

Birth Barometer

Monitoring Fertility in Austria

Fertility Intentions

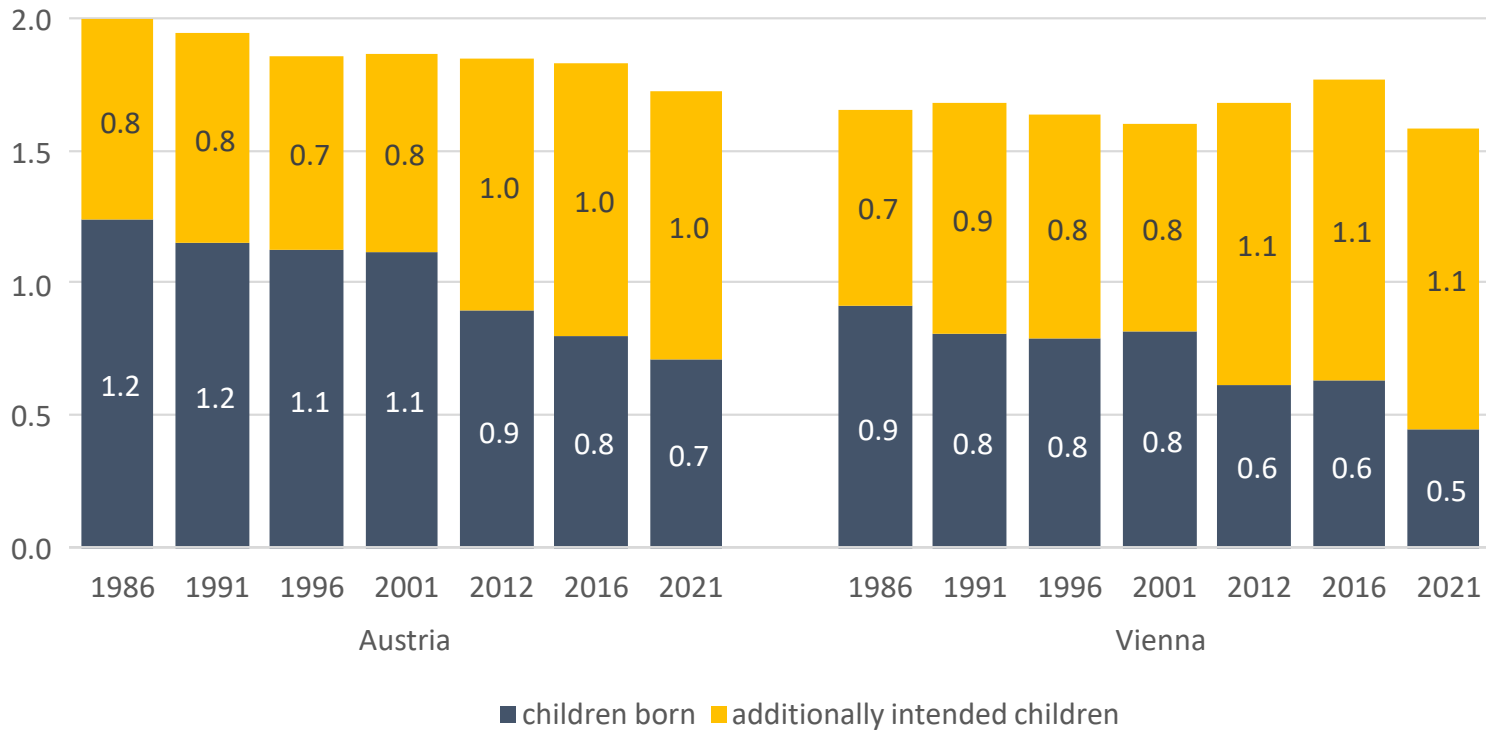


Analysis based on data from Austrian Microcensus Labour Force Survey, Supplementary Questionnaire on Parenthood and Fertility Preferences 1986–2021

