

# 50 Years of Living Without Children: Who and What has Changed

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## RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the demographic shifts related to the increased share of Americans living without children?

We know that fertility has gone down, and with an aging nation we should expect to see the number of Americans living with children to have gone down. Since 1967, how have the characteristics of people who are not living with children changed?

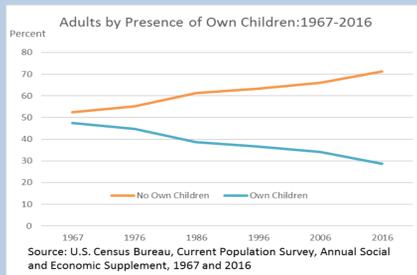
## DATA AND METHODS

- Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) has been collected since 1967.
- This study uses data on adults 18 and over to examine the sociodemographic characteristics of those who report no children living with them.
- To assess if someone did not have a child living with them, we used a self-reported count of the number of own (biological, step, or adopted), never-married children under the age of 18.
- It is important to note that for the years 1967-1995, we use the Persons of the Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters (POSSLQ) measure. This proxy for direct measurement of partnerships includes adults who report living with a member of the opposite sex and no other adults, and do not have a spouse present.

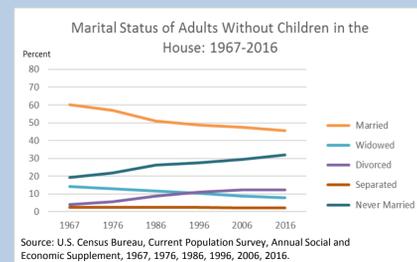
## Methods

- This study analyzed data from 1967-2016. Samples were divided between adults with and without children. Demographics of those without children in the household are shown for selected years, 1967-2016. Comparisons between adults with children living with them and those without children in the household were done for the years 1967 and 2016.
- Bivariate testing was done for determining significance at the 90 percent significance level.

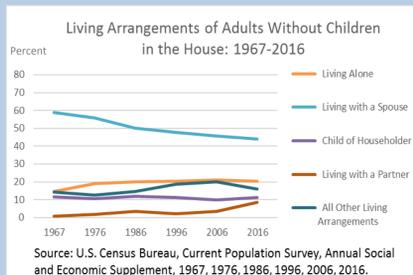
## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OVER TIME



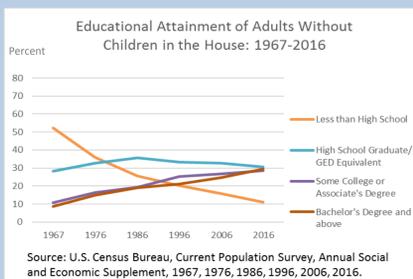
- A higher proportion of all adults live without children in their home now (71.4%) than in 1967 (52.5%).



- Married is still the most prevalent marital status among those living with no children.

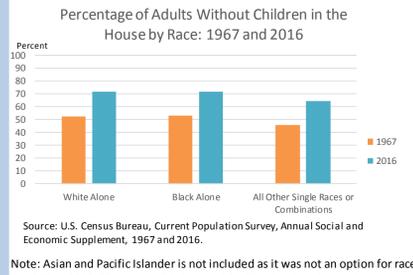


- The largest shifts in the living arrangements of adults with no children in the house were for those living with spouses and those living with a partner. The decrease in living with a spouse is related to the delay in marriage and subsequent increase in living with a partner.



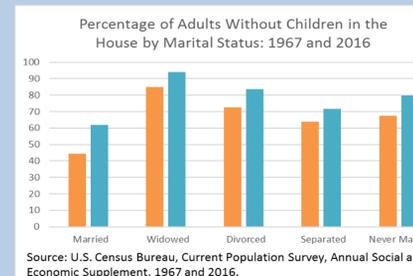
- More than one-half of adults living without children have more than a high school degree.

## BIVARIATE COMPARISON

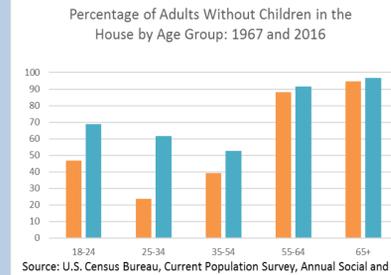


Note: Asian and Pacific Islander is not included as it was not an option for race in 1967. In 2016, 66 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders did not have children in the house.

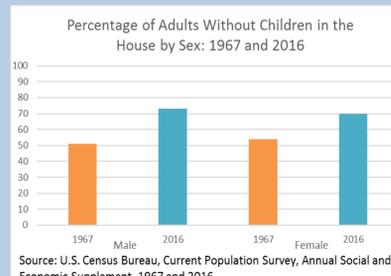
- There is an overall increase among all races of adults with no children living in their home.



- While married (including spouse absent) is the most prevalent marital status among those with no children in the house, we see that a smaller proportion of married have no children in the house compared to all other marital statuses.

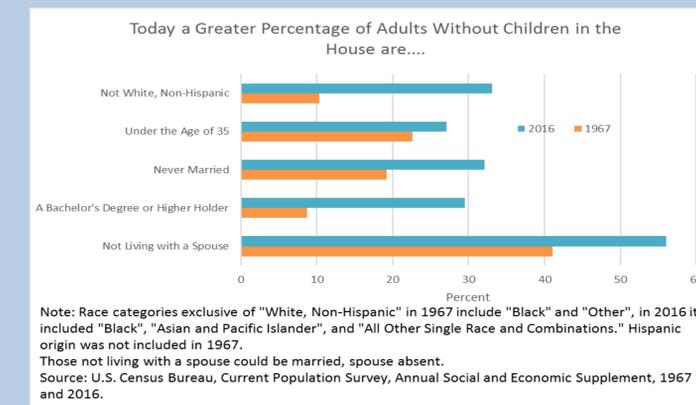


- The percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with no children living with them more than doubled since 1967.



- The gains in the percentage of adults without children in the house are larger for men than for women. This is due in part to increases in the life expectancy of men and increase in divorced adults since 1967.

## SUMMARY



## CONCLUSIONS

- In the last 50 years, we see that there have been some demographic shifts in the composition of adults who do not live with children.
- It is important to keep in mind that these demographic changes over time only reflect changes for those who had no children living with them at the time of the interview.
- Further, this group is specifically identified by the lack of own children in the house. Own children are identified as biological, step or adoptive, never married children under 18 years of age. These adults may have had children previously who no longer live with them, they may go on to have children, or they may never have had children.
- Given that the total fertility rate has decreased over the years and the nation is aging, these data highlight that an increasing share of adults in the United States are not living with children.