017, 17% of Latinas who were in poverty were cohabiting. This percentage is significantly higher than that of Latinas who were not in poverty, which was at 5%.



## Partnership Status in the United States

Between 1990 and 2017, about half of the total adult population in the United States were married. However, over those three decades, there was an overall decline in marriage among both sexes. In 1990, about 60% of the total population were married, and that percentage decreased to below 50% in 2017. (See figure 1).

Figure 1  
Percentage of the "Married" Total Population by Sex  
United States, 1990-2017



During the same period, the share of the cohabiting and unpartnered individuals rose. The cohabiting individuals made up about 4% of the total population in 1990, and that percentage climbed to almost 7% in 2017. (See figure 2). About 37% of the total population were unpartnered in 1990, and that percentage increased to about 45% in 2017. (See figure 3).

Figure 2  
 Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Total Population by Sex  
 United States, 1990-2017

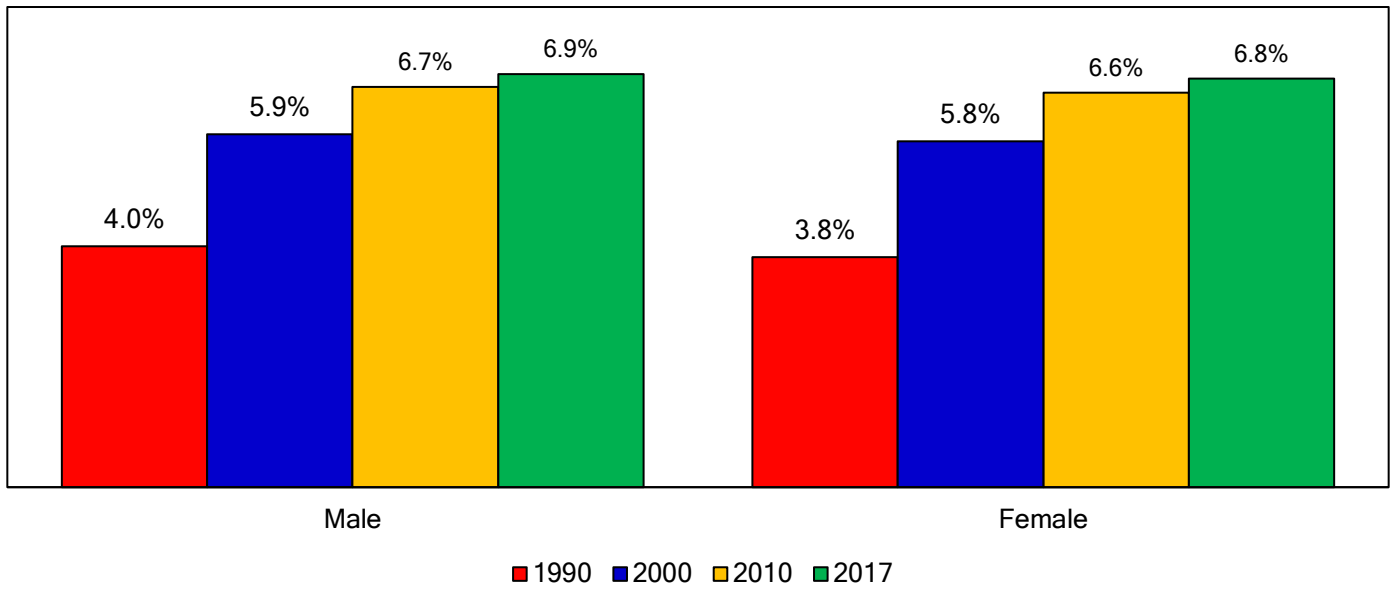
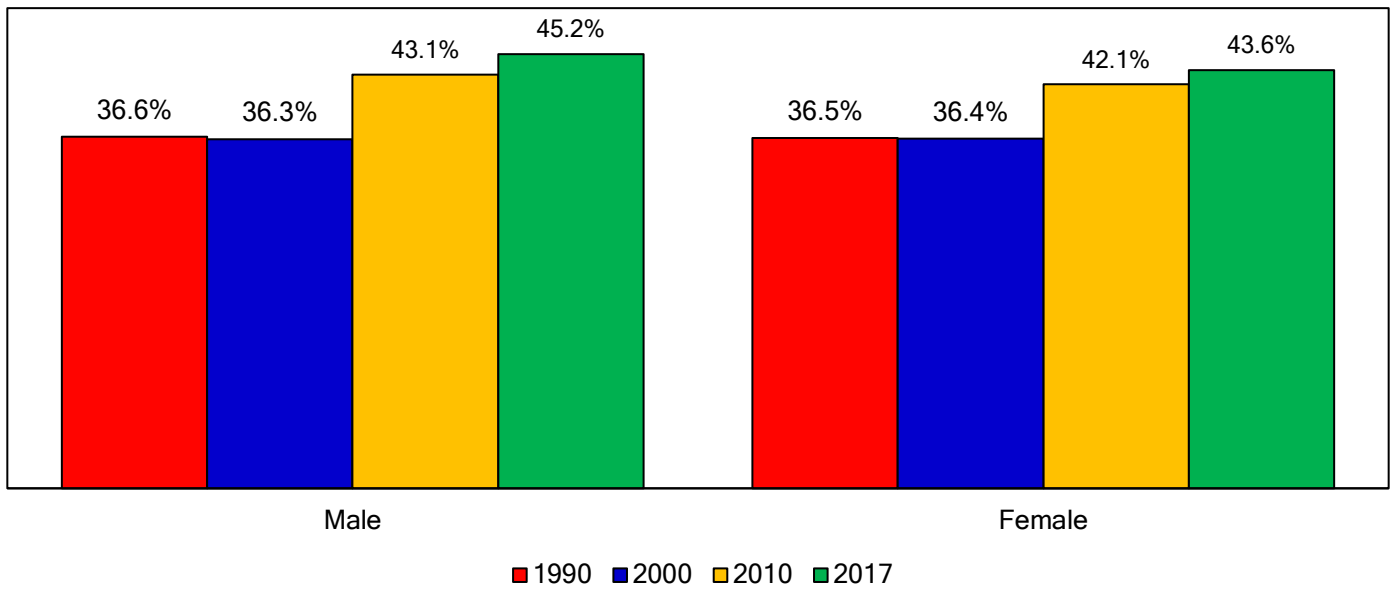


Figure 3  
 Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Total Population by Sex  
 United States, 1990-2017



These changes in partnership status suggest that, between 1990 and 2017, there has been an increase in the proportion of people in the United States who are delaying or forgoing marriage. Additionally, the rise in cohabitation implies that it has become a more accepted form of partnership. Over the same period, the differences in partnership status between men and women were minimal. (See table 1).

Table 1  
Percentage of the Total Population by Partnership Status and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
<b>Men</b>				
Married	59.4%	57.8%	50.3%	47.9%
Cohabiting	4.0%	5.9%	6.7%	6.9%
Unpartnered	36.6%	36.3%	43.1%	45.2%
<b>Women</b>				
Married	59.7%	57.8%	51.3%	49.6%
Cohabiting	3.8%	5.8%	6.6%	6.8%
Unpartnered	36.5%	36.4%	42.1%	43.6%

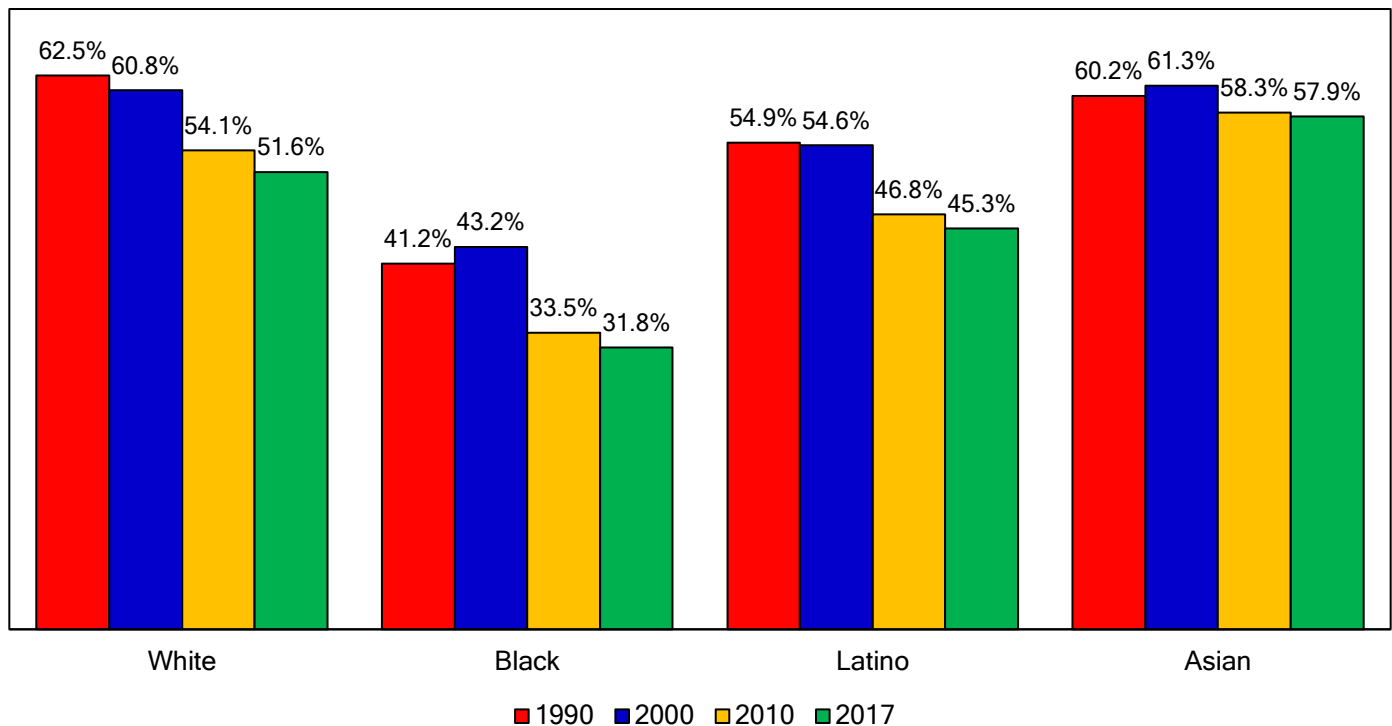
### Differences in Marriage by Race and Ethnicity

Between 1990 and 2017, partnership status varied across different race/ethnic groups. Over those three decades, men from all race/ethnic groups witnessed a decline in marriage, as shown in the previous section. The degree of the decline, however, varied by race/ethnicity. (See table 2 and figure 4). Non-Hispanic white men had the largest decline in marriage, from 62.5% in 1990 to 51.6% in 2017. Over the same period, the marriage rate decreased from 54.9% to 45.3% among Latinos, and from 41.2% to 31.8% among non-Hispanic black men. Asian men witnessed the smallest decline in marriage: 60.2% in 1990 to 57.9% in 2017.

Table 2  
Partnership Status among the Total Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017

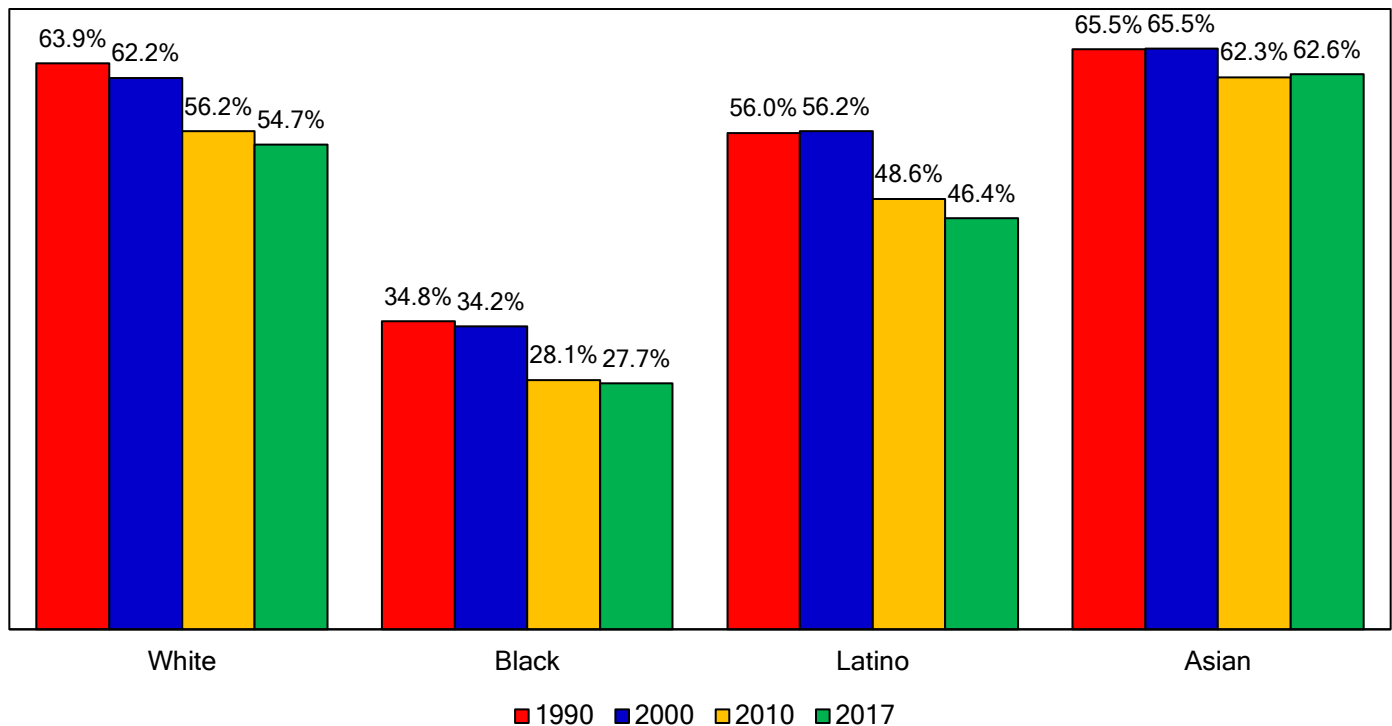
	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Non-Hispanic White</b>								
Married	62.5%	63.9%	60.8%	62.2%	54.1%	56.2%	51.6%	54.7%
Cohabiting	3.8%	3.7%	5.6%	5.7%	6.5%	6.7%	7.0%	7.3%
Unpartnered	33.7%	32.4%	33.5%	32.1%	39.4%	37.1%	41.4%	38.0%
<b>Non-Hispanic Black</b>								
Married	41.2%	34.8%	43.2%	34.2%	33.5%	28.1%	31.8%	27.7%
Cohabiting	5.5%	4.3%	7.7%	5.9%	7.3%	5.4%	6.9%	5.1%
Unpartnered	53.3%	61.0%	49.2%	60.0%	59.2%	66.4%	61.3%	67.2%
<b>Latino</b>								
Married	54.9%	56.0%	54.6%	56.2%	46.8%	48.6%	45.3%	46.4%
Cohabiting	4.7%	4.5%	6.3%	6.4%	7.7%	7.8%	7.4%	7.4%
Unpartnered	40.4%	39.5%	39.0%	37.4%	45.5%	43.6%	47.3%	46.3%
<b>Asian</b>								
Married	60.2%	65.5%	61.3%	65.5%	58.3%	62.3%	57.9%	62.6%
Cohabiting	1.8%	2.2%	2.7%	3.1%	2.8%	3.4%	2.7%	3.3%
Unpartnered	38.0%	32.4%	36.0%	31.4%	38.8%	34.3%	39.4%	34.0%