24 March 2026

Intended number of children

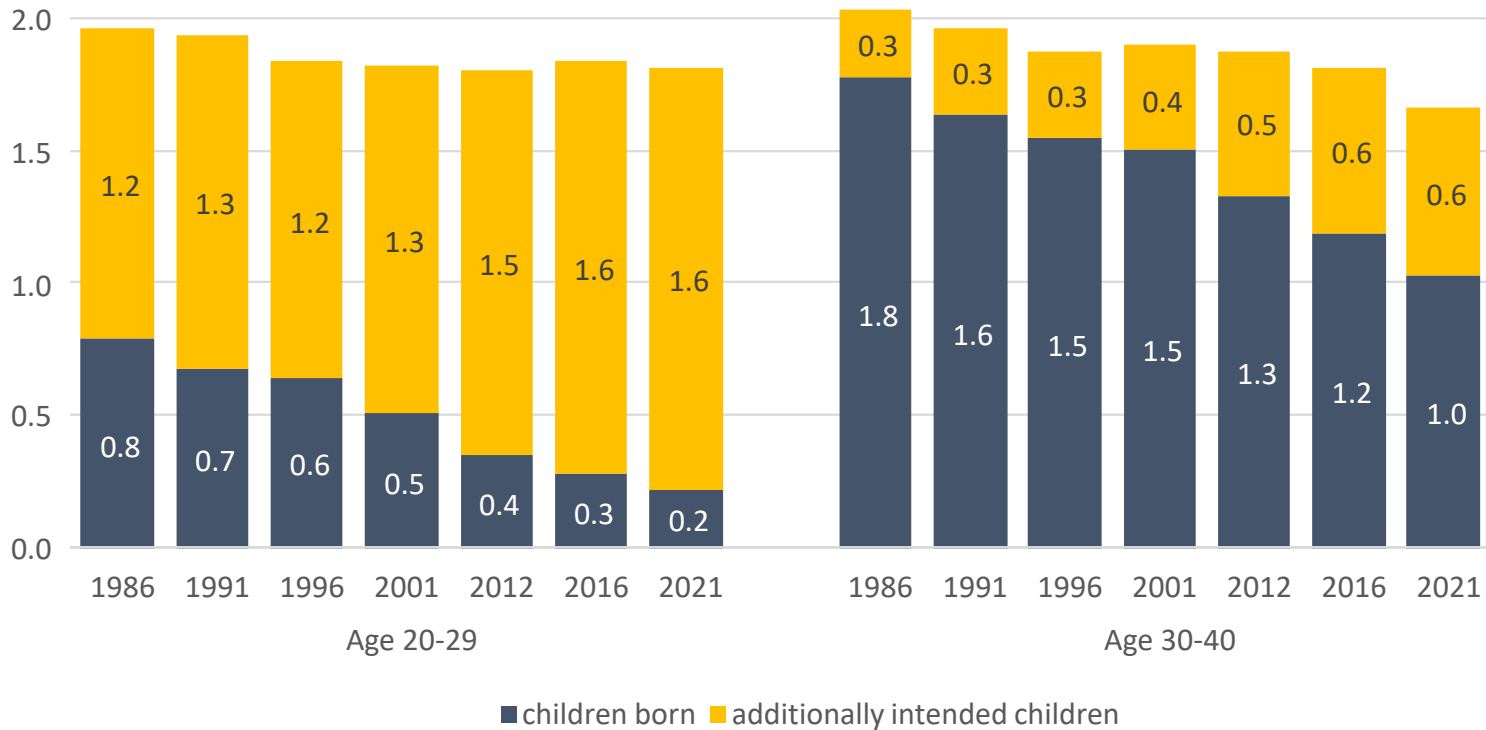
Actual and additionally intended children, women in Austria and Vienna aged 20–40



- Austrian women intend to have fewer children on average than is required to ensure population replacement, set at 2.1.
- The average number of children intended by women aged 20 to 40 in Austria declined from 2.0 in 1986 to 1.7 in 2021. This measure combines the number of children already born and the number of children additionally intended.
- Over time, the number of children women have in this age group gradually declined. The slight increase in the number of additionally intended children could not compensate for this decline.
- In Vienna, the total intended number of children per woman was at a low but relatively stable level of 1.6 between 1986 and 2021.

