



## Childbearing plans in Hungary in 2020

At the time of the introduction of the Family Protection Action Plan, in 2019 and then in 2020, the Maria Kopp Institute for Demography and Families (KINCS) carried out a representative national survey on the measures among Hungarians aged 18-49 in a sample of 1,000 people and examined their impact on population. The research also examined the number of children considered ideal by the respondents and the number of children they commit themselves to have in the near future or in the longer term.

### Ideal number of children in Hungary

An important factor in population development is what people consider to be the ideal number of children and how much this differs from the number of children born. **In 2020, 50.1% of respondents think that two children would be ideal in Hungary, and 41.7% think so about three children.** An additional 4.6% said four children would be ideal, while 1.5% said they would have one. The data for 2019 show some differences - in the previous year, half of the respondents (51.1%) considered three children to be ideal in Hungary; the proportion of those who preferred the two-child family model was 41.8%. **The proportion of those who say four children are ideal has increased by 0.9% by 2020**, and the number of those who consider one child to be ideal has decreased. Overall, the vast majority of respondents think about the ideal number of children with siblings and consider two or more children to be ideal.

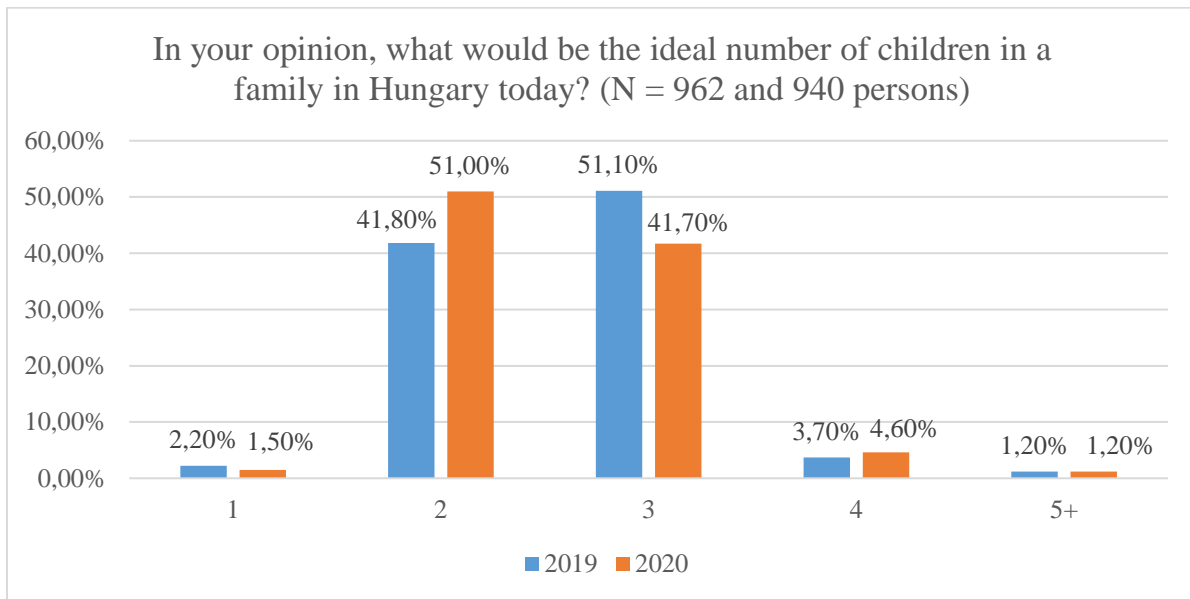


Figure 1: Ideal number of children in Hungary according to the respondents in 2019 and 2020. (N = 962 and 940 people)<sup>1</sup>

If we look at the responses according to a breakdown of those with children/childless, we can see that for parents with children, **the proportion of those who think that three children would be ideal per family is much higher, as 49.3% have this position.** Among the childless, this proportion is 34.2%. Among them, significantly more consider having two children is ideal (56.2%, compared to 45.7% among families with children).

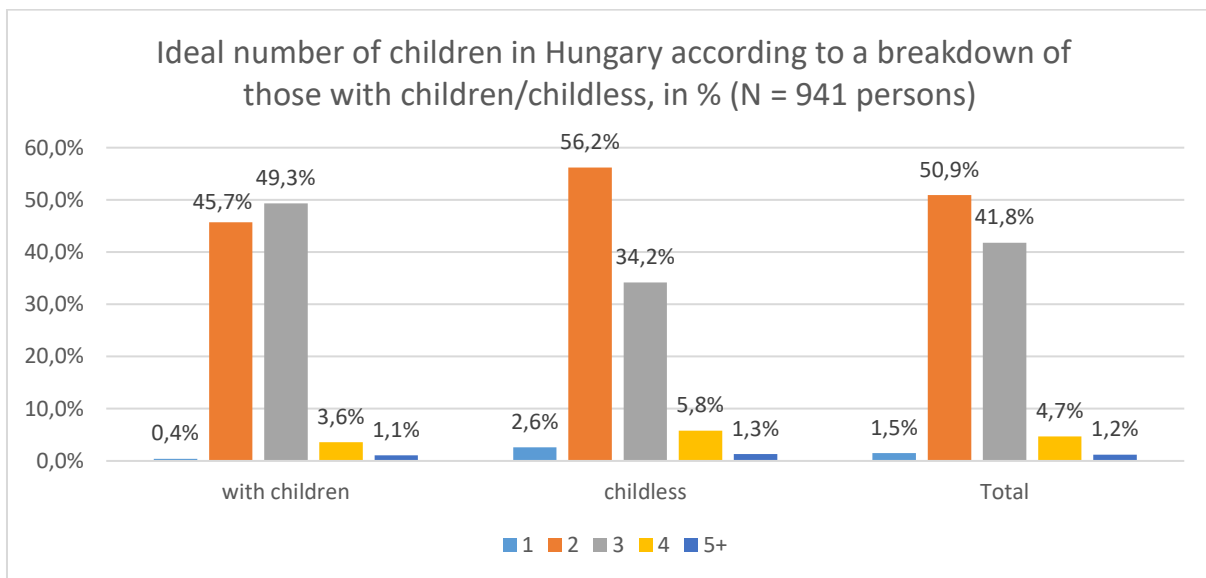


Figure 2: Ideal number of children in Hungary according to a breakdown of those with children/childless (N = 941 people)

<sup>1</sup>In the analysis, we did not take into account the low rate of non-response.

**The results show that the more children someone has, the higher they consider the ideal number of children.** While the number of children considered to be ideal among respondents with one or two children is two (52-54% think so), among respondents with three children it is three (64.4%). Four children as an ideal number of children increases significantly among respondents with four or more children, as 33.3% think so.