Figure 4  
Percentage of the "Married" Total Male Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017



Women from all race/ethnic groups also witnessed a decline in marriage over the same period, but these rates varied by group. (See figure 5). Similar to Asian men, Asian women witnessed only a slight drop in the marriage level, from 65.5% in 1990 to 62.6% in 2017 and making them the group with the highest married rates compared to women from the other race/ethnic groups. The percentage of married non-Hispanic white women decreased from 63.9% to 54.7%, from 56.0% to 46.4% among Latinas, and from 34.8% to 27.7% among non-Hispanic black women in the same period.

Figure 5  
Percentage of the "Married" Total Female Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017

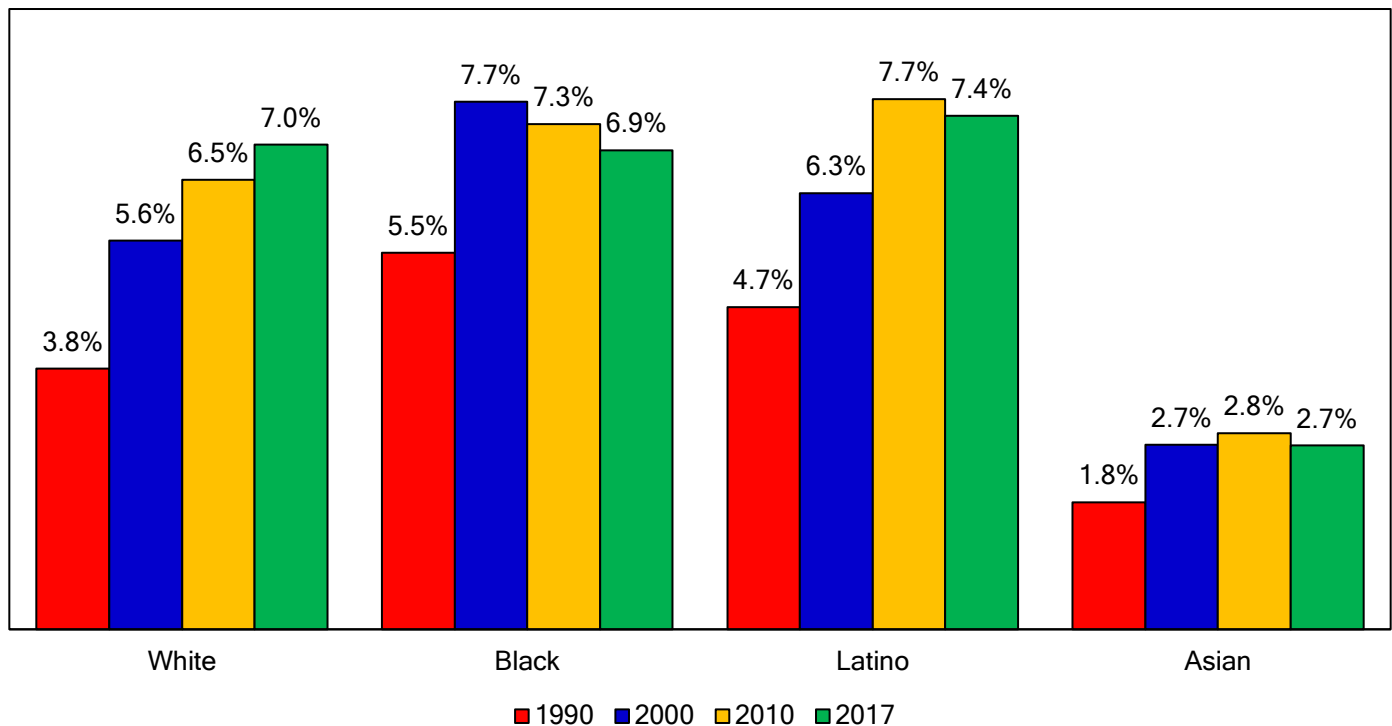


Among non-Hispanic whites, Latinos and Asians, the rate of marriage was higher among women than men. Conversely, non-Hispanic black men showed higher percentages of marriage than women.

#### Differences in Cohabitation by Race and Ethnicity

Between 1990 and 2017, the cohabitation rates increased for all four major race/ethnic groups among the total male population in the United States. (See figure 6). The rise in cohabitation was most prominent among non-Hispanic white men. Their percentage of cohabitation rose from 3.8% in 1990 to 7.0% in 2017. Over the same period, the percentage of cohabitation almost doubled from 4.7% to 7.4% among Latinos, and from 5.5% to 6.9% among non-Hispanic black men. Comparatively, a rise in cohabitation was not a prominent trend among Asians between 1990 and 2017, as it was for other major race/ethnic groups. Among Asian men, the cohabitation level increased slightly from 1.8% to 2.7%.

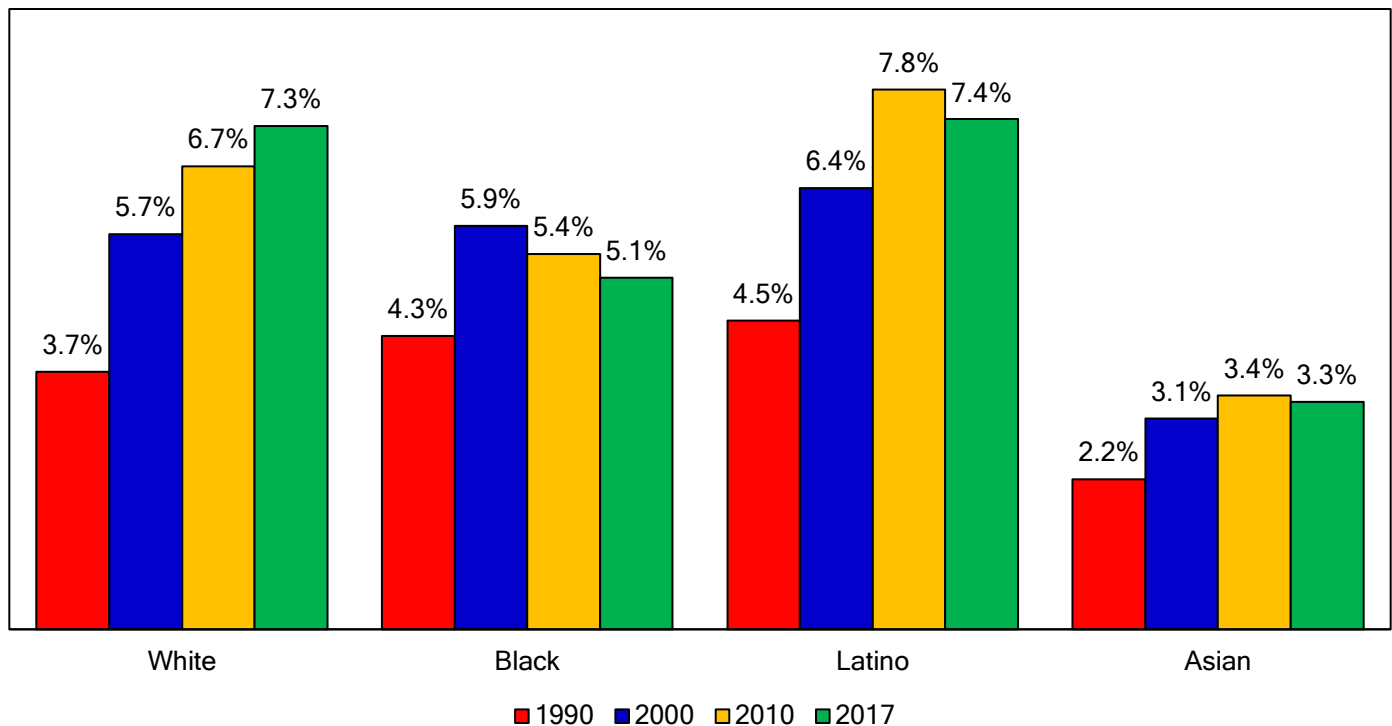
Figure 6  
Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Total Male Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017



A similar trend in cohabitation was found among the total female population. Non-Hispanic white women witnessed the largest increase in cohabitation. Their cohabitation rate rose from 3.7% in 1990 to 7.3% in 2017. Between 1990 and 2017, the percentage of cohabitation increased from 4.5% to 7.4% among Latinas, and from 4.3% to 5.1% among non-Hispanic black women. Asian women were least likely to cohabit during these three decades. Their cohabitation level increased very slightly (2.2% to 3.3%).

Among non-Hispanic whites and Latinos, there was virtually no difference in cohabitation rates between men and women. Among non-Hispanic blacks, men had a slightly higher percentage of cohabitation than women (a difference of about 2%). In contrast, among Asians, women had a slightly higher percentage of cohabitation than men (an approximately 0.5% difference).

Figure 7  
Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Total Female Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017

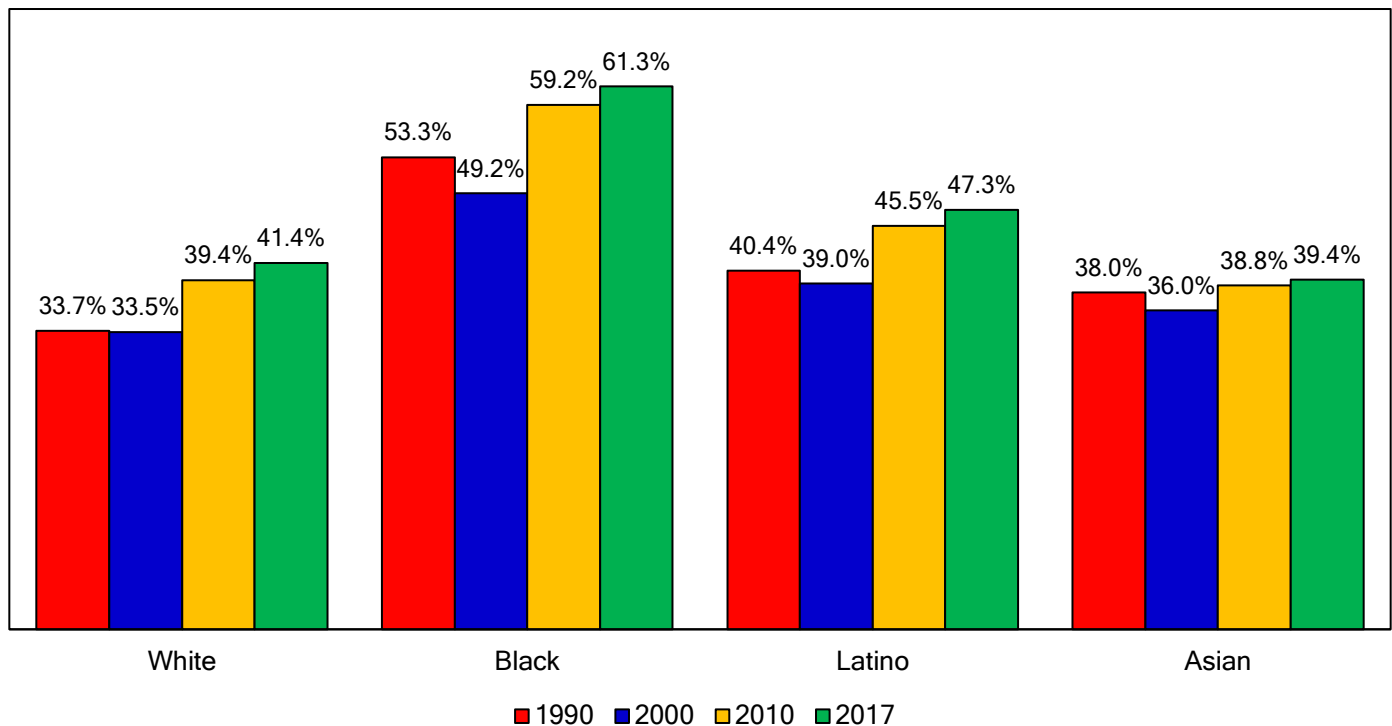


### Differences in the Unpartnered Status by Race and Ethnicity

The percentage of unpartnered men among all four major race/ethnic groups grew between 1990 and 2017. (See figure 8). During this period, non-Hispanic black men had the highest percentages of individuals that were unpartnered. In 1990, 53.3% of the non-Hispanic black men were unpartnered, and those percentages climbed to 61.3% in 2017. Latinos and non-Hispanic white men saw a modest increase in their percentages of unpartnered individuals. Between 1990 and 2017, they increased from 40.4% to 47.3% and from 33.7% to 41.4% respectively. The percentage of unpartnered Asian men changed very little, from 38% in 1990 to 39.4% in 2017.