Intended children by age

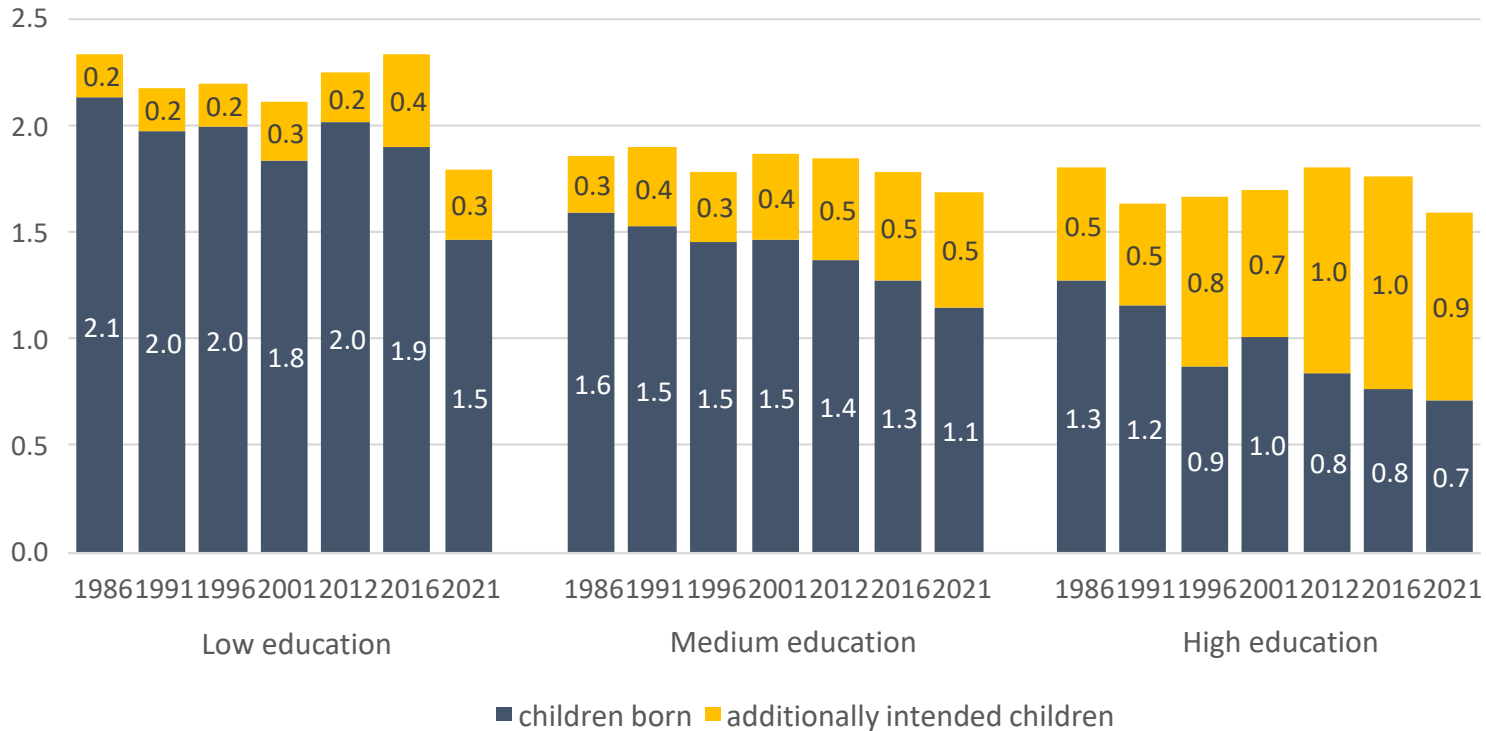
Actual and additionally intended children, women aged 20–29 and 30–40



- The total number of children intended by women declined between 1986 and 2021 among women at both younger (20–29) and older (30–40) reproductive ages.
- Among women aged 30 to 40, the average intended number of children dropped more markedly, from 2.1 to 1.6 children. This decline is mainly driven by women in this age group having, on average, fewer children today than in the past. The increase in the number of additionally intended children cannot compensate for this decline.
- Younger women aged 20 to 29 saw a strong decline in the number of children already born (from 0.8 to 0.2 children per woman) due to an ongoing shift to later age at first birth.

