

9.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

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MAJOR FINDINGS

- In 2005 there were 2,032,000 households of couple-type families¹ in Hungary (which is 55 per cent of all households at that time) with 6,122,000 persons living in them. Fifteen years earlier the rate of such households was still 59 per cent.
 - The rate of one-person households grew from 24 to 29 per cent between 1990 and 2005. In 2005 1,163,000 households belonged to this type.
 - In 1990 the number of one-person households was 946,000, while in 2005 it was already 1,163,000. Two thirds of the persons living alone were women.
 - The rate of one-person households is the smallest in the age group 30-39 and the greatest in the age group 70+.
 - The overwhelming majority of the persons living alone consists of widows. The second largest group is that of single
- men followed by single women, divorced women, and divorced men. The group of the married persons is the smallest.
 - The rate of families consisting of married couples with or without child(ren) within the total number of families decreased from 80 to 71 per cent in the same period, whereas the 5 per cent ratio of persons living in cohabitation in 1990 increased threefold by 2005, growing steadily.
 - The rate of lone-parent families grew from 15.6 to 16.8 per cent with the families consisting of mother and child(ren) growing from 80 to 87 per cent within the total number.
 - The rate of childless couples is higher among those living in cohabitation than among married couples, and the rate of couples with two children is smaller, too.
 - Among families with child(ren) married couples have the greatest number of children. They are followed by cohabiting couples, then come lone mothers with child(ren). The number of the children of lone fathers is the smallest.
 - In 2001 11.3 per cent of children under one year of age lived in lone-parent families. The similar rate of the 14 years old was already 18.4 per cent. Over two thirds of the 14 years old live with both biological parents.
 - In 2005 6 per cent of all families was a single-parent family with at least one child younger than 15.

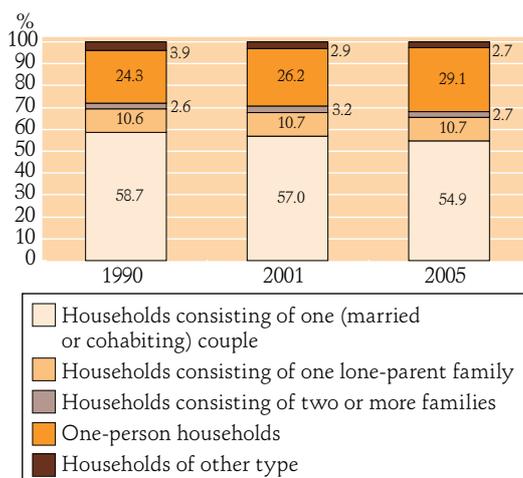
¹ Family is the smallest circle of persons living together as spouses or cohabiting/consensual unions or kin. The family may be couple-type, i.e., a married couple without child or with never-married child(ren); a consensual union without child or with never-married child(ren); and a lone-parent (father or mother) with never-married child(ren). <http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/concepts.htm1>

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

Families live in different types of households. A household can consist of one or more families and there are non-family households, too, such as, for example, one-person households. An analysis of the households is thus necessary to form a true notion of the family structure.

At the time of the 1990 census there were 3,889,532 households in Hungary, in 2001 there were 3,862,702 and in 2005 there were 4,001,976. Their distribution is characterized by the decreasing number of those with only one married or cohabiting couple, by the stagnation of lone-parent households, and by the increase of one-person households. In 2005 11.5 per cent of the total population lived in the latter which constituted 29.1 per cent of all households. The total number of one-person households and of those for only one family constituted 95 per cent of all households. This means that households with two or more families or households with persons not representing a family but living 'under the same roof' are getting very rare (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Distribution of households, 1990–2005



Source: KSH (2004, KSH (2006)

WHO DOES THE WASHING UP? – FAMILY ROLES AND THE DIVISION OF LABOUR IN A HOUSEHOLD

Household chores are mostly done by women, especially routine duties like cooking, washing up, and cleaning. In Hungary the traditional division of family roles between the sexes is generally accepted. As compared with the life of women in countries like Germany, France, and Russia Hungarian women spend much more time with household chores, husbands not doing much of their share. Women with college or university degrees are in the most favourable situation in this respect. In their families the division of labour resembles the one in France in the same category. Hungarian women take upon themselves 3.3 times more of the housework than their partners. (Out of the four countries discussed East-German women are in the best position with a rate of 2.3.) In spite of these facts, due to the traditional approach to housework, the number of conflicts arising from the disparities is the lowest in Hungarian families.