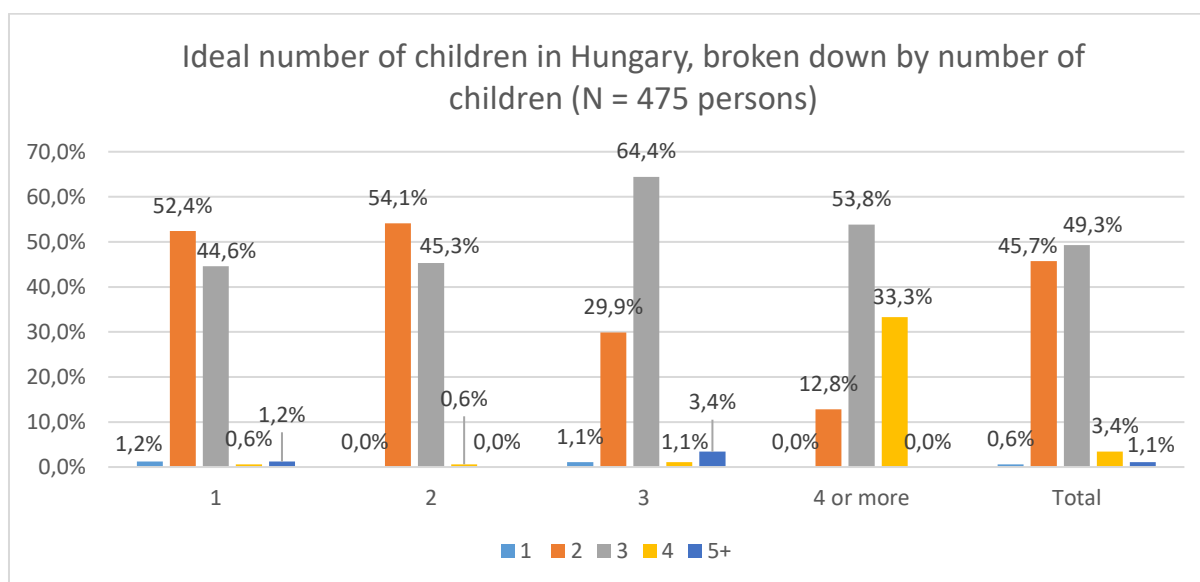


Figure 3: Ideal number of children in Hungary by respondents, broken down by number of children (N = 475 people)

Regarding the breakdown by place of residence, it can be said that **according to the majority of respondents living in Budapest (56.7%), two children are ideal, but the proportions of those living in county seats (university cities) are changing significantly. Here, having three children is considered ideal by most (49.7%), followed by the two-child family model with 47.2%.**

54.8% of those living in cities say two children and another 39% say three children are ideal. Among the people living in municipalities, it can be observed that although most of them support the two-child family model (46.3%), the group of those who consider three children to be ideal (43.1%) is only 3% behind, and the proportion of those who think that four or five children would be adequate in a family in Hungary today makes up almost 9%.

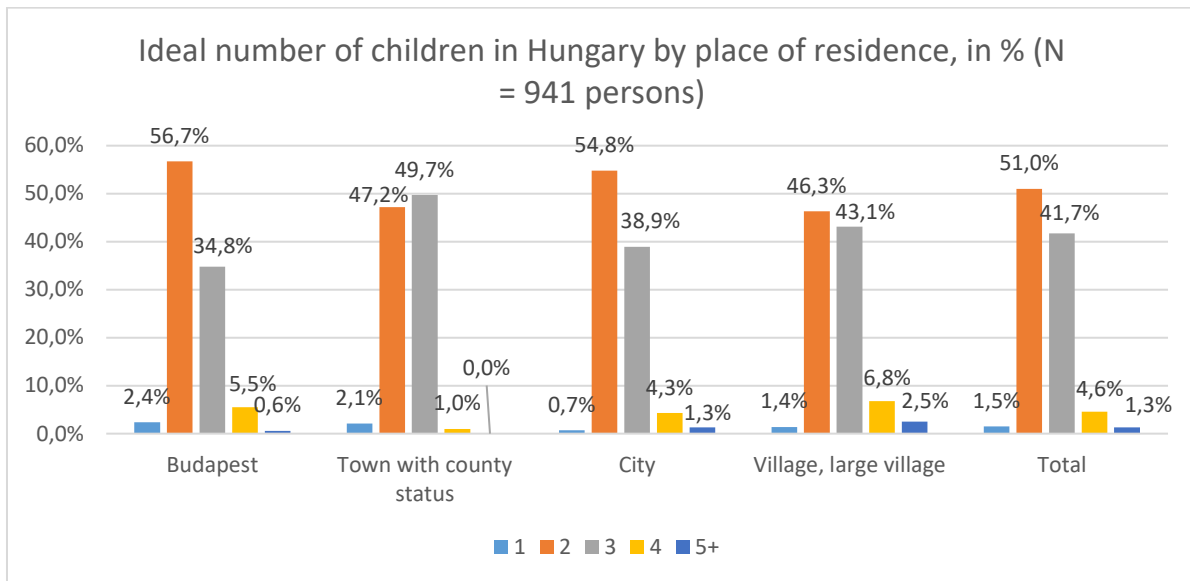


Figure 4: Ideal number of children in Hungary according to the respondents, broken down by place of residence. (N = 941 people)

If we would like to examine the correlation of education with this question, we can say that although the ideal number of children among respondents with primary education is two (47.4%), the proportion of those who think that four or more children would be ideal in a family is close to 10%. (9.5%). The proportion of those who prefer three children among those with primary education is 34.8%.

Among those with a secondary education, two children were also said to be the ideal number of children by 53.9%, and the proportion who said three children would be appropriate in a family was 40.2%. **Among those with higher education, the highest proportion are those who consider families with three children to be good (43.2%), but even in this group, most consider the family model with two children to be ideal (52.6%).**

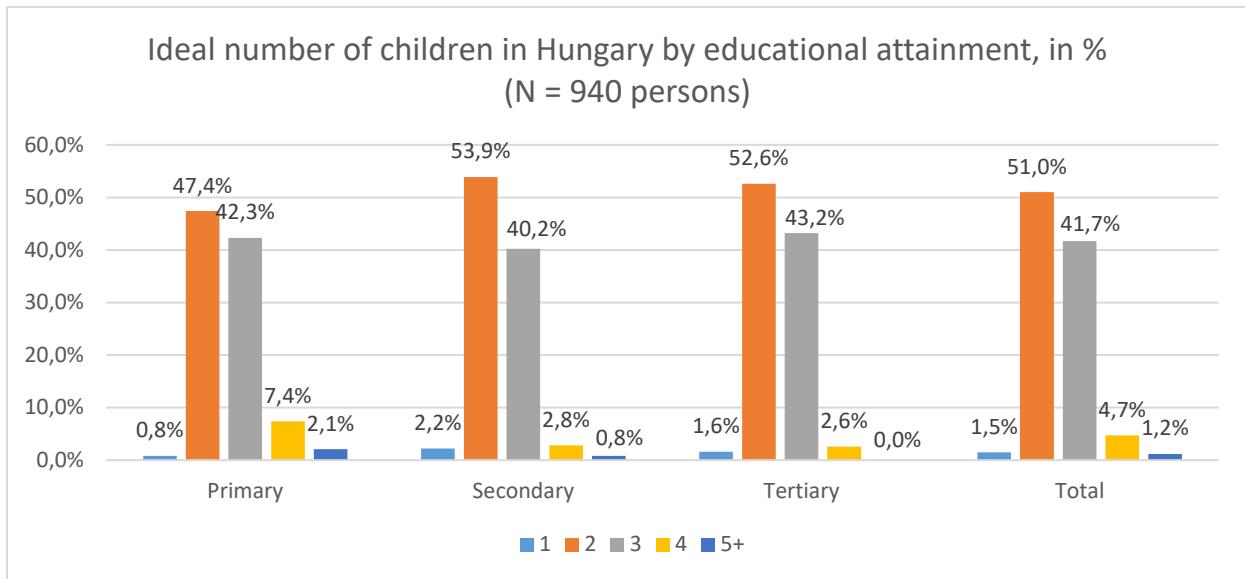


Figure 5: Ideal number of children in Hungary by respondents, by educational attainment (N = 940 people)

Examining the issue by economic activity, it is clear that the highest proportion of those who consider one child to be ideal are among the unemployed (7.4%), most of those who consider two children to be ideal live off casual work (61.5%) or work part-time (59%). **Those who think that the ideal number of children in Hungary today would be three are typically full-time students (51.6%) or people who are on childcare leave and do not work besides it (50.75).** The majority of those who consider four or more children to be ideal came from the homemakers (16.7%), followed by the unemployed (12%).