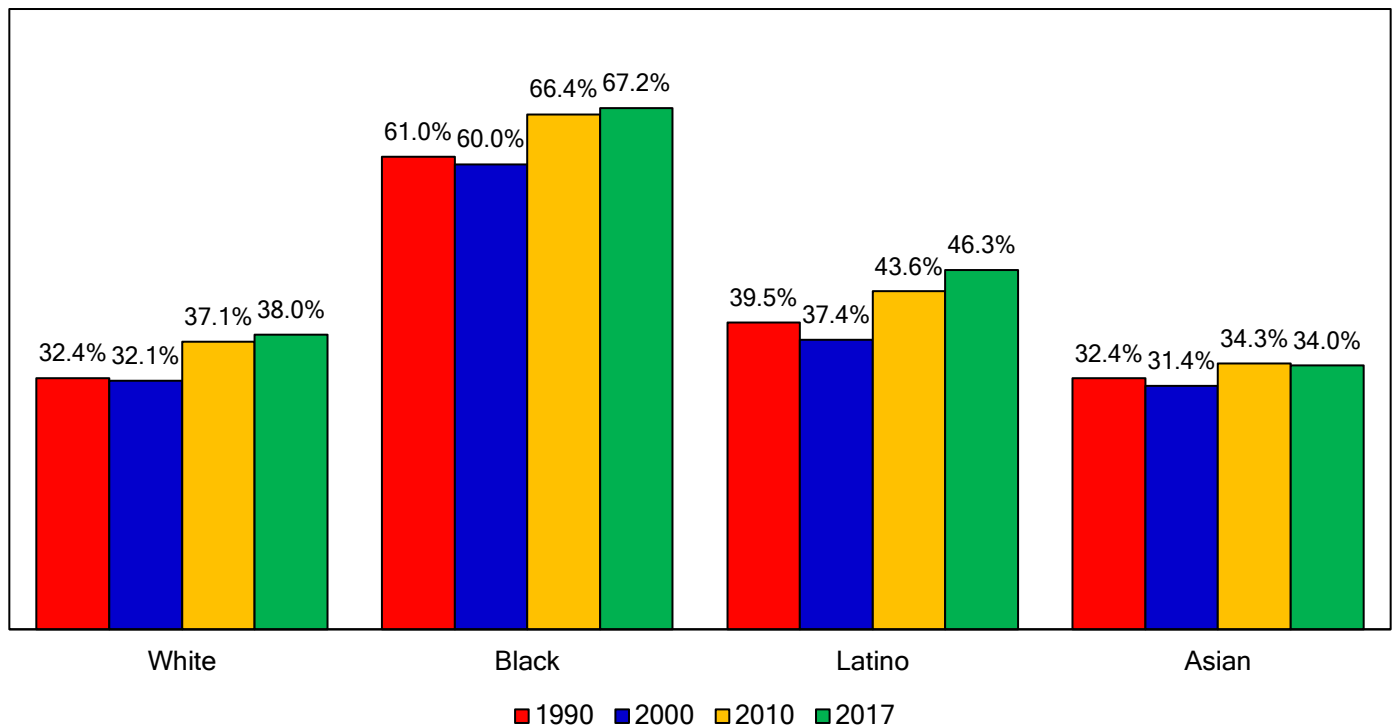
Figure 8  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Total Male Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017



Between 1990 and 2017, among the total female population, all race/ethnic groups witnessed an increase in the unpartnered population. (See figure 9). During those three decades, non-Hispanic black women had the highest level of unpartnered status. In 1990, 61.0% of the non-Hispanic black women were unpartnered, and that percentage increased to 67.2% in 2017. Latinas and non-Hispanic white women experienced a modest increase in their percentages of unpartnered individuals. Between 1990 and 2017, the percentage of unpartnered Latinas increased from 39.5% to 46.3%, and from 32.4% to 38.0% among non-Hispanic white women. The percentage of unpartnered Asian women remained relatively stable, at approximately 33% between 1990 and 2017.

In all four major race/ethnic groups except for non-Hispanic blacks, men were more likely to be unpartnered than women between 1990 and 2017.

Figure 9  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Total Female Population by Race/Ethnicity  
United States, 1990-2017



### Partnership Status among Latinos by Age

The distribution of partnership status varied across different age groups between 1990 and 2017. Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the percentages of the married, cohabiting, and unpartnered Latinos between the ages of 18 to 34. Focusing on partnership status among Latinos who are in their early adulthood helps us identify the key trend: the postponement of partnership formation. (For full results, see appendices 1 through 3). Between 1990 and 2017, the percentages of Latino young adults who were married decreased across all age groups studied. (See table 3, and figure 10 and 11). For example, in 1990, almost half (50.2%) of Latinos aged between 25 and 29 were married, but that percentage dropped almost by half (27.9%) in 2017. As for the Latinas between the ages of 25 and 29, the percentage of marriage declined from 58.5% in 1990 to 35.2% in 2017. The decline in marriage among Latinos in early adulthood suggests that marriage postponement was a prevalent trend among this age group during the 1990-2017 period, especially for men.

Table 3  
 Percentage of the "Married" Latinos by Age and Sex  
 United States, 1990-2017

Age	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
18-19	5.3%	14.3%	8.5%	16.2%	2.3%	5.6%	1.5%	3.7%
20-24	24.2%	37.6%	25.9%	36.8%	12.4%	21.5%	9.2%	15.4%
25-29	50.2%	58.5%	49.5%	57.5%	33.1%	43.3%	27.9%	35.2%
30-34	63.6%	64.7%	63.1%	66.2%	51.0%	56.3%	44.9%	50.6%

Figure 10  
 Percentage of the "Married" Latino Men by Age  
 United States, 1990-2017

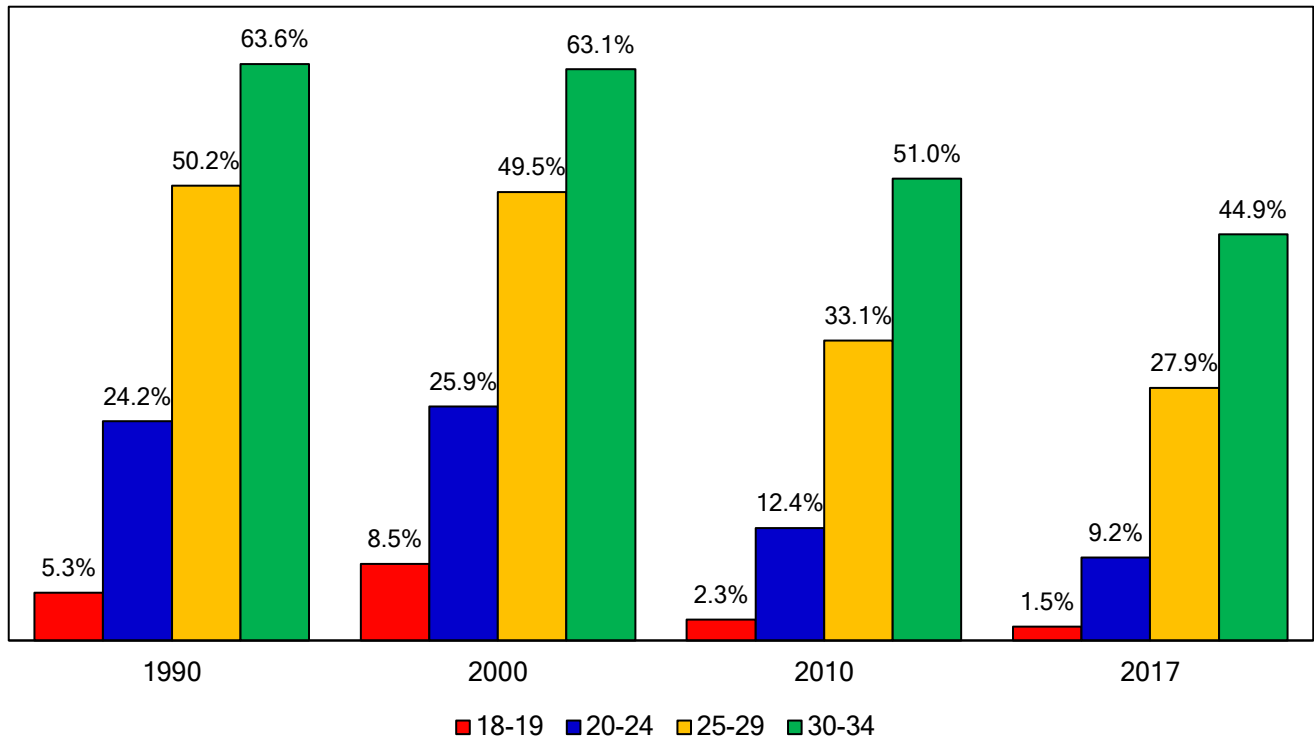
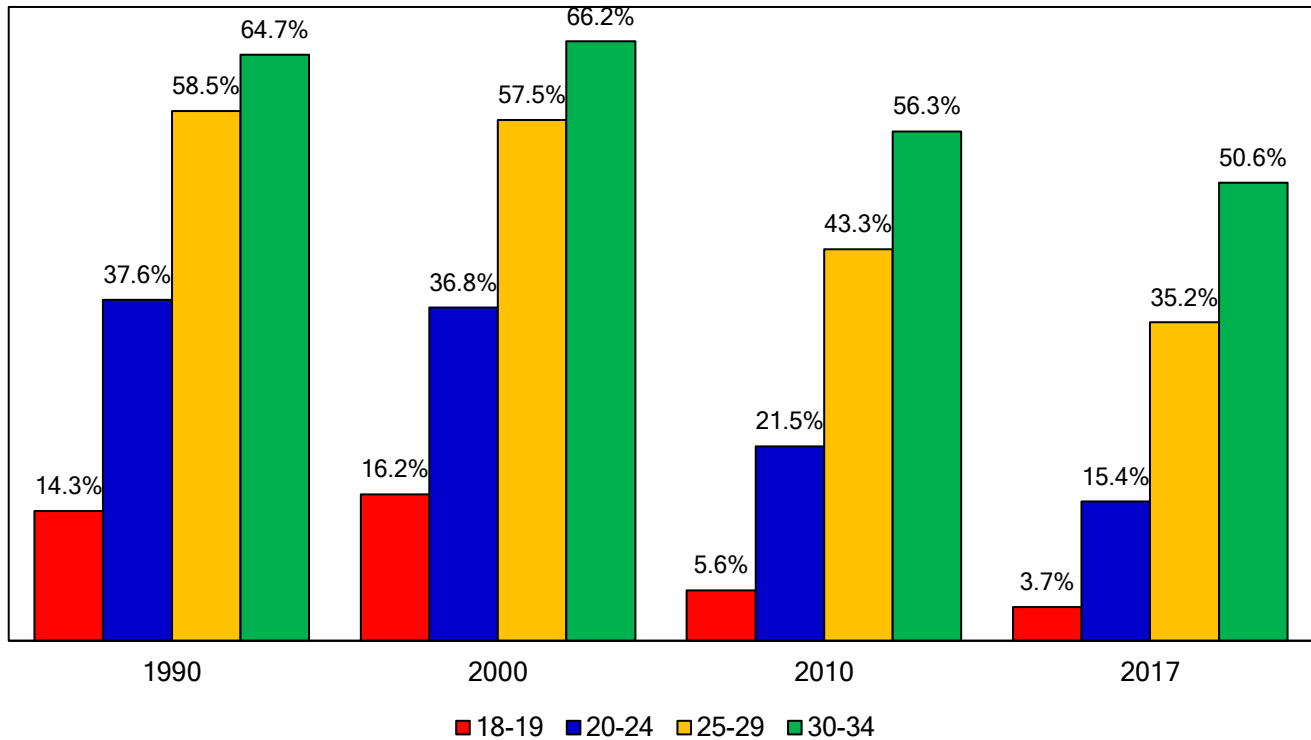


Figure 11  
Percentage of the "Married" Latino Women by Age  
United States, 1990-2017



Between 1990 and 2017, the cohabitation rate decreased among Latinos between the ages of 18 and 19. (See table 4, and figures 12 and 13). On the contrary, the cohabitation rate increased among Latinos who were between 20 and 34 years old. In 1990, about 6% of Latinos and Latinas between 25-29 years of age were cohabiting, and that percentage increased to over 10% in 2017. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Latinos and Latinas have become more likely to choose cohabitation as a type of partnership as time passed.