Young couples tend to share housework more equally and to make it together in every country in question, whereas in the case of older couples women tend to work more at home. Earning activity influences the division of labour in a family only to a slight degree. There are, however, greater differences by the type of the relationship as married women tend to do much more housework than those living in cohabitation.

Source: Pongrácz and Murinkó (2009)

While the number of households increased between 2001 and 2005 – mainly due to the growing number of one-person households –, that of those consisting of a family as well as the number of their members decreased. In 2001 the average size

of families consisting of a married couple with or without child(ren) was 3.18 persons but four years later the respective figure was only 3.14. The size of families where the couples live in a consensual union decreased even more, from 2.98 to 2.87 persons. Although the number of lone-parent families increased in the period, the average number of their members fell. This means that there are less children in each type of household with child.

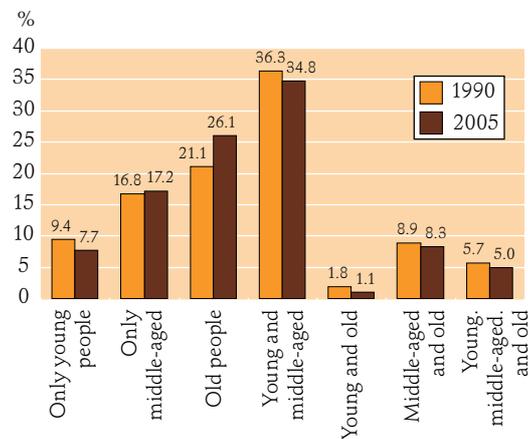
The ageing of the population is reflected also in the age distribution of the members of the households. In the past few decades the number of the young was continuously decreasing, while that of old persons was increasing.² The rate of households with at least one old person grew from 37.5 per cent in 1990 to 40.4 per cent in 2005. The greatest increase could be observed in the number of households consisting only of old people. The growth was 5 per cent in 15 years. At the same time the rate of households with young people decreased, which is the obvious result of the declining number of births. The falling number of households consisting only of young persons is also conspicuous within this group, which goes back partly to the difficulties of making an independent home, partly to the related problem of the postponement of starting a family (Fig. 2).

In 2005 there were 2,849,000 families with 8,212,000 members (81.4 per cent of the population) in Hungary. Between 1990 and 2005 the number of families was steadily decreasing (by 48,000 families altogether), and their composition underwent a considerable change, too (Fig. 3).

While in 1970 90 per cent of the families was couple-type, this rate fell to 83-85 per

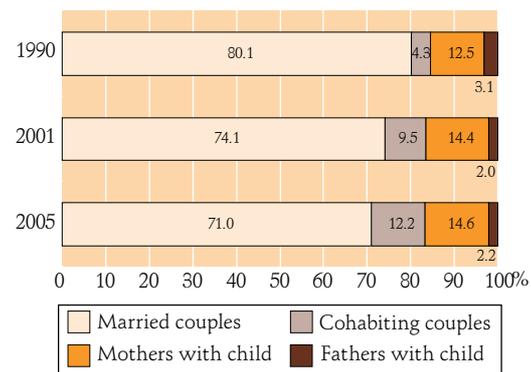
² When speaking of household members we consider the age group 0-29 as young, the one 30-59 as middle-aged, and the one 60+ as old.

Fig. 2. Age distribution of households, 1990 and 2005



Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

Fig. 3. The change in the composition of families



Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

cent beginning with 1990, with the rate of cohabitations steadily increasing. Between 1990 and 2005 the rate of cohabitations grew threefold. Although cohabitation is getting more and more accepted, the majority of the population lives in families consisting of married couples with or without child(ren).