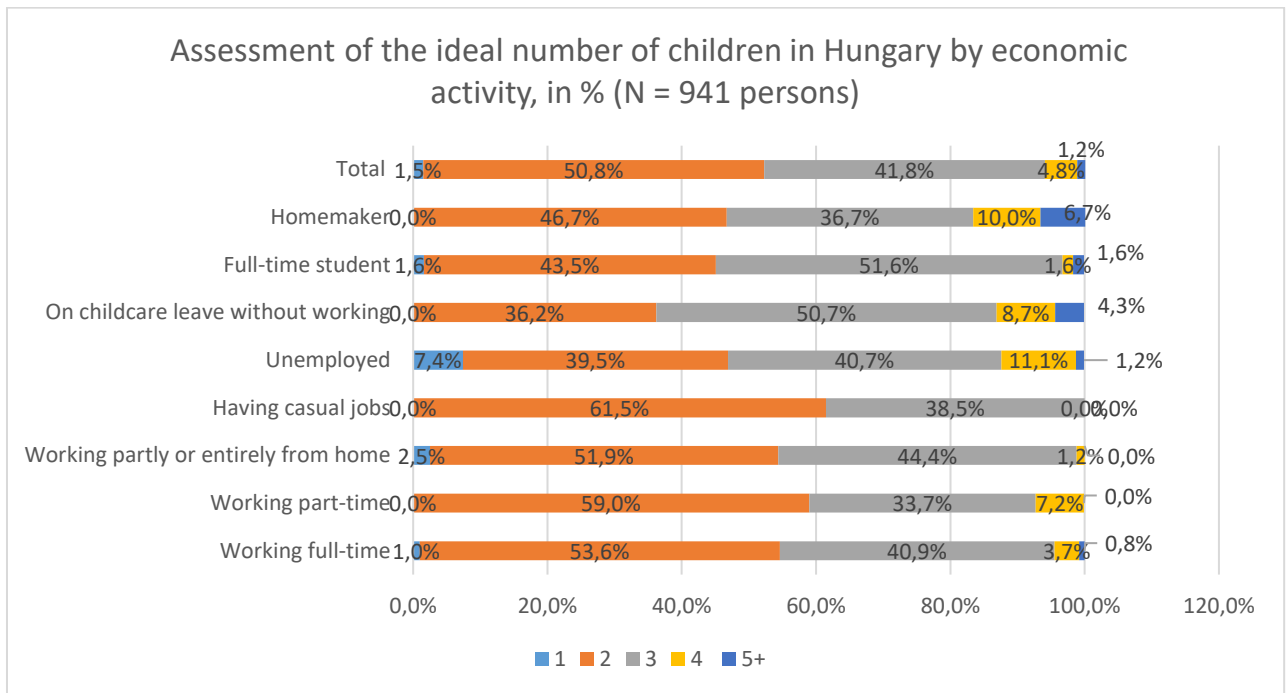


Figure 6: Assessment of the ideal number of children in Hungary according to the respondents, broken down by economic activity (N = 941 persons)

Examining the average of the number of children considered ideal by the respondents, it can be concluded that those who have children consider more children to be ideal than those who do not have. The more children the respondent has, the higher his ideal number of children is. Typically, in smaller settlements more children are considered ideal, while as the size of the settlement increases, the number of children considered ideal decreases, in Budapest we obtained the lowest value. Those with a primary education consider a higher number of children to be ideal than those with a higher education. **In terms of economic activity, a larger number of children than the average of the total sample is considered ideal by those who were on some form of childcare leave, were housemakers, unemployed or in higher education at the time of the survey.**

		<b>Average number of ideal children</b>
	Full sample	<b>2.52</b>
Do you have children?	with children	2.59
	childless	2.47
How many children do you have?	1	2.48
	2	2.46



	3	2.76
	4+	3.20
Place of Residence	Budapest	2.45
	county status	2.49
	city	2.50
	municipality	2.62
Educational background	primary education	2.62
	secondary education	2.46
	higher education	2.47
Economic activity	Working full-time	2.49
	Working part-time	2.48
	Working partly or entirely from home	2.44
	Having casual jobs	2.38
	Unemployed	2.59
	On childcare leave without working	2.81
	Full-time student	2.58
	Homemaker	2.76

*Table 1: The average ideal number of children*

## Number of children planned

In addition to the number of children considered ideal, we asked how many children the respondents plan in their lifetime. **According to the results, nearly half of the respondents (48.9%) would like to have two children, and another 27.4% are planning to have three children in their lifetime.** They are followed by the respondents who would like to have one child, with 13.8% and roughly 10% of those who want four or more children. The 2019 data showed similar results, but with a few differences, there were more three children planned in 2019 than in 2020 (a 5 percentage point difference).

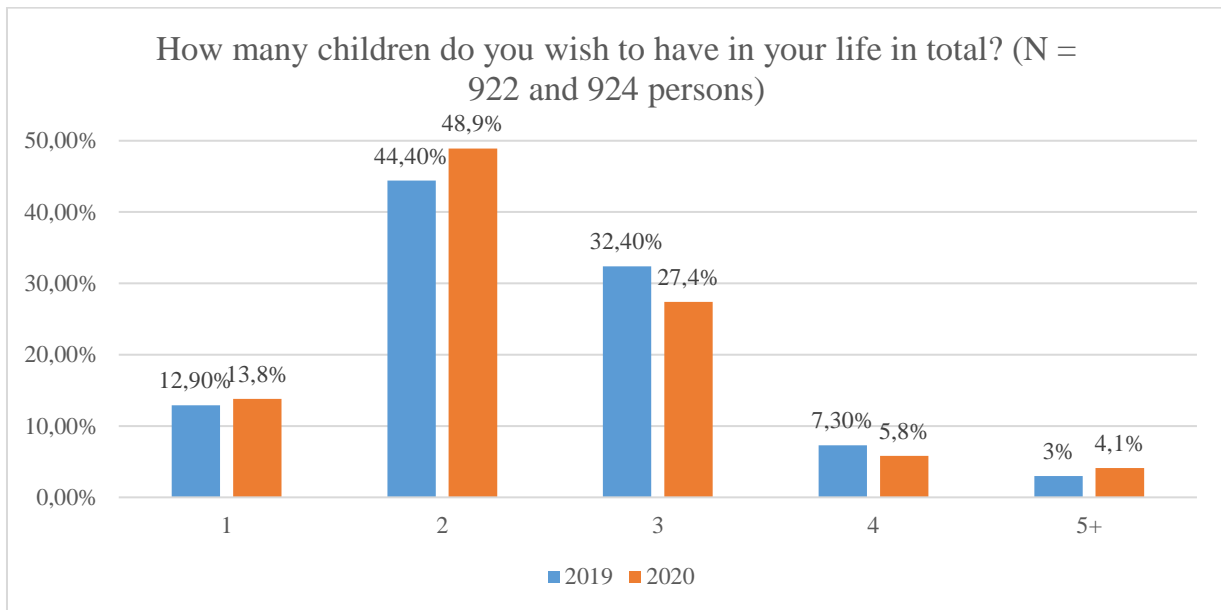


Figure 7: Number of planned children in 2019 and 2020 (N = 922 and 924 people)<sup>2</sup>

If we examine the question according to a breakdown of those with children/childless, we can see that 55.5% of childless people are planning one child, compared to 42.8% of respondents with children. The proportion of those planning three children was 25.9% for those without children and 28.7% for respondents with children. There is a larger difference for four or more children, as 13% of respondents with children plan to have four or more children in their lifetime, compared to only 6.3% of those without children.