Intended children by education

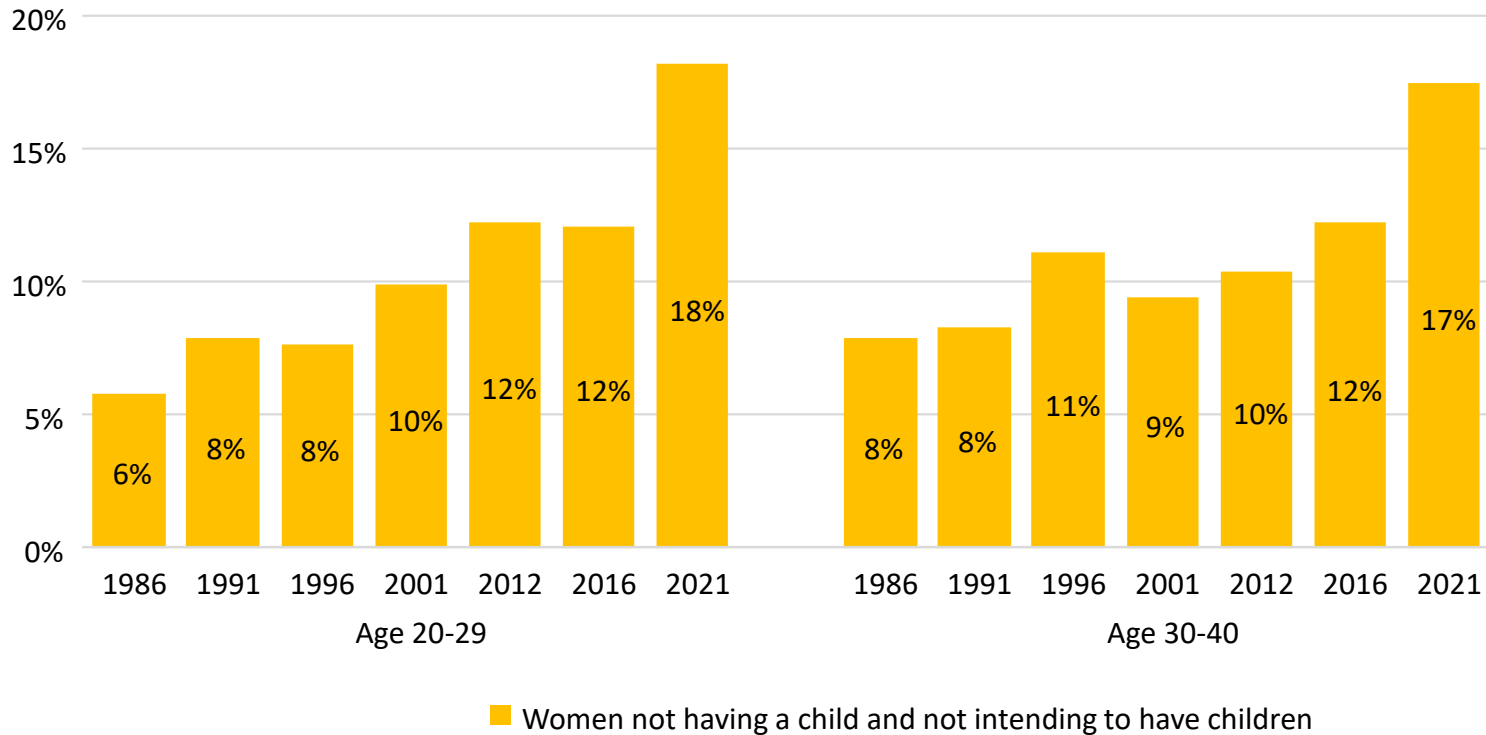
Actual and additionally intended children, women aged 30-40 by level of education



- Women with different levels of education have different intended family sizes.
- On average, women aged 30–40 with a degree and those with a higher secondary education intend to have fewer children than women with lower levels of education. This difference was visible already in 1986 and persisted over time, although it narrowed after 2016.
- Women aged 30–40 with lower educational attainment have, on average, already given birth to most of their intended children. By contrast, women with a degree intend to have more births later in life than they already have.