Table 4  
 Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latinos by Age and Sex  
 United States, 1990-2017

Age	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
18-19	1.2%	3.1%	1.8%	4.1%	1.1%	2.7%	0.9%	1.6%
20-24	4.4%	5.9%	6.1%	8.6%	5.9%	9.2%	4.5%	7.5%
25-29	6.2%	6.0%	8.6%	9.1%	11.9%	13.1%	10.4%	12.1%
30-34	6.2%	5.4%	8.0%	7.4%	11.3%	10.5%	11.3%	11.0%

Figure 12  
 Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latino Men by Age  
 United States, 1990-2017

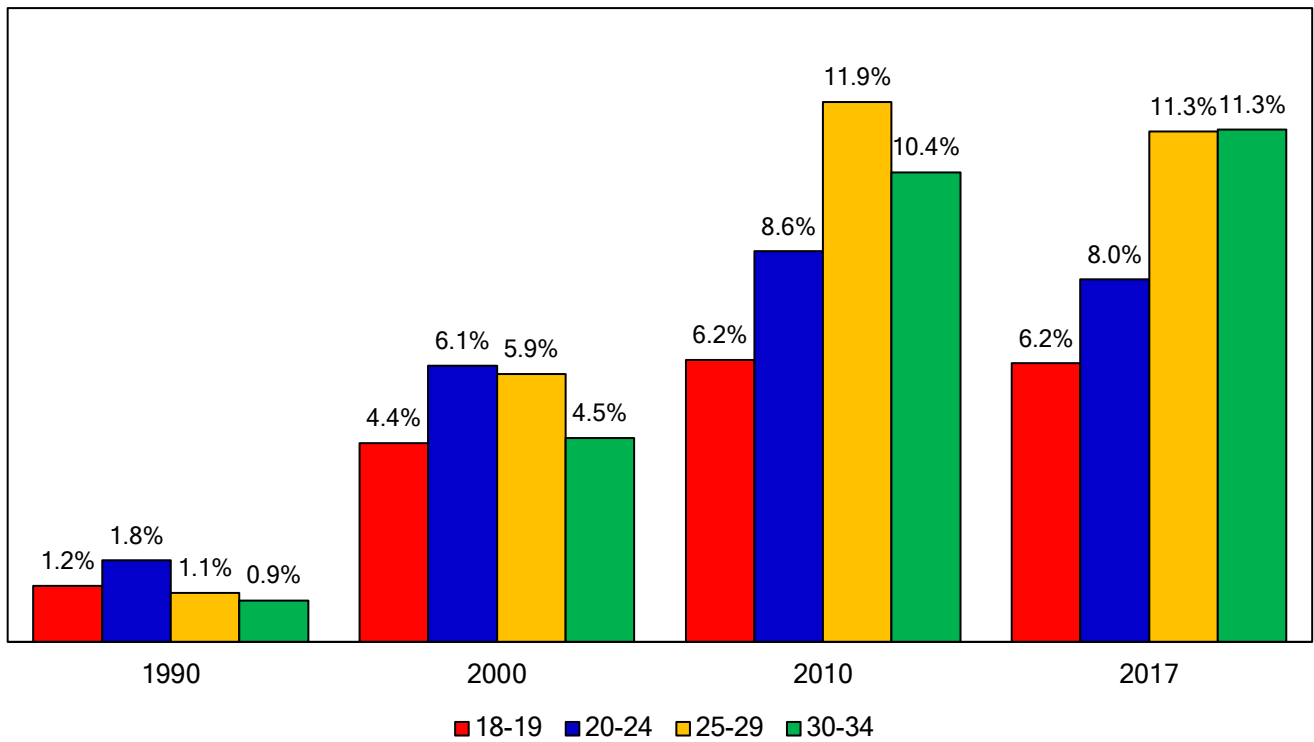


Figure 13  
Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latino Women by Age  
United States, 1990-2017

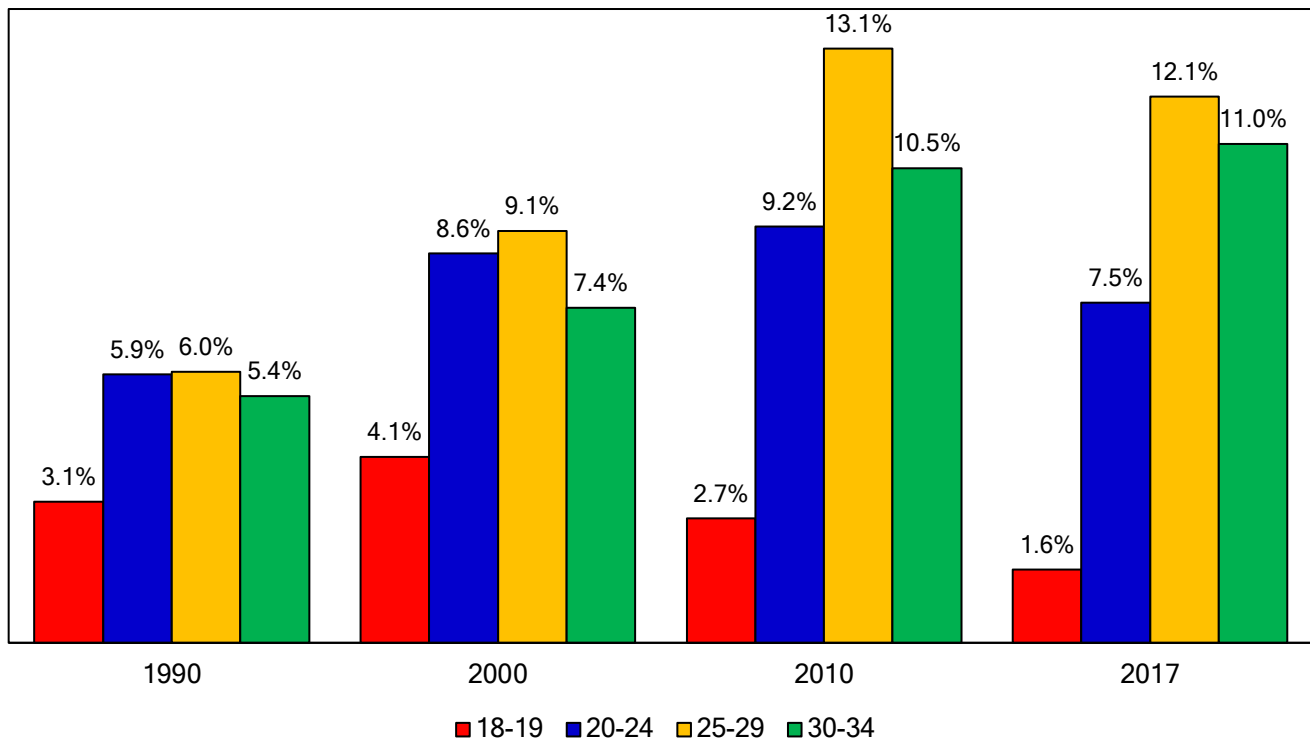


Table 5 and figures 14 and 15 illustrate that a larger proportion of Latino young adults were single in 2017 compared to those in 1990. For example, in 1990, 43.6% of Latinos and 35.5% of Latinas between the ages of 25 and 29 were unpartnered. In 2017, those percentages rose to 61.7% and 52.7%, respectively. The growth of unpartnered Latino young adults between 1990 and 2017 suggests that they were increasingly postponing partnership formation during that period.

Table 5  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latinos by Age and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

Age	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
18-19	93.5%	82.5%	89.7%	79.6%	96.6%	91.7%	97.5%	94.7%
20-24	71.4%	56.5%	68.0%	54.6%	81.7%	69.3%	86.3%	77.1%
25-29	43.6%	35.5%	41.9%	33.4%	55.0%	43.6%	61.7%	52.7%
30-34	30.2%	29.8%	28.9%	26.4%	37.7%	33.2%	43.8%	38.4%

Figure 14  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latino Men by Age  
United States, 1990-2017

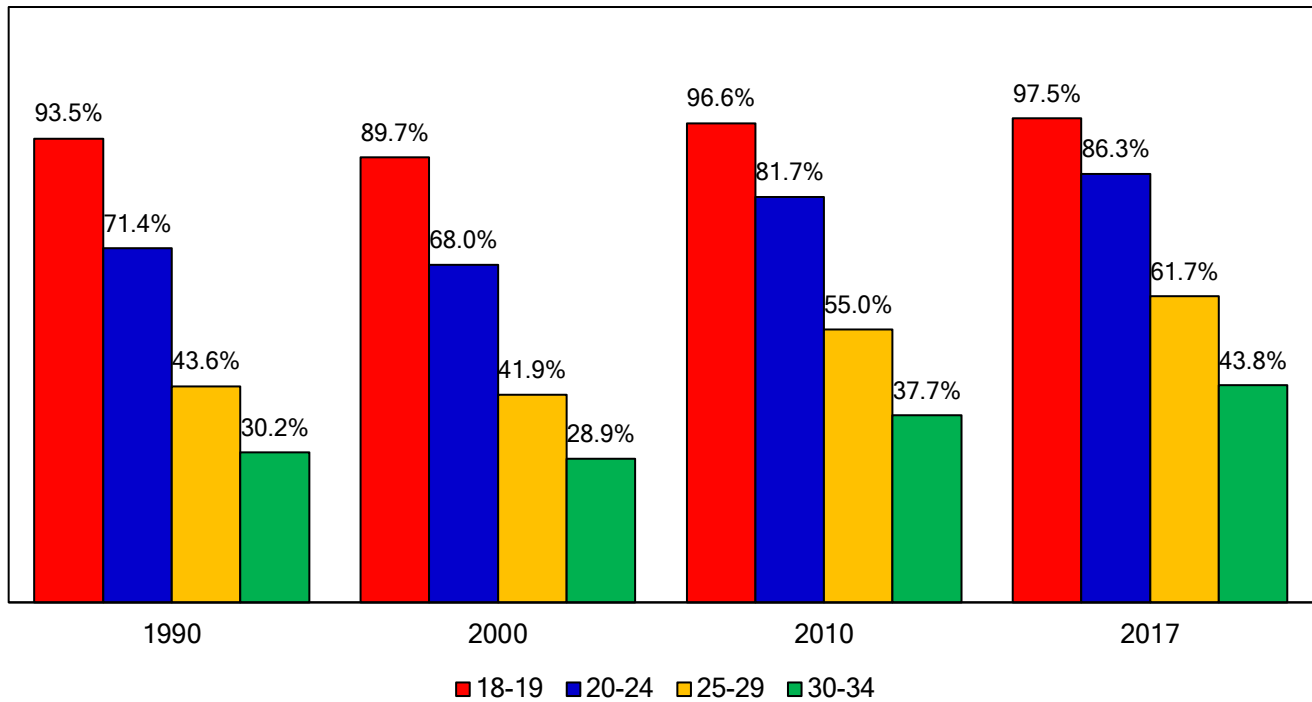
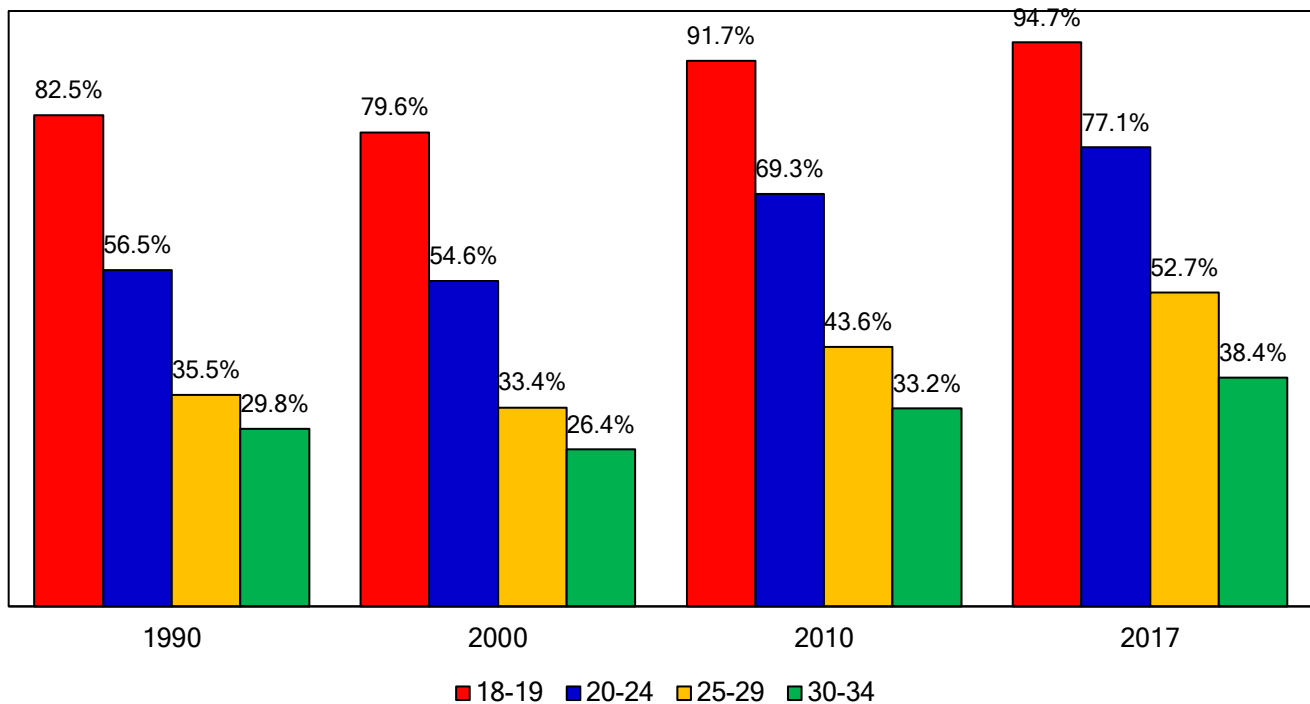