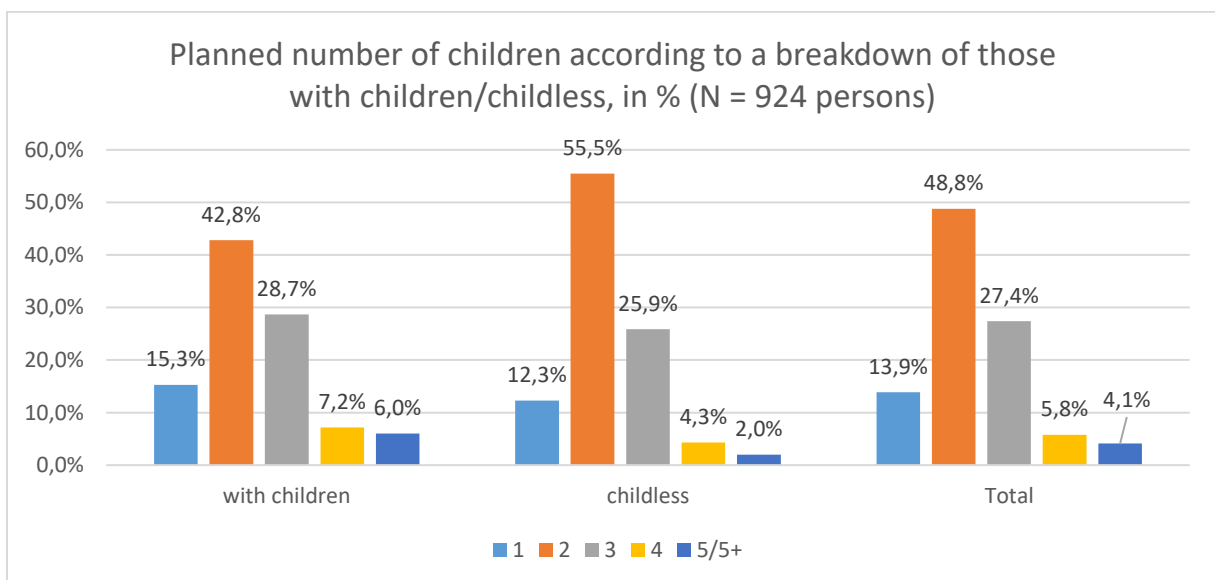


Figure 8: Number of planned children among respondents according to a breakdown of those with children/childless (N = 924 people)

<sup>2</sup>In the analysis, we did not take into account the low rate of non-response.



Among respondents with one child, 37.4% **would like to have two children and another 17.2% three children. 18.5% of those with two children are planning a third child and 78.3% planned to have two children, not more. Among those with three children, 14% are thinking about additional child (ren), while 83.9% do not plan to have more children. Among those with four or more children, 45.5% plan a total of five or more children in their lifetime, but these figures also include those who already have more than four children.**

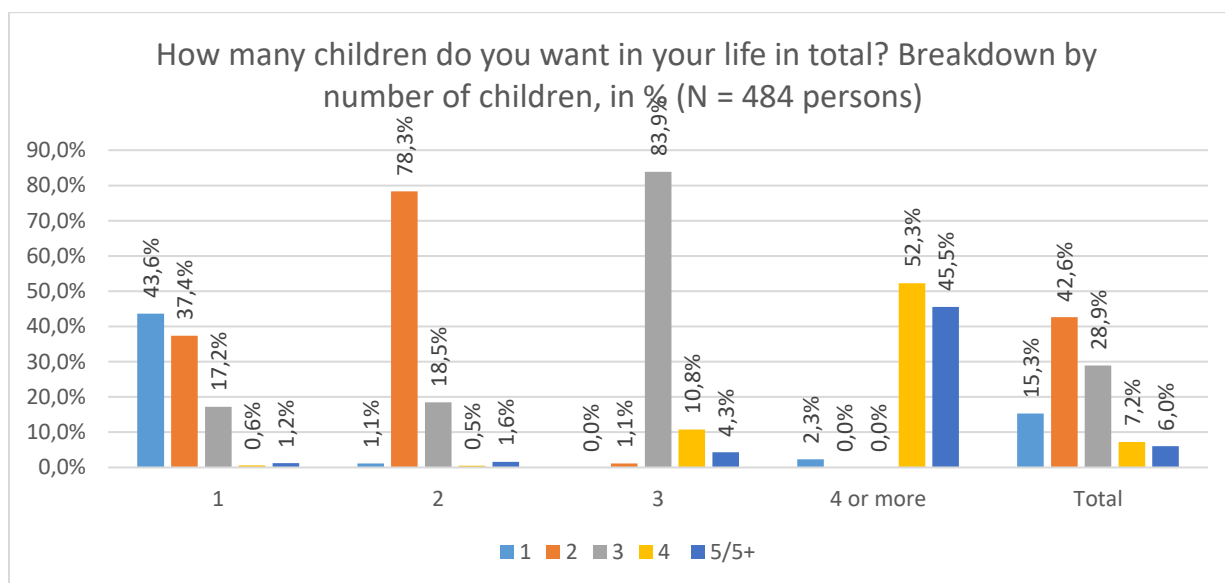


Figure 9: Number of planned children among respondents with children (N = 484 people)

Breaking down by age category, we can see that the highest proportions of those planning one child are among the 40-49 age group (22.6%). **Those who want two children in their lifetime, mostly came from the group of 18-29 year olds (53.1%),** followed by 30-39 year olds with 47.9%, then 40-49 year olds with 45.2%. The proportion of those planning three children is the highest among those aged 30-39 with 30.3%, and those aged 18-29 (29.3%) are only a little behind. Four or more children are mostly planned in the 40-49 and 30-39 age groups, with a proportion of around 10%.

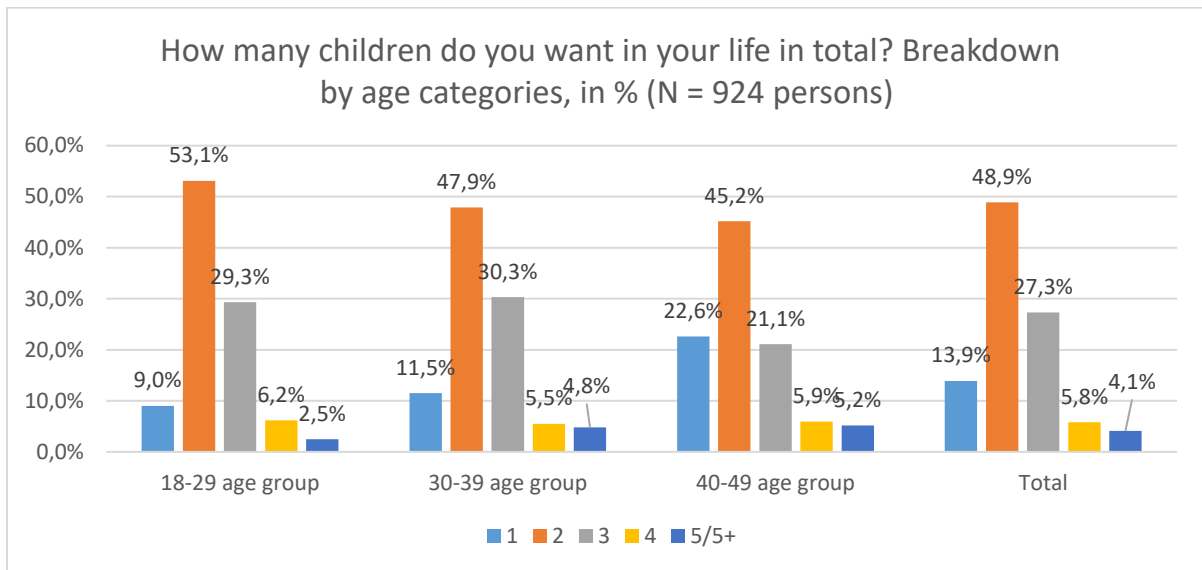


Figure 10: Number of planned children by age category (N = 924 people)

Examining the relationship between the planned number of children and educational attainment, it can be said that the majority of those planning to have four or more children have completed primary education (13.6%), but this group also has the highest proportion of those planning to have only one child in their lifetime (14, 9%). **Those who plan to have two children are the most likely to have completed secondary education (55%). This proportion is 47.7% for those with tertiary education.** The majority of those planning three children have a tertiary education, with a share of 33.3%, followed by those with a primary education by 5% less, i.e. 27.9%.