The rate of lone-parent families grew slightly in the discussed period. In 1990 it was 15.6 per cent, while in 2005 16.8 per cent. The type mother and child(ren) was the most numerous within the category. It

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by household types, age groups and their country's category within the EU member states, 2007 (%)

Household types	EU27			EU15			The 12 countries joining in 2004 and later		
	18–34	35–64	65+	18–34	35–64	65+	18–34	35–64	65+
	éves								
One-persons	18	11	34	20	12	34	12	9	34
Lone parents with children	6	7	7	6	6	5	6	8	15
Married or cohabiting couples	26	24	49	27	25	52	19	19	36
Couples with child(ren) below 16	50	31	–	47	33	–	63	27	–
Couples with all child(ren) above 16	–	27	10	–	24	9	–	37	15

Source: European Quality of Life Survey, 2007

constituted 80 per cent in 1990, 88 per cent in 2001, and 87 per cent in 2005.

The distribution of the population by household types shows remarkable differences in the European Union (*Table 1*).

In the EU27 countries an average of 37 per cent of the population lives in households where parents and children live together, and one quarter of the total population live with their partners but without child. Every sixth person lives alone in a one-person household. This rate is higher in the EU15 (16 per cent) than in the countries joining the Union in 2004 and later (11 per cent).

In 2007 three quarters of the youth (age group 18–34) lived in partnership in the European Union, either with or without child(ren). This rate was already four fifths among the middle-aged (age group 35–64), and among the old (aged 65+) it was still nearly 60 per cent. Every third old person lived alone even if he/she had children as most children had become independent by then and many persons of the age group had become widowed. Among the young the rate of those living alone in independent households was 18 per cent. These peo-

ple either did not (yet) live together with their partner or had lost their partner. They even may not have had a (cohabiting) partner at all.

The 12 new member states show a conspicuous difference as compared to the EU15 member states as regards the types of households and families for the three generations. In the new member states the rate of those among the young who live alone is much smaller, mostly because it is more difficult for them to create the conditions for an independent life than for members of their peer-group living in the EU15 countries. But if they manage to do so and establish a lasting partnership, they have children earlier. Sixty-three per cent of them have children, in contrast with the 47 per cent of the EU15 states in average. Consequently, a greater proportion of the middle-aged population have children above 16 in their families, and also the elderly live much more often together with their children. There is no difference in the rate of old persons living alone, but the rate of old couples living by themselves is much lower in the new member states.

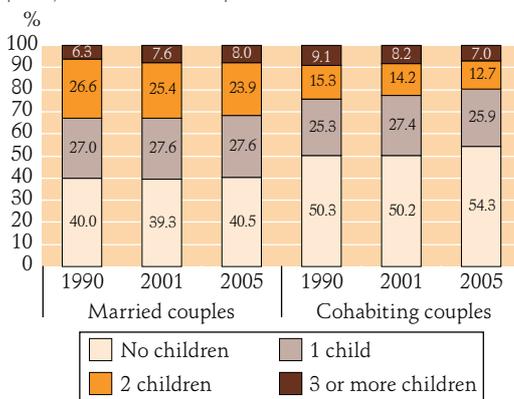
COUPLE-TYPE AND LONE-PARENT FAMILIES

Couple-type families include married or cohabiting couples with or without child(ren). In 1990 5 per cent of all couple-type families consisted of non-married couples. By 2001 this rate doubled with the decrease of the willingness to get married and with the spread of cohabitation. By 2005 its rate increased threefold.

The number of children born to married and cohabiting couples differs greatly. As regards married couples, the rate of those without children (40 per cent) and of those having one child (slightly over 25 per cent) remained basically constant between 1990 and 2005. Changes took place only in the case of those with two or more children. The rate of the former fell by 3 percentage points from 26.6 per cent and that of the latter rose by 1.5 percentage points from 6.4 per cent.

