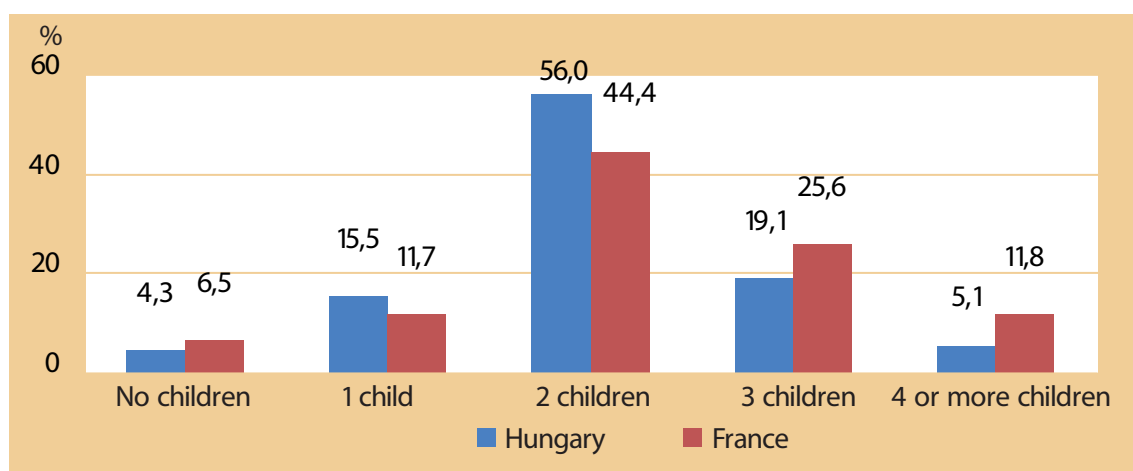


Desired family size and fertility in Hungary and France

Social norms favour two-child family as the most suitable family size in Hungary. Childlessness is relatively rare, although some researchers claim that voluntary childlessness is emerging for a narrow social group, similarly to Germany. However, large families are not very common either. On the contrary, large families with three or more children are more widespread in France. Having only one child is socially not accepted and, as in Hungary, childlessness is rather rare in the generations with accomplished fertility history.

Desired family size reflects social norms concerning fertility in the two countries. While more than half of the people in childbearing age want to have two children in Hungary, larger families are more often desired in France.

Desired family size in Hungary and France



Sources: Hungarian GGS1 (DRI, 2002) and INED-INSEE ERFI-GGS1, 2005.
 Sample: men and women aged 18–45.
 Hungary: N=7559; France: N=4678.

Fertility in France is among the highest in Europe, and large families play an important role: more than one third of women aged 45–70 had three or more children. In Hungary the same applies to only 18.1% of women of the same age, while half of these women had two children. This proportion is lower in France. The differences in fertility behaviour are already visible among younger generations with unfinished fertility history. Even though the proportion of childless women and the mean number of children is similar among women aged between 18 and 45 in the two countries, the proportion of mothers with three or more children is higher in France (15.8% in France vs. 11.9% in Hungary), while the ratio of women with one or two children is higher in Hungary.

Distribution of women aged 46–70 and 18–45 according to their number of children in Hungary and France (%) and mean number of children

	Women aged 46–70		Women aged 18–45	
	Hungary	France	Hungary	France
No children	10,1	10,0	39,6	40,7
1 child	25,0	19,8	19,8	18,9
2 children	46,8	35,8	28,7	24,6
3 children	12,9	21,0	8,9	11,6
4 or more children	5,2	13,4	3,0	4,2
Mean number of children	1,82	2,2	1,17	1,21

Sources: Hungarian GGS1 (DRI, 2002) and INED-INSEE ERFI-GGS1, 2005.

In the Hungarian sample women aged 45–70 represent the 1932–1956 cohorts and women aged 18–45 the 1957–1983 cohorts (N=8213). In the French sample women aged 45–70 represent the 1935–1959 cohorts and women aged 18–45 the 1960–1987 cohorts (N=5128).