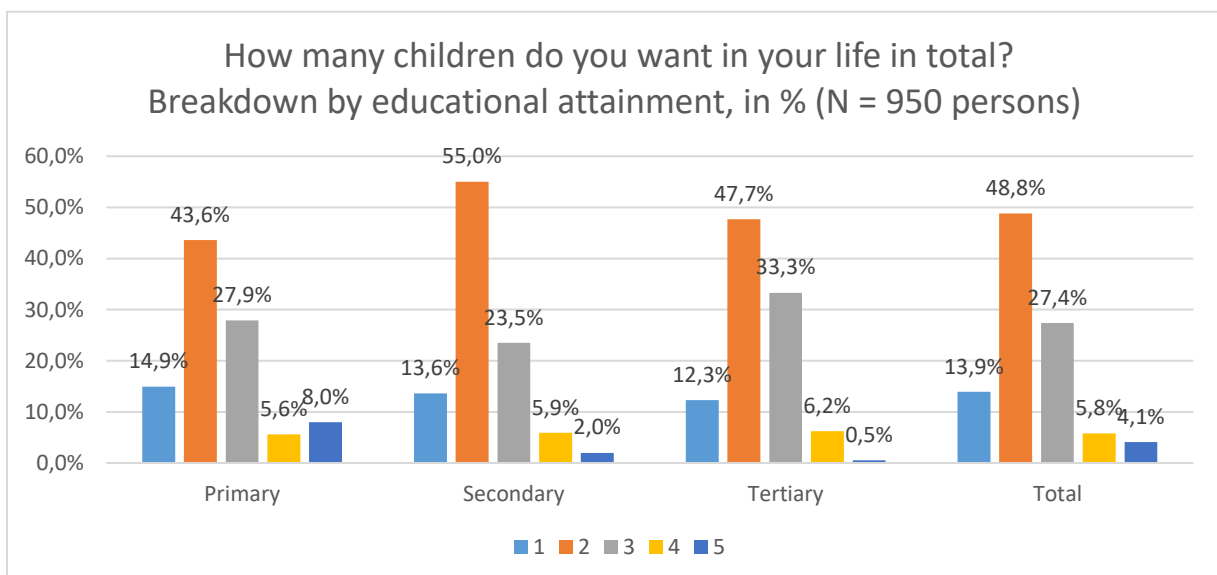


Figure 11: Number of planned children by educational attainment (N = 924 persons)

In the course of the research, we were also curious about the relationship between the number of planned children and economic activity. Most want two or three children in their entire lives. The results show that the majority of one-child planners are part-time workers (20.2%), unemployed (17.8%), and casual workers (16.7%). Most of those who preferred two children were also casual (54.2%) and full-time workers (54.2%). It may seem surprising that **full-time students had the highest proportion of planning to have three children in their lifetime (45.9%), followed by homemakers with 40%**. The highest proportion of those who want four or more children is among the non-working people who are on childcare leave, at 23.1%.

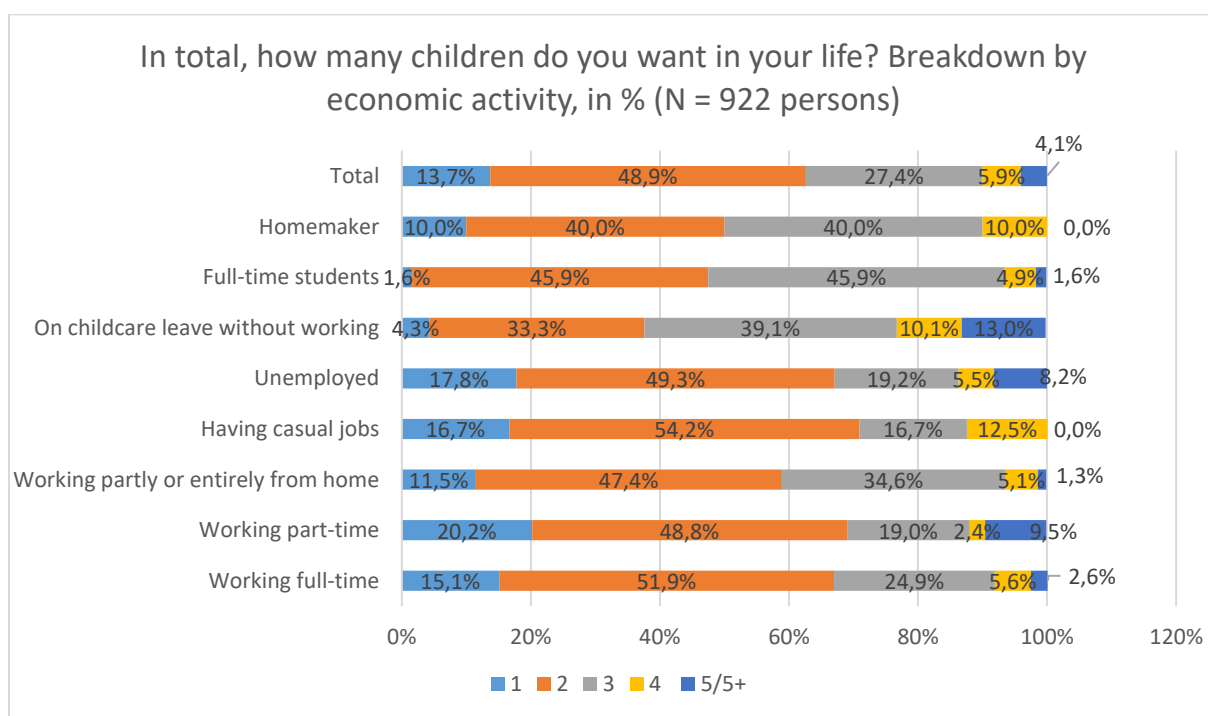


Figure 12: Number of planned children by economic activity (N = 922 persons)

Among respondents, the average number of children planned (2.37) is slightly below the number of children considered ideal (2.52). The 30-39 age group marked the highest planned number of children. Those who have children plan to have more children on average than those who do not. Understandably, the more children the respondents have, the higher the planned number of children. Mostly, people with a primary education think about having more children. In terms of economic activity, similar to the ideal number of children, those who are currently

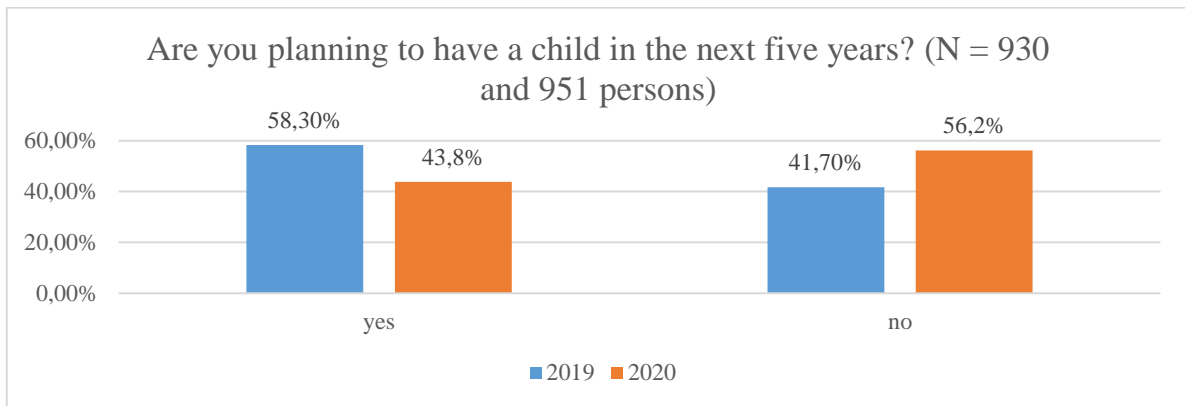
on childcare leave, as well as homemakers and full-time students, are planning to have more children.