Figure 15  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latino Women by Age  
United States, 1990-2017



### Partnership Status among Latinos by Nativity

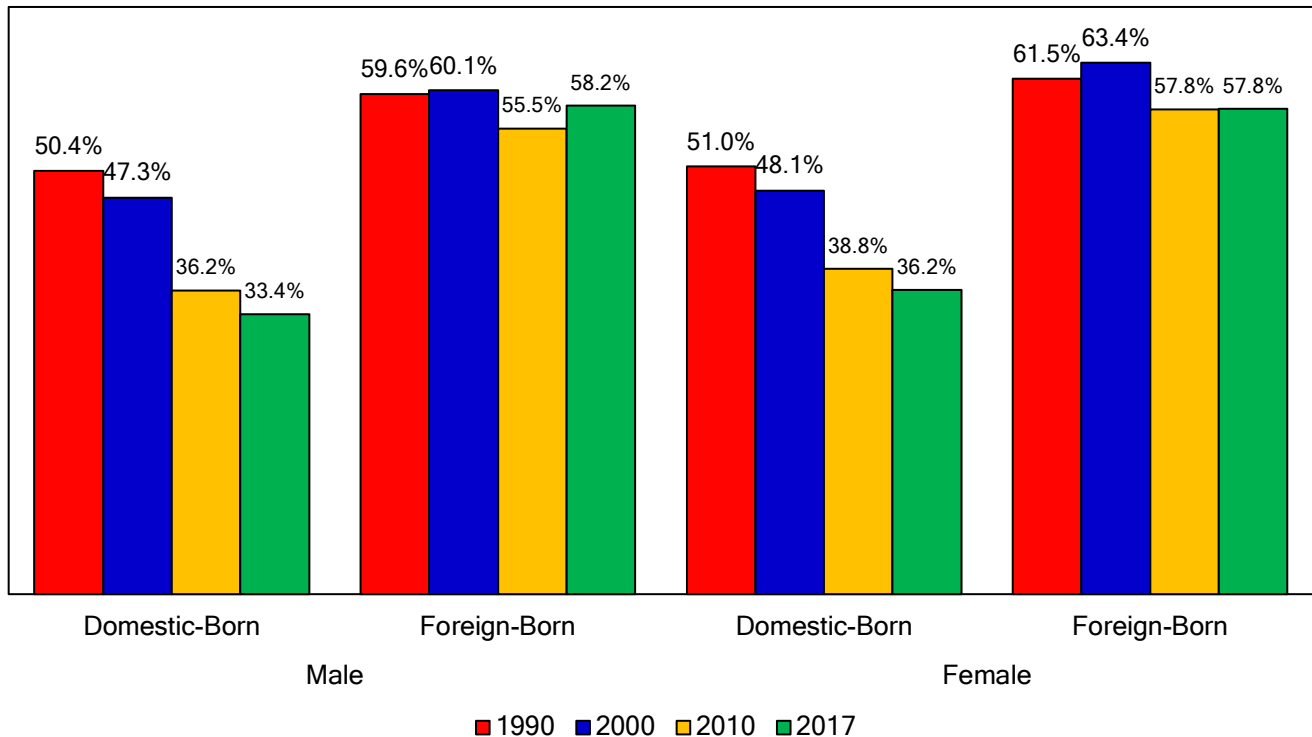
The difference in the marriage levels between the domestic-born and the foreign-born Latinos increased between 1990 and 2017 because of a significant decline in marriage among the former. (See table 6 and figure 16). In 1990, almost half of the domestic-born Latinos and Latinas were married, but foreign-born and married people in the same groups amounted to about 60%. In 2017, the marriage rate dropped to 35% among domestic-born Latinos, while it remained almost the same among the foreign-born. In other words, throughout the 1990-2017 period, marriage was more prevalent among foreign-born Latinos than domestic-born Latinos. This difference may be associated with the fact that the current immigration policy prioritizes marriage over other family relationships.



Table 6  
Partnership Status among Latinos by Nativity and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Domestic-Born</b>								
Married	50.4%	51.0%	47.3%	48.1%	36.2%	38.8%	33.4%	36.2%
Cohabiting	5.3%	5.1%	7.3%	7.4%	7.8%	7.9%	7.5%	7.7%
Unpartnered	44.3%	43.9%	45.4%	44.5%	56.0%	53.3%	59.1%	56.0%
<b>Foreign-Born</b>								
Married	59.6%	61.5%	60.1%	63.4%	55.5%	57.8%	58.2%	57.8%
Cohabiting	4.1%	3.8%	5.6%	5.5%	7.6%	7.7%	7.4%	7.0%
Unpartnered	36.2%	34.7%	34.3%	31.1%	36.8%	34.4%	34.4%	35.2%

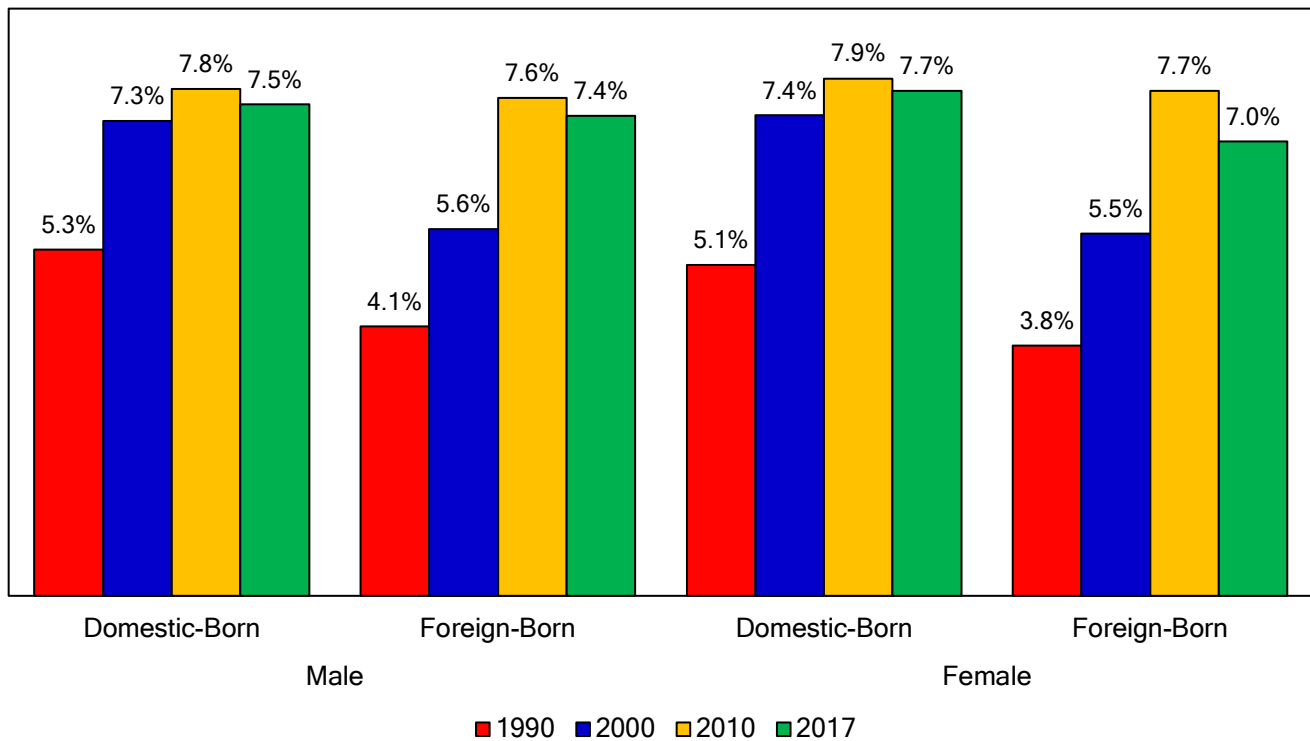
Figure 16  
Percentage of the "Married" Latinos by Nativity and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017



In 1990, the cohabitation level was slightly higher among domestic-born than foreign-born Latinos. (See figure 17). Between 1990 and 2017, both groups witnessed a slight increase (about 3%) in their

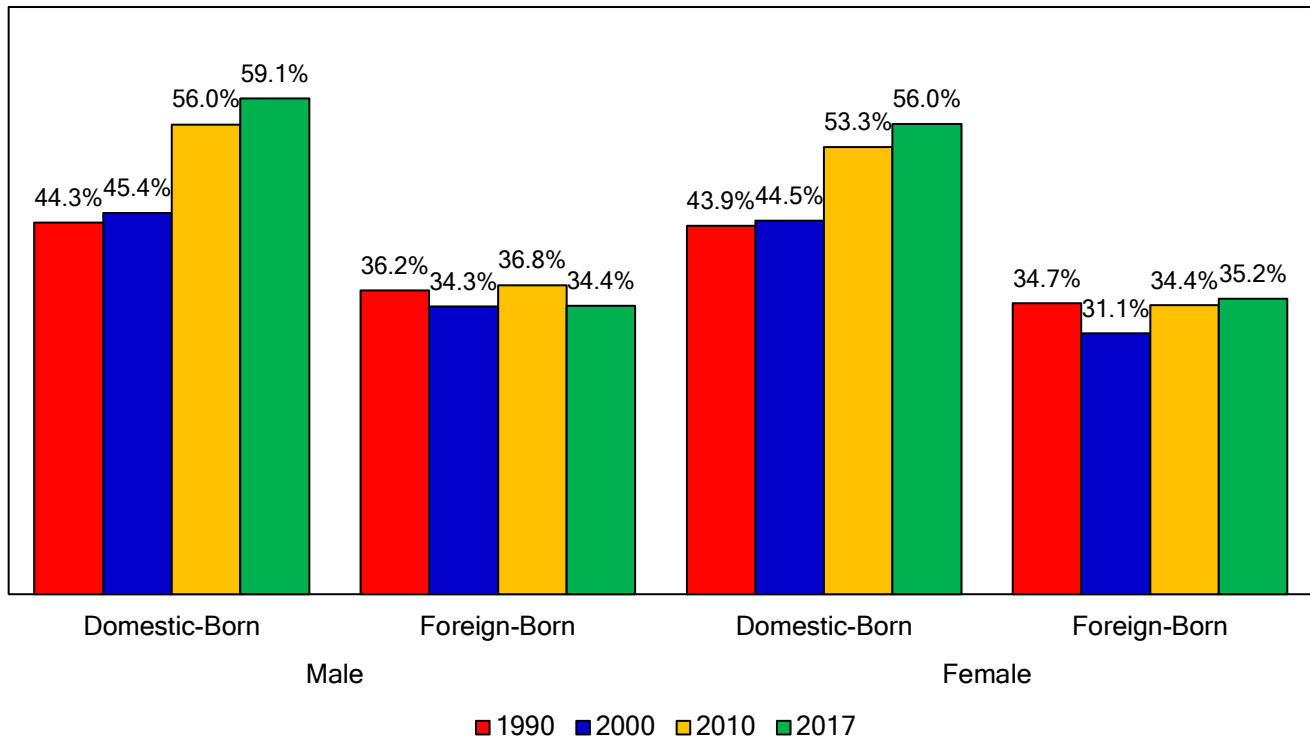
cohabitation percentages, but the differences among both groups were not as stark as with the marriage rates. In 2017, about 7.5% of both foreign-born and domestic-born Latinos were cohabiting.

Figure 17  
Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latinos by Nativity and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017



During the 1990-2017 period, domestic-born Latinos had a higher percentage of unpartnered individuals than foreign-born Latinos. (See figure 18). The proportion of the unpartnered population increased from about 45% to 60% among domestic-born Latinos. By contrast, that percentage remained relatively stable among foreign-born Latinos at around 35%.