Intended childlessness

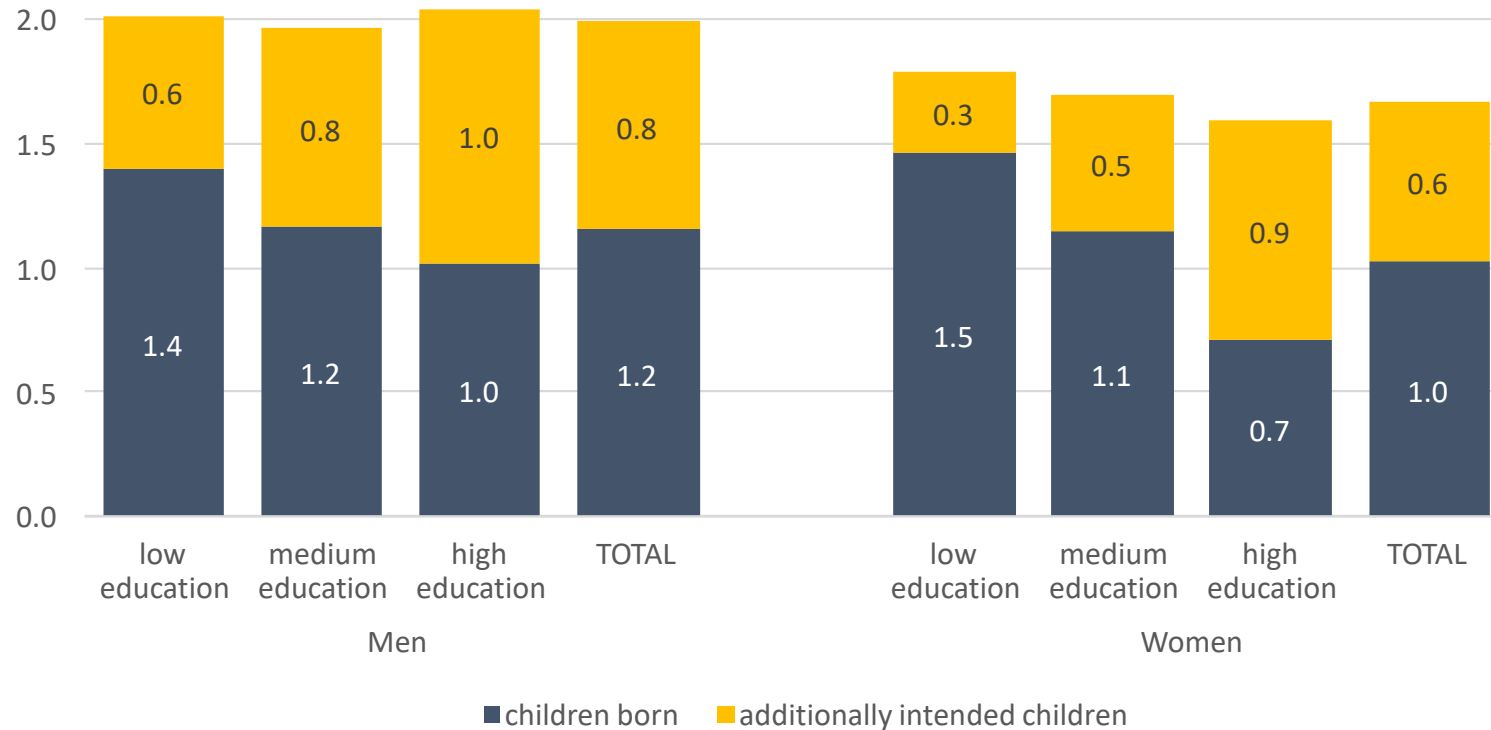
Share of women intending to remain childless by age (%)



- The share of women aged 20 to 40 who have no children and do not intend to have children in the future has increased over the recent decades.
- This trend is more visible among younger women (aged 20–29), among whom the share not intending to have a child doubled to 12% between 1986 and 2016.
- Since 2016, the proportion of women not intending to have kids has increased markedly. Close to one in five women aged 20–40 intended to remain childless in 2021.
- Worries about climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and rising living costs are likely to have contributed to this increase. Growing uncertainty about the future may have led to the renouncement of parenthood.