		<b>Average number of children planned</b>
	Full sample	<b>2.37</b>
Age	18-29 years	2.40
	30-39 years	2.44
	40-49 years	2.26
Do you have children?	with children	2.46
	childless	2.28
How many children do you have?	1	1.78
	2	2.23
	3	3.18
	4+	4.39
Educational background	primary education	2.48
	secondary education	2.27
	higher education	2.35
Economic activity	Working in full-time	2.29
	Working in part-time	2.32
	Working partly or entirely from home	2.37
	Having casual jobs	2.25
	Unemployed	2.37
	On childcare leave without working	2.94
	Full-time student	2.59
Homemaker	2.50	

*Table 2: Average planned number of children*

### Child planning in the near future

**In 2020, 43.8% of those surveyed plan to have a child in the next five years**, while 56.2% do not. However, during the 2019 survey, the opposite was the case: 58.3% were positive about child planning and 41.7% did not plan to have a child. So in the course of one year, 14.5% fewer said they were planning to have their own child in the next five years.



1. Figure: Child planning within five years, in 2019 and 2020. (N = 930 and 951 people)<sup>3</sup>

By sex, although there are more people of both sexes who are not planning to have a child in the next five years, there are **8.2% more men who are planning to have children than women. Thus, a larger proportion of men plan to have an own child in the next five years than women.**

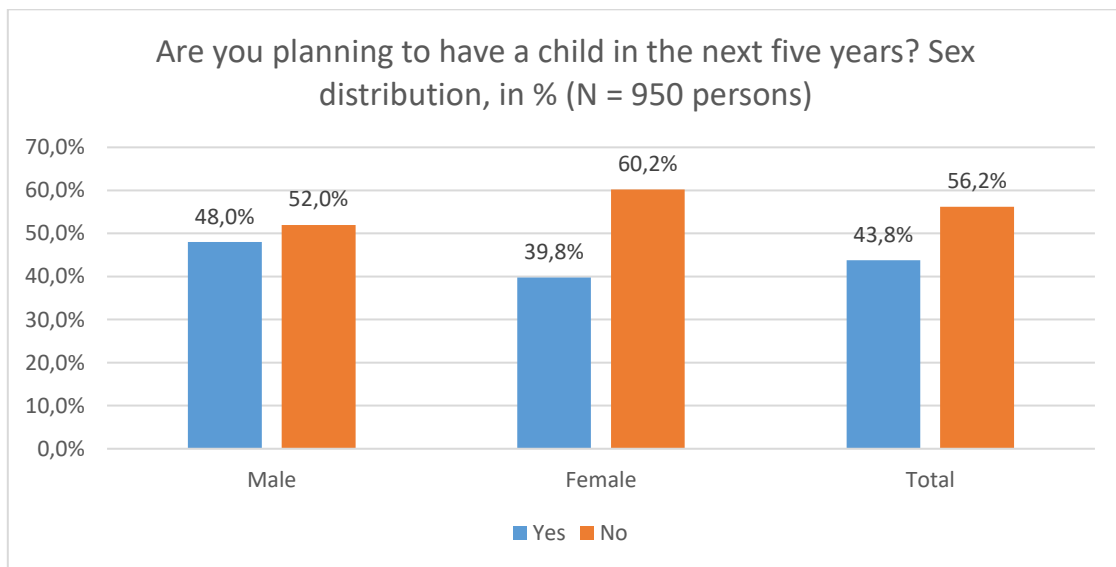


Figure 14: Child planning within five years, by sex (N = 950 people)

If we want to examine the answers of respondents with children and without children, the data show that **41.5% more childless respondents plan a child (65.8% would like a child in the next 5 years) than respondents with children (24.3% would like a child).**

<sup>3</sup>In the analysis, we did not take into account the low rate of non-response.

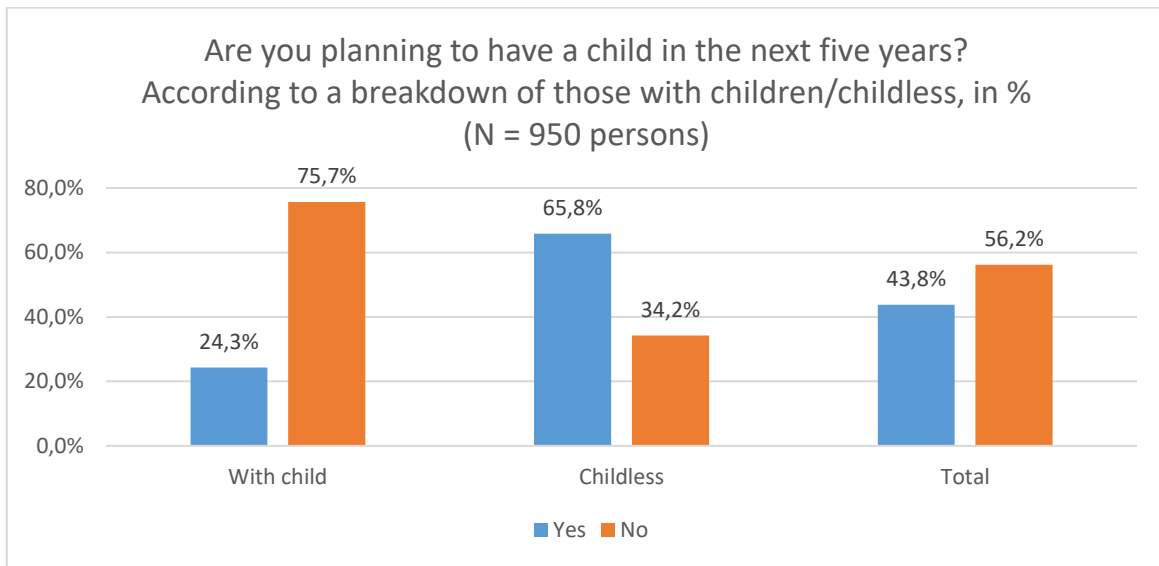


Figure 15: Child planning within five years, according to a breakdown of those with children/childless (N = 950 people)

**A breakdown by respondents with children shows that the more children someone has, the less they plan to have a child in the next five years:** while 41.7% of single child families plan to have a younger sibling, this proportion is 12.2% for three children and only 6.8% for four or more children.