Figure 18  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latinos by Nativity and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017



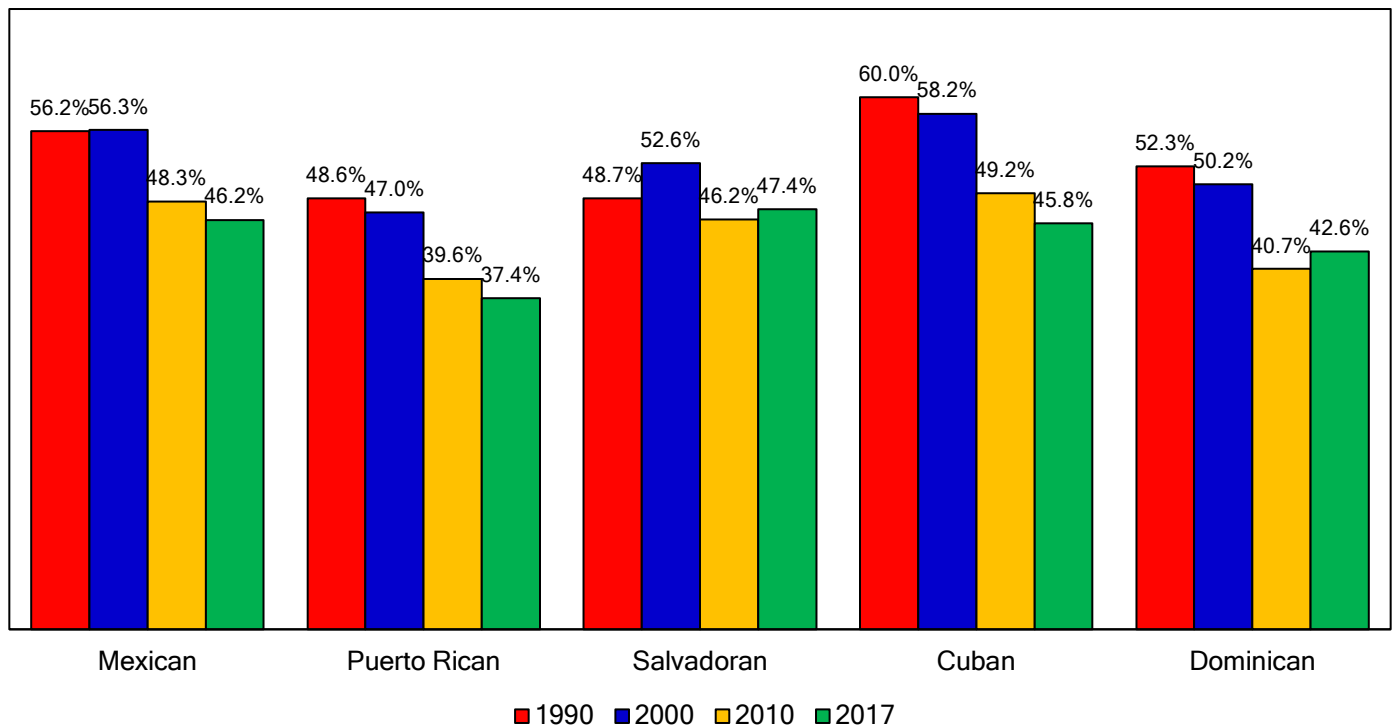
### Partnership Status among the Five Largest Latino National Subgroups

Partnership status varied across the five largest Latino national subgroups. In 1990, Cuban men had the highest marriage rates at about 60%, followed closely by Mexicans (58.2%), Dominicans (52.3%), Salvadorans (48.7%), and Puerto Ricans (48.6%). (See table 7 and figure 19). By 2017, all Latino male subgroups witnessed a decline in marriage, especially Cubans: about 46% of Cuban men were married in 2017. Among the other nationalities, marriage rates were 46.2% (Mexican), 37.4% (Puerto Rican), 47.4% (Salvadoran), and 42.6% (Dominican).

Table 7  
Partnership Status among Latinos by National Subgroups and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Mexican</b>								
Married	56.2%	59.3%	56.3%	59.5%	48.3%	51.1%	46.2%	48.0%
Cohabiting	4.2%	4.2%	5.7%	6.0%	7.5%	7.8%	7.3%	7.4%
Unpartnered	39.6%	36.5%	37.9%	34.5%	44.1%	41.1%	46.6%	44.6%
<b>Puerto Rican</b>								
Married	48.6%	43.8%	47.0%	43.9%	39.6%	36.6%	37.4%	35.0%
Cohabiting	7.2%	6.4%	9.7%	8.7%	9.9%	8.6%	9.5%	8.5%
Unpartnered	44.2%	49.8%	43.3%	47.4%	50.5%	54.7%	53.2%	56.4%
<b>Salvadoran</b>								
Married	48.7%	50.4%	52.6%	55.3%	46.2%	46.2%	47.4%	47.9%
Cohabiting	5.8%	6.4%	6.5%	7.1%	8.1%	9.8%	8.0%	8.1%
Unpartnered	45.6%	43.2%	40.9%	37.6%	45.7%	44.0%	44.6%	44.0%
<b>Cuban</b>								
Married	60.0%	60.1%	58.2%	58.8%	49.2%	48.6%	45.8%	44.3%
Cohabiting	3.8%	2.8%	6.7%	5.6%	7.5%	6.9%	9.3%	8.8%
Unpartnered	36.1%	37.1%	35.1%	35.6%	43.3%	44.5%	44.9%	46.8%
<b>Dominican</b>								
Married	52.3%	45.1%	50.2%	45.7%	40.7%	36.4%	42.6%	38.5%
Cohabiting	5.7%	4.3%	8.2%	6.6%	8.8%	6.9%	6.4%	5.6%
Unpartnered	42.1%	50.6%	41.6%	47.7%	50.5%	56.7%	51.0%	55.8%

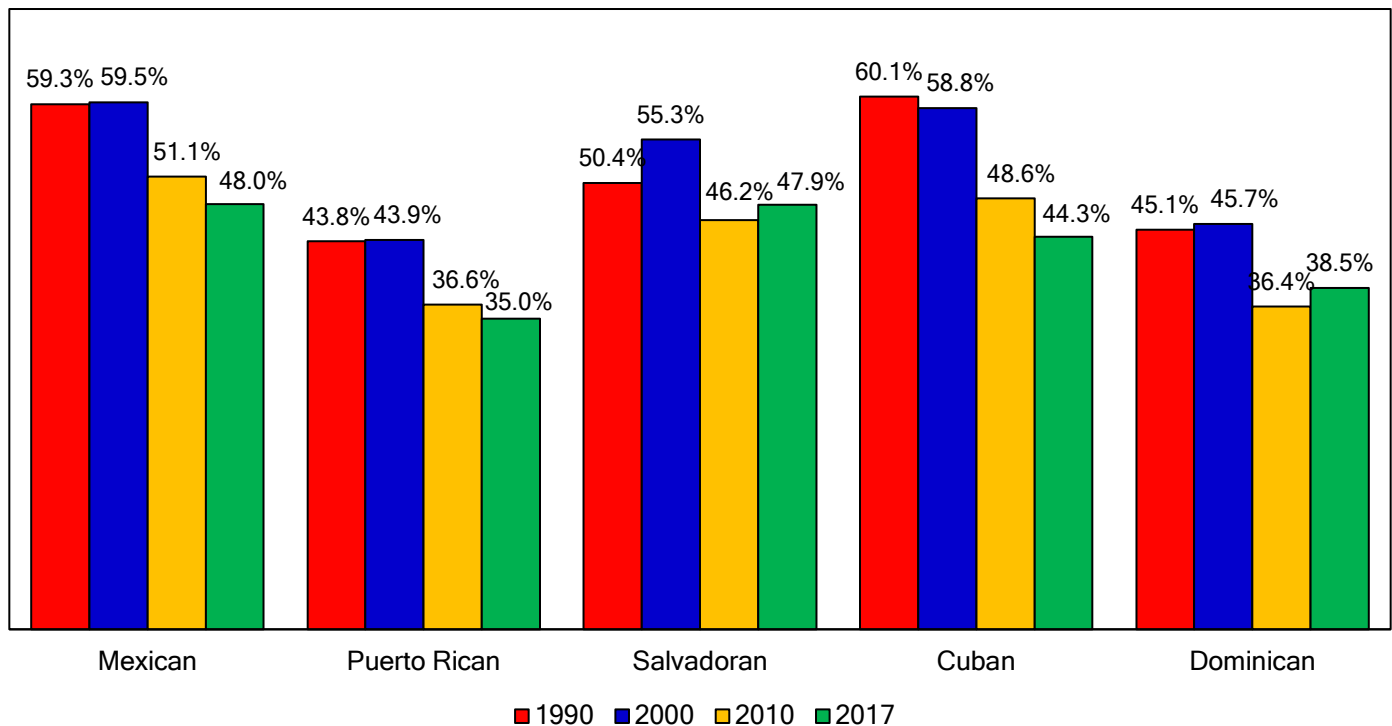
Figure 19  
Percentage of the "Married" Latinos by National Subgroups  
United States, 1990-2017



The subgroup differences in marriage rates were similar among Latinas. (See figure 20). Again, Cuban women had the largest drop in marriage, from 60.1% in 1990 to 44.3% in 2017. Over the same period, the marriage rate decreased similarly from 59.3% to 48.0% among Mexicans, from 43.8% to 35.0% among Puerto Ricans, from 50.4% to 47.9% among Salvadorans, and from 45.1% to 38.5% among Dominicans.

Mexican and Salvadoran women had slightly higher marriage rates than men. In contrast, among Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans, men had a slightly higher marriage rate than women. The largest male-female difference in marriage levels was found among Dominicans (42.6% among men compared to 38.5% among women).

Figure 20  
Percentage of the "Married" Latinas by National Subgroups,  
United States, 1990-2017



Between 1990 and 2017, the largest growth in cohabitation rates was experienced by Cuban men and women. (See figures 21 and 22). Over those three decades, the percentage of cohabiting Cuban men more than doubled (from 3.8% to 9.3%), and almost tripled (from 2.8% to 8.8%) among women. The second largest rise in cohabitation was found among Mexicans, whose cohabitation rates grew from 4.2% to 7.4%. Comparatively, other Latino subgroups—Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, and Dominicans—witnessed a rather modest increase in cohabitation.

Figure 21  
 Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latinos by National Subgroups,  
 United States, 1990-2017

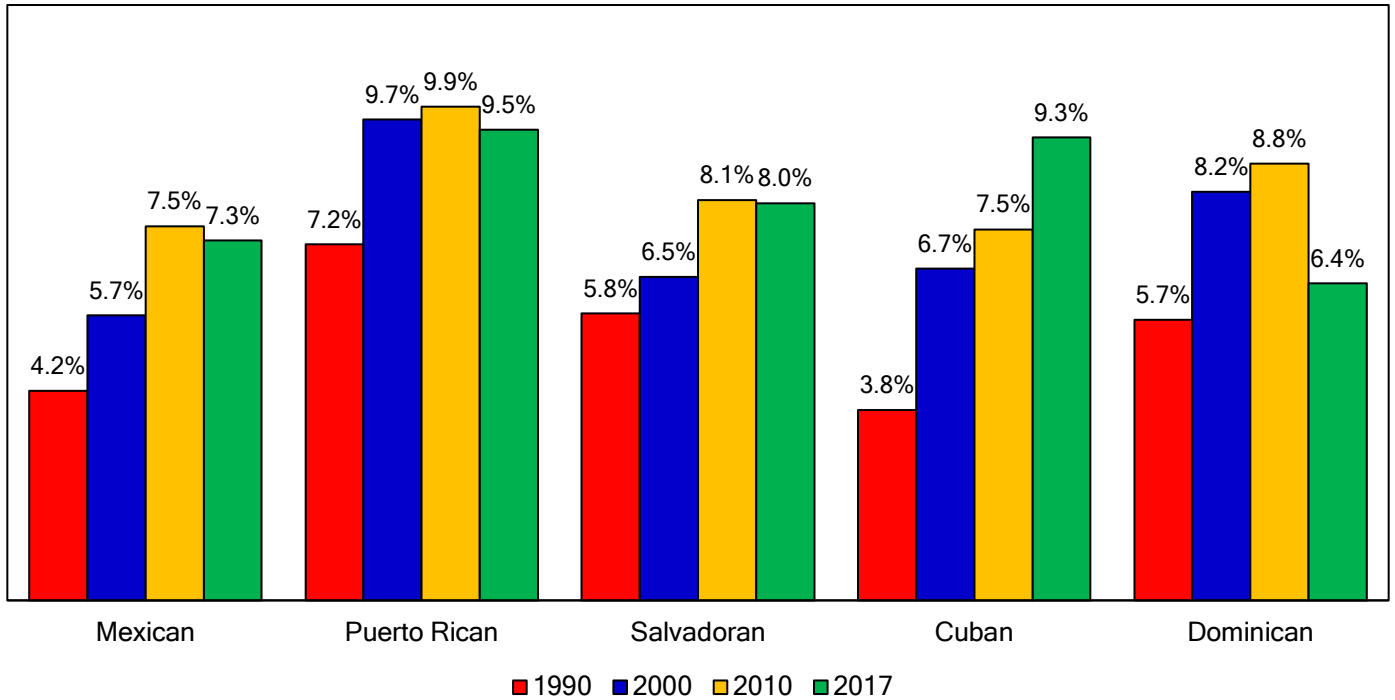
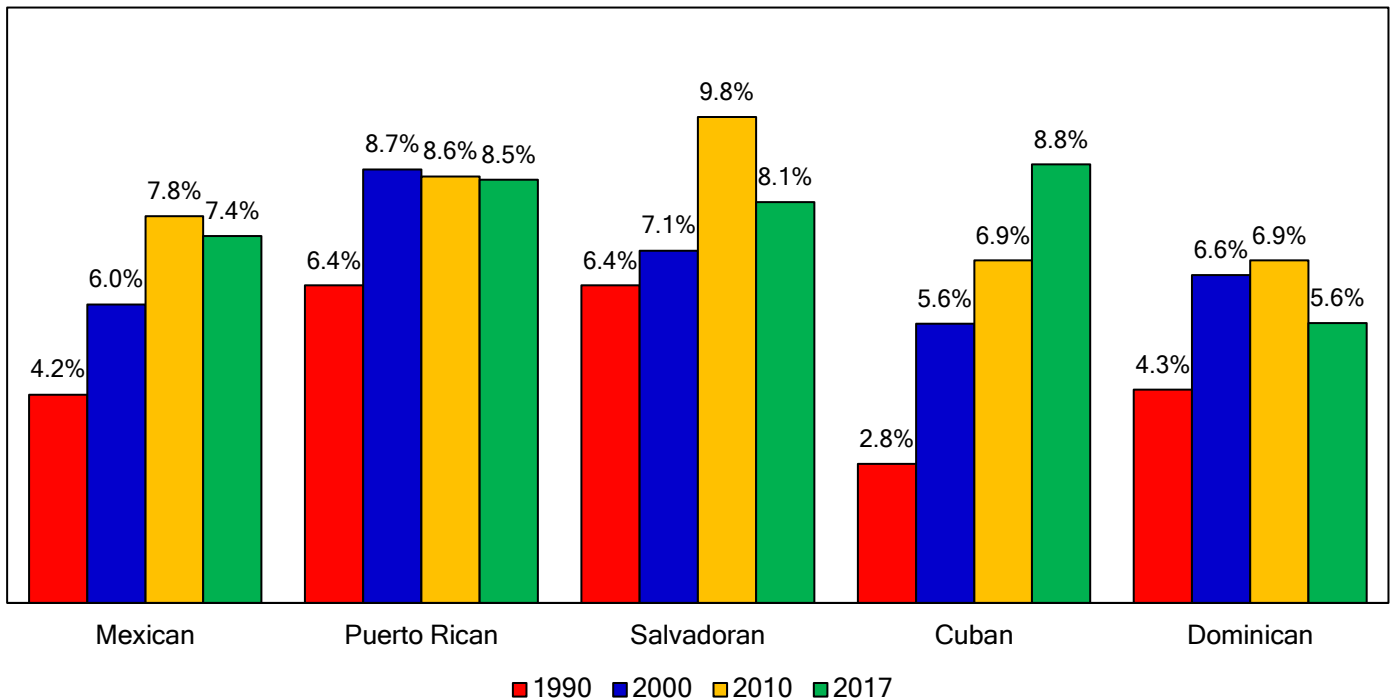