At the time of the latter two censuses the rate of childless couples was higher among those living in cohabitation (50 per cent), and it rose further by 2005 (54.3 per cent). The proportion of cohabiting couples with one child is similar to that of married cou-

Fig. 4. Distribution of couple-type families by type of family and the number of children



Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

THE CHILD AS A CONCEPT

Speaking sociologically, lone-parent families are ones where a mother or a father lives with his/her minor or at least dependent child(ren). From statistical perspective this definition is not necessarily true, as the term 'child' is used here differently. At the 2001 census those persons were considered children who had been born (in or out of wedlock) to a person "with the family status husband, wife, consensual partner, father or mother, irrespective of his/her own age, marital status, source of income, provided he/she has no independent, own family".³

According to the statistical definition a lone-parent family is "a parent (mother or father) with never-married child(ren)", so the former definition is narrowed down only in one point, i.e., as regards family status. In everyday life the status of child implies not only a relationship by blood but also young age and the fact of being dependent. The concept of child used by statisticians leaves all these out of consideration, so lone-parent families can well consist of an eighty-year-old mother living with her sixty-year-old son who returned to the parental home following several partnerships and having children himself. Lone-parent families as seen by statistics are, therefore, not identical with lone-parent families taken in a sociological sense but are interpreted in a much wider sense.

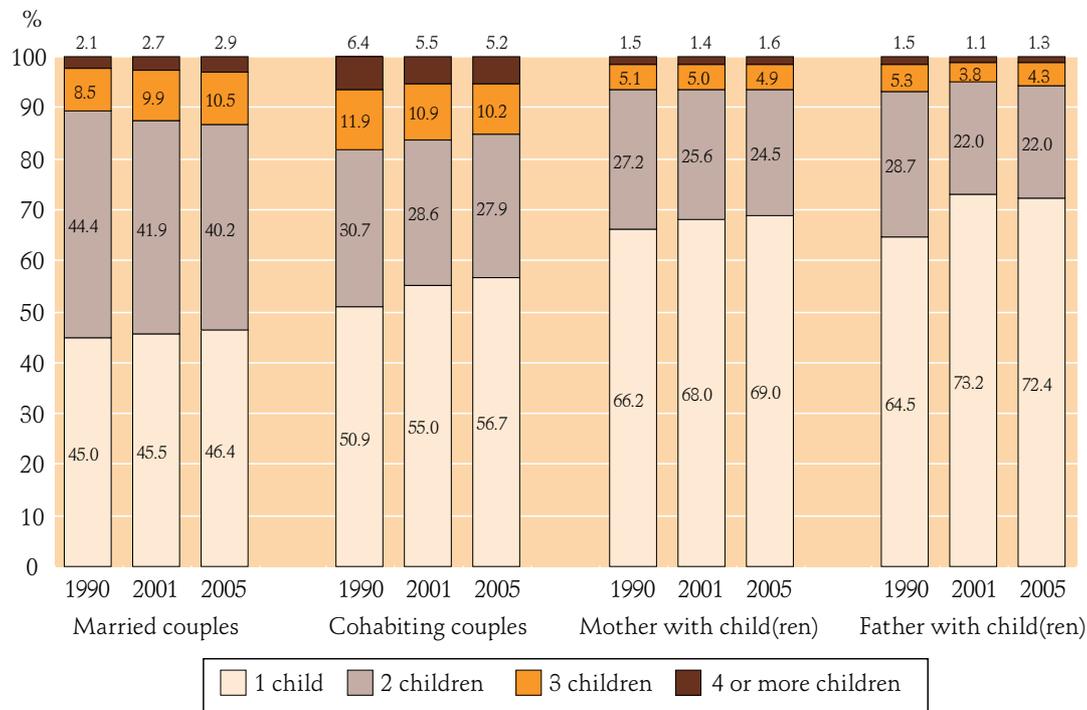
Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

ples in this category (25-27 per cent). The rate of those with two or more children among them was 24.4 per cent in 1990 and only 19.8 per cent in 2005 (Fig. 4).

It follows from this that married couples have more children than cohabiting couples, on average. The average number of children born to 100 married couples was

³ <http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/concopts.html>, "Family status"

Fig. 5. Distribution of families with child(ren) by family type and number of children



Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

above 100 for each of the three years concerned. This figure was smaller in the case of cohabiting couples, and was gradually decreasing between 1990 and 2005, from 89 to 76. The rise in the rate of childless cohabitations can be in connection with the fact that young couples prefer cohabitation in the early phase of their relationship.