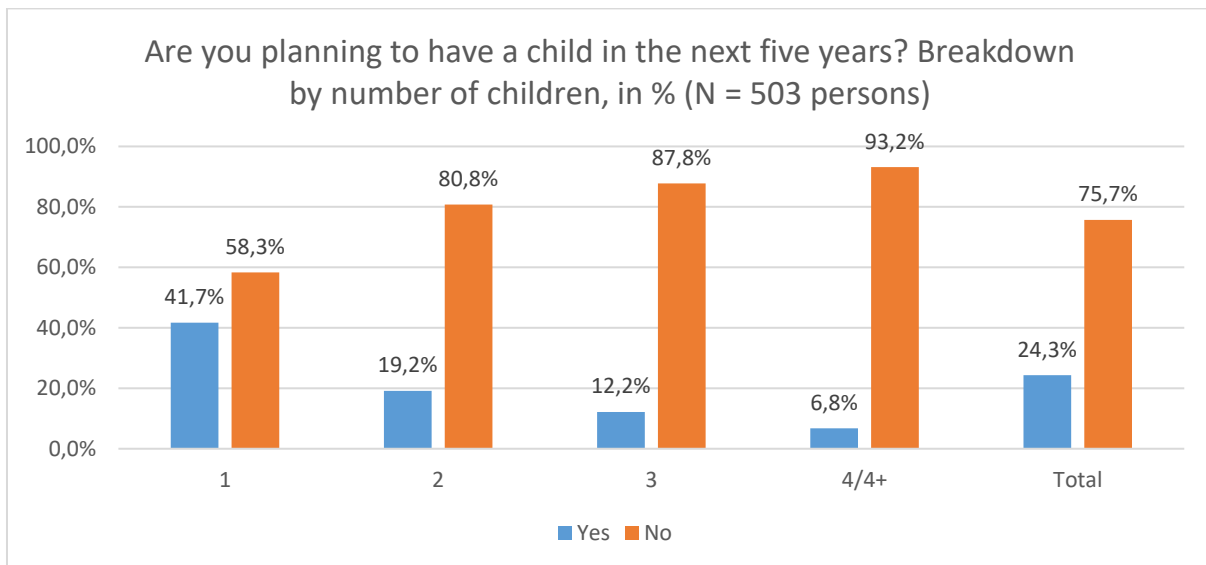


Figure 16: Child planning within five years, broken down by number of existing children (N = 503 people)

**The results of the breakdown by educational attainment show that the higher the educational attainment of a person, the higher the proportion of children they would want in the next five years.** While 36.7% of those with a tertiary education plan to have a child in the next five years, this proportion is 51.5% for those with a tertiary education, so more than half of those with a tertiary education are considering having a child in the near future.

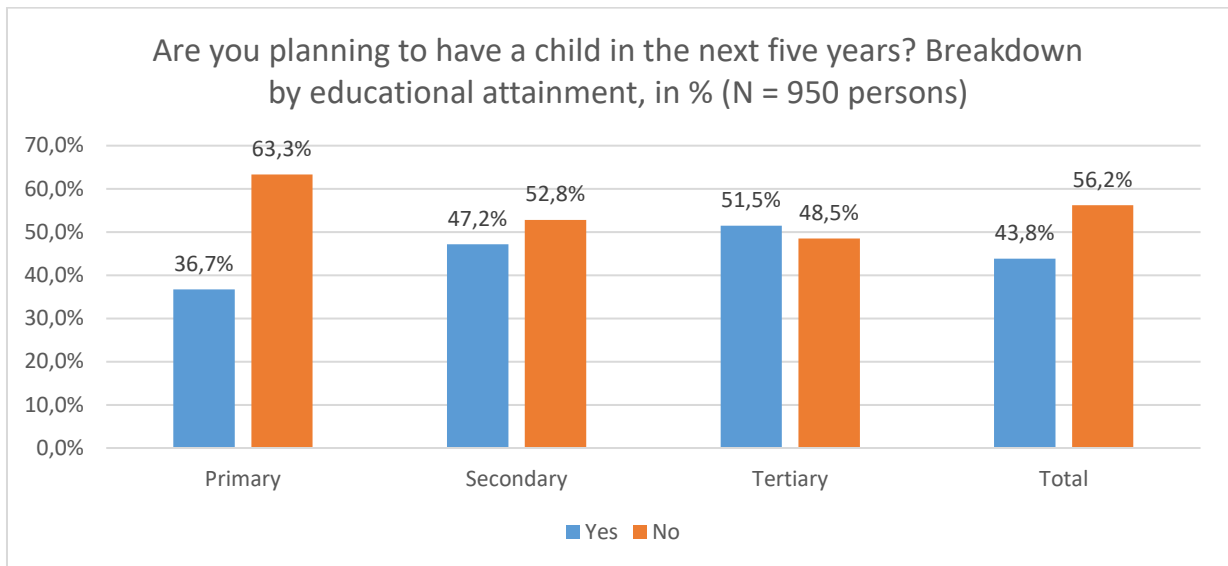


Figure 17: Child planning within five years, by educational attainment (N = 950 people)

**Examining the age groups, we can see that the probability of childplanning decreases with advancing age.** 62.3% of 18-29 year olds plan to have a child in the next five years. This rate drops to 52% for 30-39 year olds and 15.6% for 40-49 year olds.

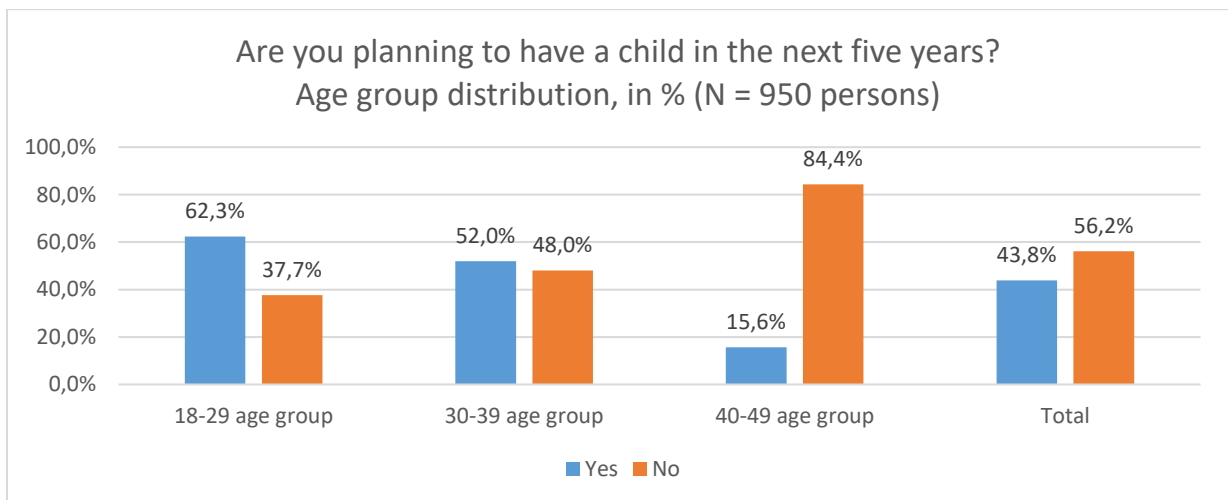


Figure 18: Child planning within five years, broken down by age groups (N = 950 people)

We did not obtain any surprising results even when we examined the issue as a function of marital status. **The highest proportions of people in a cohabiting relationship want a child in the next five years (53.6%), followed by singles (48%), then married (32.8%) and divorced (32%).** The development of the numbers is probably due to the fact that the majority of people living in a cohabiting relationship do not yet have children and are also planning a marriage. Singles are probably also about to have their first child, so this is why they are planning to have a child in the near future.