Figure 22  
 Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latinas by National Subgroups,  
 United States, 1990-2017



Except for Salvadorans, every other Latino nationality in this report saw an increase in their proportion of unpartnered individuals between 1990 and 2017. (See figures 23 and 24). About 45% of Salvadoran men and women were unpartnered. On the opposite end, Cubans witnessed the largest growth in their unpartnered population: from 36.1% to 44.9% among men, and 37.1% to 46.8% among women.

Figure 23  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latinos by National Subgroups,  
United States, 1990-2017

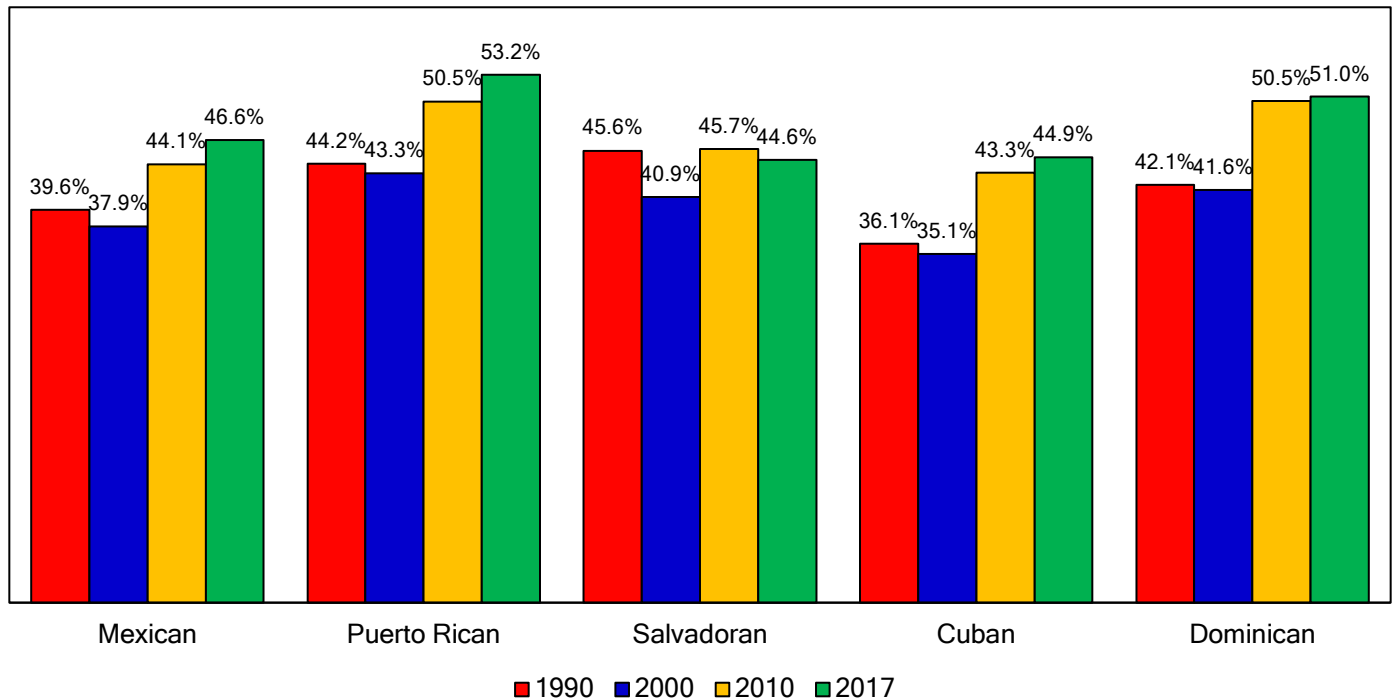
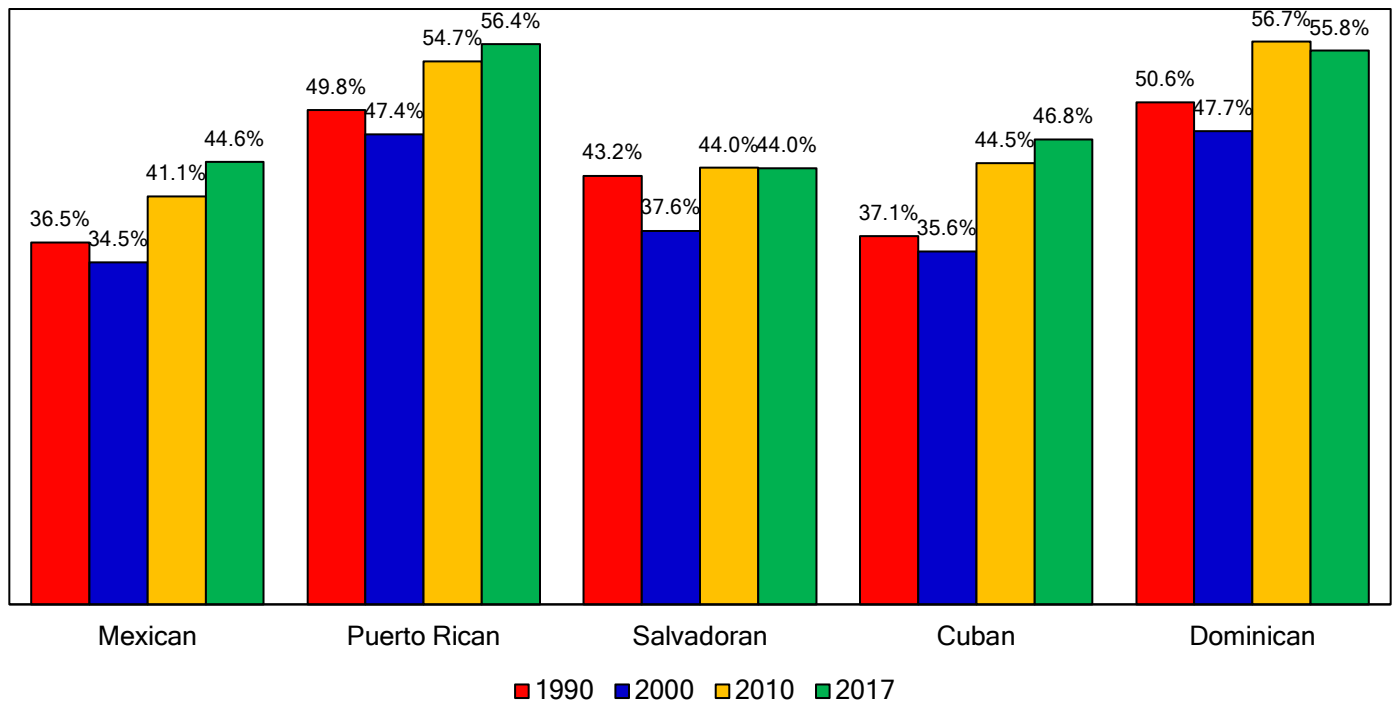




Figure 24  
Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latinas by National Subgroups,  
United States, 1990-2017



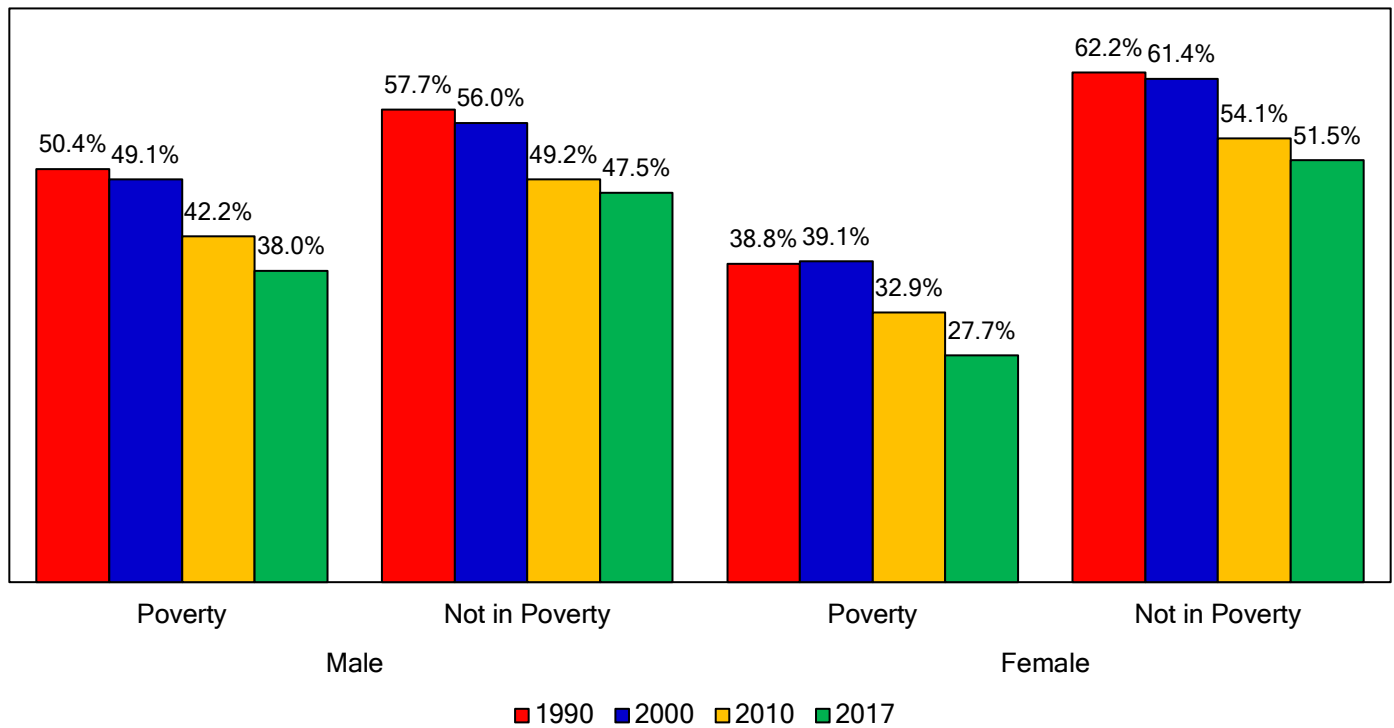
### Partnership Status among Latinas by Poverty Status

Partnership status among Latinas differed by poverty status. Latinas who were not in poverty had higher marriage rates than those in poverty, regardless of sex, between 1990 and 2017. (See table 8 and figure 25). However, Latinas had a greater difference in marriage rates by poverty status than Latinos. In 2017, about half of Latinas not in poverty (51.5%) were married, almost doubling the marriage rates from those in poverty (27.7%). Among Latinos in the same year, the percentages were 47.5% and 38.0%, respectively.

Table 8  
Partnership Status among Latinos by Poverty Status  
United States, 1990-2017

	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>In Poverty</b>								
Married	50.4%	38.8%	49.1%	39.1%	42.2%	32.9%	38.0%	27.7%
Cohabiting	7.4%	9.0%	9.2%	13.1%	12.0%	16.5%	11.7%	16.5%
Unpartnered	42.2%	52.2%	41.7%	47.8%	45.8%	50.6%	50.3%	55.8%
<b>Not in Poverty</b>								
Married	57.7%	62.2%	56.0%	61.4%	49.2%	54.1%	47.5%	51.5%
Cohabiting	4.3%	3.1%	6.0%	4.6%	7.1%	5.2%	7.1%	5.3%
Unpartnered	38.0%	34.7%	38.0%	34.1%	43.7%	40.7%	45.4%	43.2%

Figure 25  
Percentage of the "Married" Latinos by Poverty Status and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017



While Latinos witnessed a rise in cohabitation regardless of their poverty status between 1990 and 2017, those in poverty experienced a larger growth than those not in poverty. (See figure 26). In 1990,

9.0% of Latinas in poverty were cohabiting, and that percentage almost doubled to 16.5% in 2017. The change in the cohabitation percentage during the same period was much smaller among Latinas who were not in poverty: it rose from 3.1% to 5.3%.