Lone-parent families more often have only one child and less frequently two or more children than couple-type families (Fig. 5).

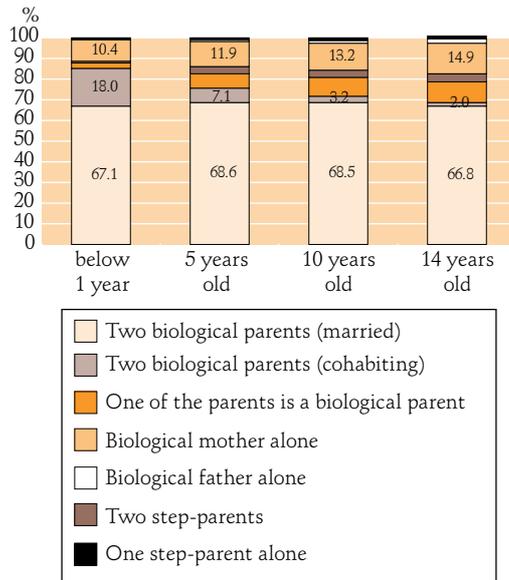
Cohabiting couples more often have only one child than married ones but they also tend to have three or more children more often. The proportion of families with 3 children has become similar in the two types of families during the last one and a half decade. In 1990 the rate of families with 4 or more children was three times as high among cohabiting couples as among

married ones but in 2005 the difference was only twofold.

The analysis of family structure is of outstanding importance from the point of view of children primarily as regards their family being an intact or a lone-parent one and the type of family they live in in a given period of their lives. The 2001 census gave opportunity for mapping the situation of children by the status of the parent(s) living with them. The study by Spéder (2006) discusses four age groups: infants below 1 year of age, five-year-old children, ten-year-old children, and fourteen-year-old children (Fig. 6).

In 2001 11.3 per cent of children below 1 year of age lived in lone-parent families and among the fourteen-year-old ones this rate was already 18.4 per cent. However, the number of those who have experienced life in a lone-parent family is higher than

Fig. 6. Distribution of children of different ages by the number of parents living with them and their relationship with the parents, 2001



Source: Spéder (2006 2)

that as lone parents may find a new partner later on, making the family a two-parent one once again and registered as such.

The great number of divorces and the fact that cohabitations are even less stable than marriages have brought about a change in the structure of two-parent families: the rate of children living with both biological parents is diminishing and that of those living with one biological parent and one step-parent is growing. The overwhelming majority of infants (85.1 per cent) lives with both of their biological parents, but only just over two thirds of the 14-year old (68.8 per cent) do so. Two-parent families consisting of one biological parent and one step-parent take care of 2.7 per cent of infants below one year of age, of 7.1 per cent of the five-year old, and of 9.7 per cent of the fourteen-year old.

The vast majority of babies are still born in families and are raised by their parents

living together as a couple but an ever growing number of children experience a change when the relationship of their parents changes and they become exposed to different kinds of family types with a more or less complicated family structure.

Lone-parent families are usually transitional stages in the life of families and children, so it is worth examining the probability of such an experience in the children's lives and the amount of time it takes up of their childhood.

In the 1970s and 1980s the chances of living in a lone-parent family differed greatly in the countries of Europe. For those below 15 the smallest rate was that of Italy (9 per cent) and the highest was that of Latvia (44 per cent) (Table 2).

In Hungary, one quarter of all children had experienced living in a lone-parent family before turning 15 at the time of the

Table 2. Rate of children experiencing life in a lone-parent family below 15 and the time spent in it

Countries	Rate of children involved (%)	Rate of time spent (%)
Italy	9	3
Spain	13	4
Slovenia	15	6
Belgium	17	5
Poland	18	9
Finland	22	8
Hungary	24	8
Norway	26	7
Czech Republic	29	8
Lithuania	29	10
France	31	11
West Germany	34	12
Sweden	34	12
Austria	34	12
Latvia	44	15

Source: Spéder (2006)

survey. It is highly probable that their rate has increased since then. The average time spent in a lone-parent family below 15 years of age varies between less than half a year (Italy) and over two years. In Hungary it is one year, two months, and twelve days. This means that children spend the overwhelming part of their childhood in two-parent families but this does not give cause for optimism. On the one hand, the dissolution of the family can have long-term effects even if the lone-parent phase lasts for a short time and, on the other hand, being raised by two parents one of whom is a biological parent and the other a step-parent (or subsequent step-parents) is more unfavourable for a child than being raised by its own biological parents.