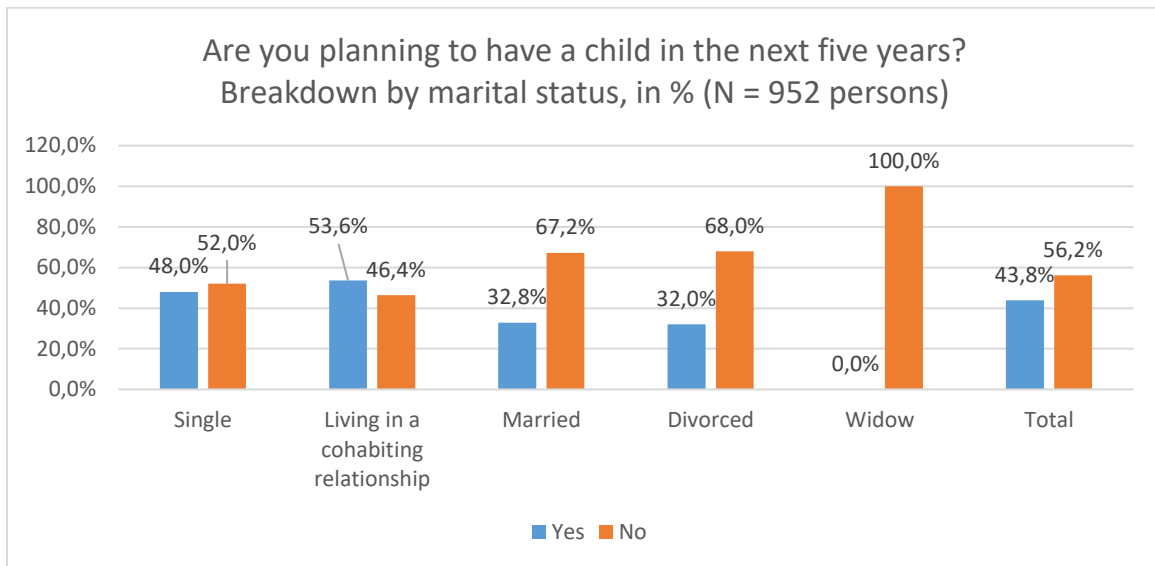


Figure 19: Child planning within five years, broken down by marital status (N = 950 people)

**Breaking down by type of settlement, we can see that people in Budapest plan to have the largest proportion of children in the next five years, and the proportion of respondents who would have children in the near future decreases in parallel with the size of the settlement. While in Budapest 53.8% of the respondents plan to become a parent within the next five years, in towns and villages this proportion is only 40.1%.**

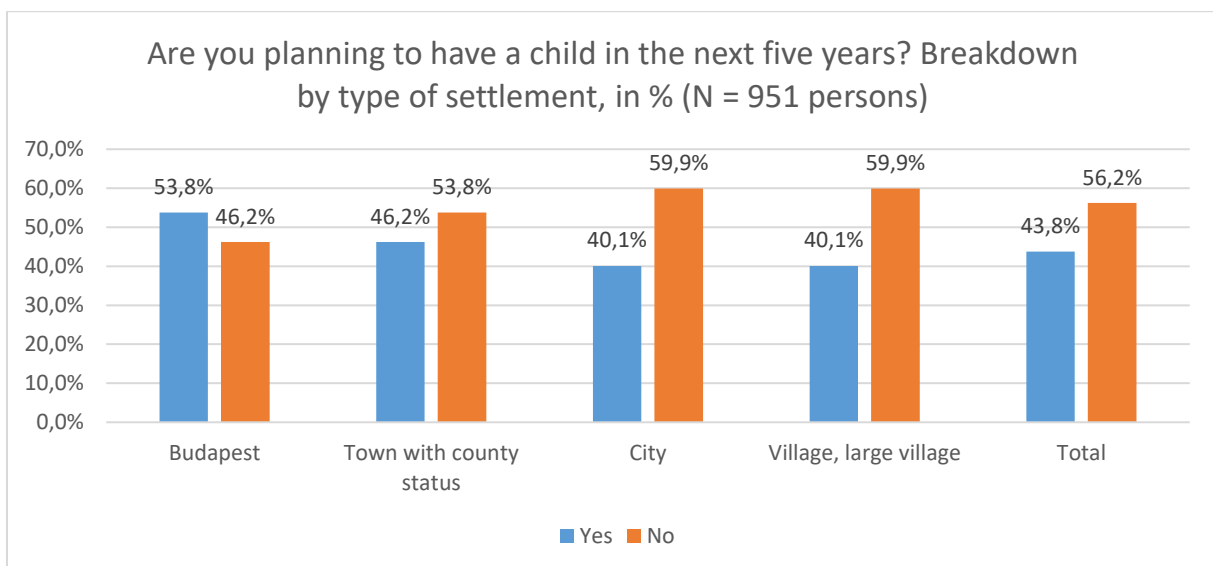


Figure 20: Child planning within five years, broken down by type of settlement (N = 951 persons)

According to the data, the largest proportion of those who want to have a child in the next five years are those who live of casual work: 50% of them said so. They are followed by the group of



full-time workers with 48.1%. Those who plan the least to have a child in the near future are homemakers (21.2%) and those on childcare leave and not working (31.5%).

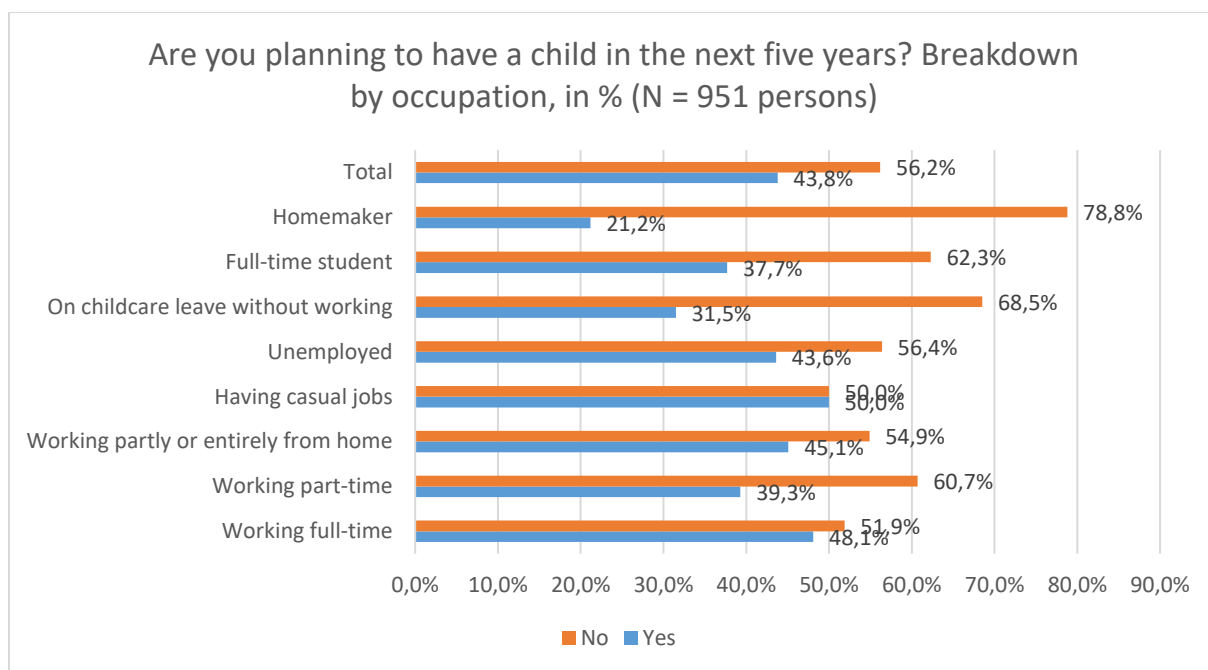


Figure 21: Child planning within five years, broken down by economic activity (N = 951 persons)

## Summary

Hungarians of childbearing age set the ideal number of children at 2.52 on average and the planned number of children at 2.37 on average, i.e. both the ideal and planned number of children exceed the level of 2.1 required for reproduction.

The ideal number of children according to half of the respondents is two children, an additional 41.7% believe that three is the ideal number of children in a family. Based on the data, the more children someone has, the larger the ideal number of children will be designated.

49% of respondents plan to have a total of two children in their lifetime, and a further 37% plan to have three or more children. The proportion of those planning only one child is 13%.

Half of men in the childbearing age of 18 to 49 and 40% of women want a child in the next five years. As age progresses, the likelihood of childplanning decreases, however, it can be observed that the higher the level of education one has, the higher the proportion of children planning for the next five years.

*Courtesy translation prepared by KINCS International Bureau*

*Budapest, September 15, 2020*