Figure 26  
Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latinos by Poverty Status and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

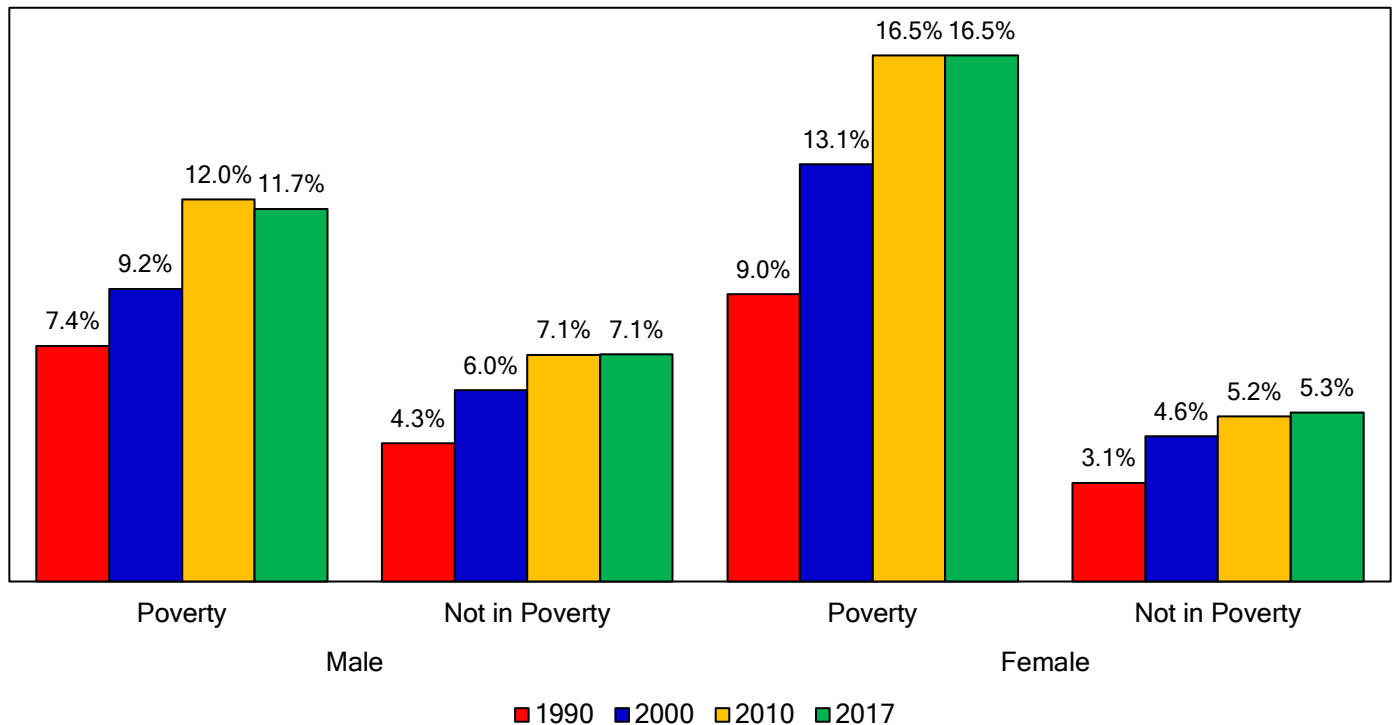
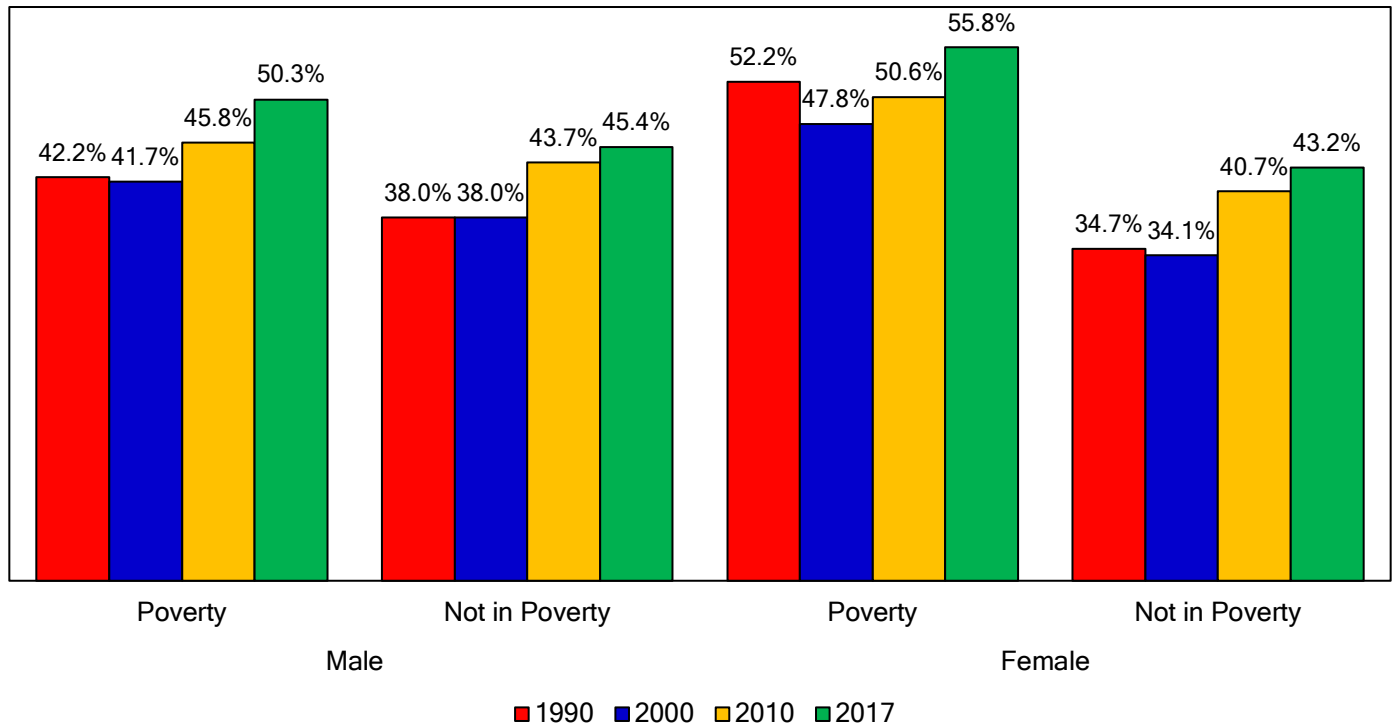


Figure 26 also shows that there is a notable male-female difference in the relationship between poverty and partnership status. Among the groups in poverty, Latinas had higher rates than Latinos (16.5% and 11.7% respectively by 2017). Contrarily, among those not in poverty, Latinas had lower cohabitation rates than Latinos (5.3% and 7.1% respectively in the same year).

A larger proportion of Latinos was unpartnered regardless of their poverty status in 2017 compared to those in 1990. (See figure 27). The difference in the unpartnered percentage continued to exist by poverty status, and it was larger among Latinas than Latinos between 1990 and 2017. For example, in 1990, almost half (52.2%) of the women in poverty were unpartnered, while only about a third (34.7%) of the women not in poverty were so. In 2017, the percentage unpartnered was 55.8% among women in poverty, and 43.2% among those not in poverty.

Figure 27  
 Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latinos by Poverty Status and Sex  
 United States, 1990-2017



## Conclusion

This report captures the changes in the partnership status among the total population in the United States between 1990 and 2017 and focuses on Latinos. After exploring the sex and race/ethnic differences in partnership status in the total population, it examined the association between trends in partnership status among Latinos with sex, age, nativity, national subgroups, and poverty status. The data highlighted four key trends in partnership status among Latinos.

First, there were significant changes in partnership status among the Latino young adults between 1990 and 2017. On the one hand, a smaller proportion of Latino young adults were married in 2017 than those back in 1990. On the other hand, young adults in 2017 were more likely to cohabit or remain unpartnered than those in 1990. The changes in partnership status among this population suggest that the postponement of partnership formation (whether it be marriage or cohabitation) was a prevalent trend among this age group during the 1990-2017 period. Also, the rise in cohabitation among young adults may be interpreted as if cohabitation has become a more acceptable type of partnership.

Second, there were differences in partnership status by nativity. Foreign-born Latinos were more likely to be married than domestic-born Latinos in 1990, and this marriage gap increased by 2017. One possible explanation to the foreign-born Latinos' high level of marriage is that they are older than the domestic-born individuals. Also, their higher marriage rate may be associated with the current U.S. immigrant policy that prioritizes marriage in deciding who can migrate to the U.S.

Third, partnership status varied across the five largest Latino national subgroups. The observed differences in partnership status by national subgroups may be explained by the different cultural norms on family behavior in their countries of origin. But at the same time, the changes in partnership status that were similar to those of the total US population hint that Latinos, regardless of their national subgroups, were adopting mainstream partnership formation practices.

Lastly, poverty status is closely associated with partnership status, particularly among Latinas. Latinos in poverty were less likely to be married and more likely to be cohabiting or unpartnered than those who were not in poverty. These patterns suggest that partnership status not only reflects social norms but also reflects existing economic inequalities among Latinos.

## Statistical Appendix

Table 9  
Percentage of the "Married" Latinos by Age and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

Age	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
18-19	5.3%	14.3%	8.5%	16.2%	2.3%	5.6%	1.5%	3.7%
20-24	24.2%	37.6%	25.9%	36.8%	12.4%	21.5%	9.2%	15.4%
25-29	50.2%	58.5%	49.5%	57.5%	33.1%	43.3%	27.9%	35.2%
30-34	63.6%	64.7%	63.1%	66.2%	51.0%	56.3%	44.9%	50.6%
35-39	70.4%	66.1%	68.2%	66.7%	59.3%	60.2%	56.2%	58.5%
40-44	74.4%	65.8%	70.3%	65.5%	64.2%	62.1%	62.1%	61.4%
45-49	76.0%	65.3%	71.8%	64.1%	65.5%	61.1%	64.8%	61.7%
50-54	77.2%	64.1%	73.0%	61.6%	67.1%	59.4%	65.9%	59.6%
55-59	78.3%	60.5%	74.0%	58.8%	69.3%	56.6%	66.0%	57.6%
60-64	77.2%	54.8%	74.5%	55.3%	72.0%	52.8%	67.4%	54.6%

Table 10  
Percentage of the "Cohabiting" Latinos by Age and Sex  
United States, 1990-2017

Age	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
18-19	1.2%	3.1%	1.8%	4.1%	1.1%	2.7%	0.9%	1.6%
20-24	4.4%	5.9%	6.1%	8.6%	5.9%	9.2%	4.5%	7.5%
25-29	6.2%	6.0%	8.6%	9.1%	11.9%	13.1%	10.4%	12.1%
30-34	6.2%	5.4%	8.0%	7.4%	11.3%	10.5%	11.3%	11.0%
35-39	5.2%	4.6%	7.0%	6.5%	9.3%	8.9%	10.1%	8.9%
40-44	4.7%	4.2%	6.3%	5.7%	7.8%	6.9%	8.5%	7.4%
45-49	3.9%	3.2%	5.4%	4.8%	6.6%	5.8%	6.9%	6.1%
50-54	3.4%	2.3%	4.5%	3.8%	5.3%	4.9%	5.9%	4.6%
55-59	2.5%	1.6%	3.8%	2.5%	4.6%	3.7%	4.7%	3.8%
60-64	1.8%	1.0%	2.9%	1.9%	3.4%	2.1%	3.7%	2.7%

Table 11  
 Percentage of the "Unpartnered" Latinos by Age and Sex  
 United States, 1990-2017

	1990		2000		2010		2017	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Age</b>								
18-19	93.5%	82.5%	89.7%	79.6%	96.6%	91.7%	97.5%	94.7%
20-24	71.4%	56.5%	68.0%	54.6%	81.7%	69.3%	86.3%	77.1%
25-29	43.6%	35.5%	41.9%	33.4%	55.0%	43.6%	61.7%	52.7%
30-34	30.2%	29.8%	28.9%	26.4%	37.7%	33.2%	43.8%	38.4%
35-39	24.4%	29.3%	24.8%	26.8%	31.3%	30.9%	33.7%	32.6%
40-44	20.9%	30.1%	23.4%	28.8%	28.0%	31.0%	29.5%	31.2%
45-49	20.1%	31.5%	22.8%	31.1%	27.9%	33.1%	28.3%	32.2%
50-54	19.4%	33.6%	22.5%	34.6%	27.6%	35.7%	28.2%	35.8%
55-59	19.2%	37.9%	22.2%	38.7%	26.1%	39.8%	29.3%	38.6%
60-64	20.9%	44.2%	22.6%	42.8%	24.6%	45.2%	28.9%	42.7%