PERSONS LIVING ALONE

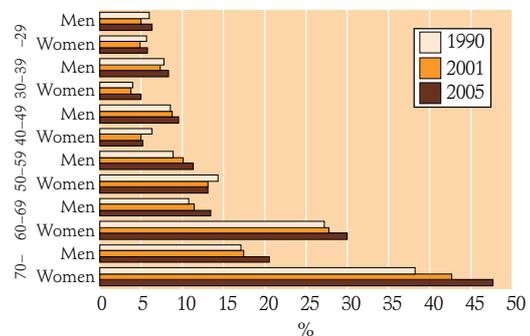
The number of families as well as the number and rate of the people living in them has been steadily decreasing since 1990. At the same time the number and rate of persons living alone are increasing. Between 1990 and 2005 the rate of one-person households grew from 24 to 29 per cent, their number growing in 1990–2001 by 64,000 and in the following four years by nearly 150,000. The average size of the households became smaller, too, mostly due to the ageing of the population and the decrease in fertility. In 2005 the proportion of one-person and two-person households was already quite similar, while the number and rate of those with more than two members were steadily decreasing. In 1990 one hundred households still had 260 members, while in 2005 they had only 247.

The share of men among persons living alone was around 35 per cent in 1990, in

2001, and in 2005 alike. The 65 per cent represented by women is due to the fact that as a consequence of their longer average life expectancy women become widowed and remain alone more often than men.

One-person households come about when young people leave the parental home or when old people remain alone after the death of their partner. The latter phenomenon is the more frequent and more lasting of the two as young people are likely to establish lasting partnerships sooner or later after leaving the parental home and live alone relatively rarely and only for a short time. Young men and women below 30 still live alone in a similar proportion. In the age group 30–49 men live alone to a higher proportion than women (*Fig. 7*) since they enter partnerships later than women and if divorced, they are given custody of their children more rarely. Over 50 the higher mortality of men suddenly becomes conspicuous. As time passes women remain alone in one-person households to a greater degree than men and the difference between the two sexes is growing. In 1990 14 per cent of women and 9 per cent of men aged 50–59 lived alone. In the age group 60–69 this rate was 27 and 11 per cent, respec-

Fig. 7. Rate of men and women living in one-person households within the age groups

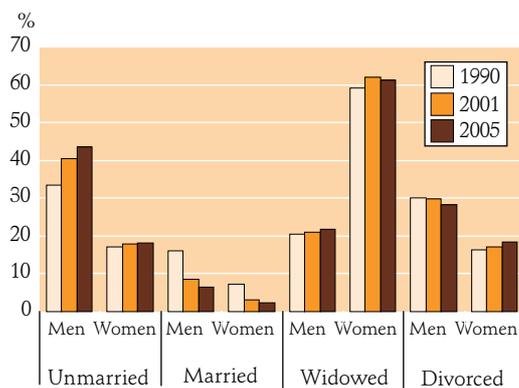


Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

tively, while in the age group 70+ it was 17 and 38 per cent. In the years between 1990 and 2005 the greatest change took place in the oldest age groups and primarily among women: the rate of women aged 70+ living alone increased by over 9 per cent in a decade and a half.

With the exception of married persons, who constitute the smallest group within those living alone, the number of people living in one-person households increased irrespective of family status (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8. Distribution of persons living in one-person households by sex and family status



Source: KSH (2004), KSH (2006)

The most numerous in numbers and the greatest in proportions among those living in one-person households is the group of widowed women (about 40 per cent) as due to the higher life expectancy of women they are more likely to remain alone in their old age. The number of widowers makes up only a fragment of the number of widows. Between 1990 and 2005 their rate was one fifth or one sixth as compared to the latter.

Among those living alone there were more unmarried men than women, while in the case of the divorced (with the exception of 1990) the rate was just the opposite.

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