Intended number of children (2021)

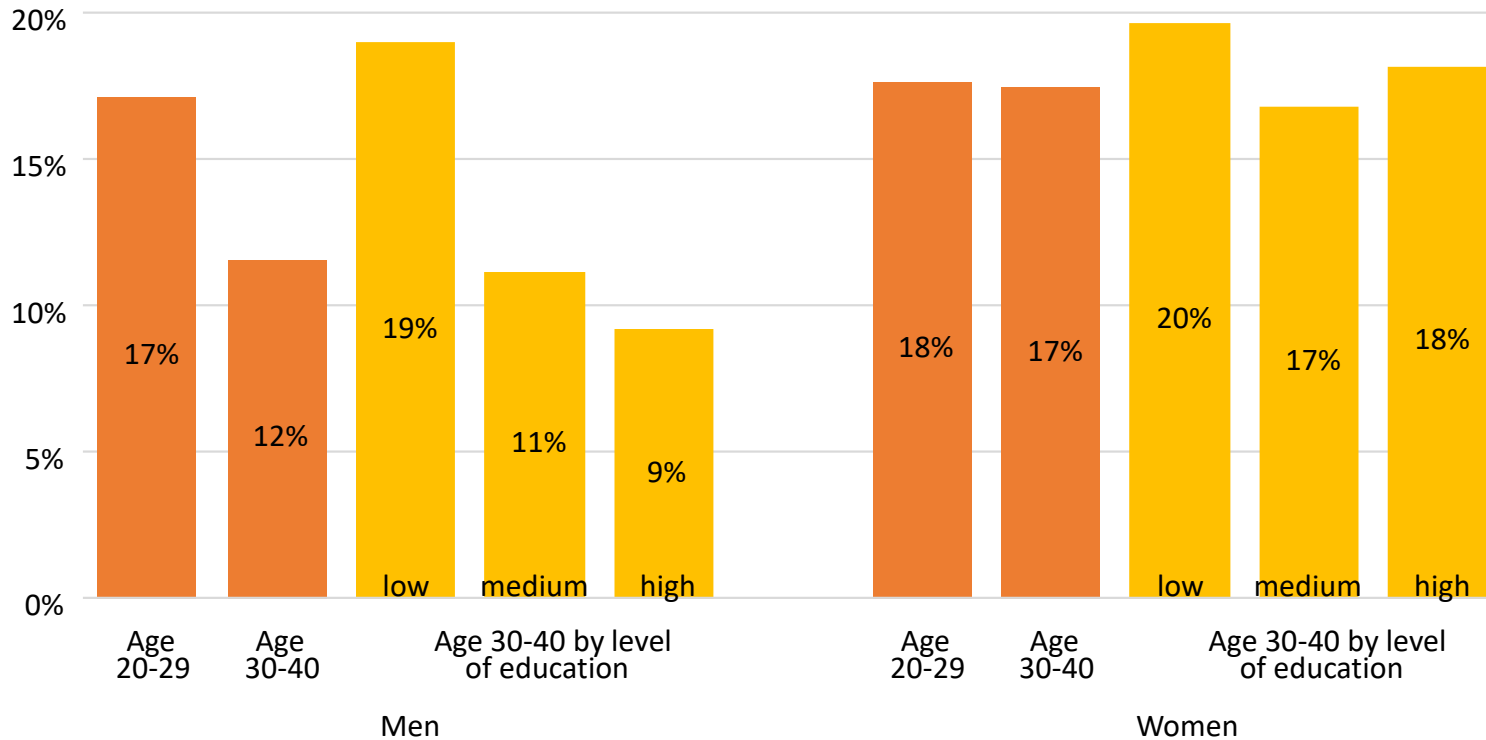
Men and women aged 30–40, by level of education



- Among women of later reproductive ages, actual and intended number of children vary by education. Women with medium and higher educational attainment intend to have fewer children (1.6 on average) than women with lower educational attainment (1.8 on average). Women in their 30s with a degree have much lower average number of children already born (0.7) than their low-educated counterparts (1.5).
- Men in Austria have higher intended family size than women. Among men aged 30 to 40, fertility intentions do not vary much by educational attainment. Both lower- and higher-educated men intended to have around 2 children on average in 2021.

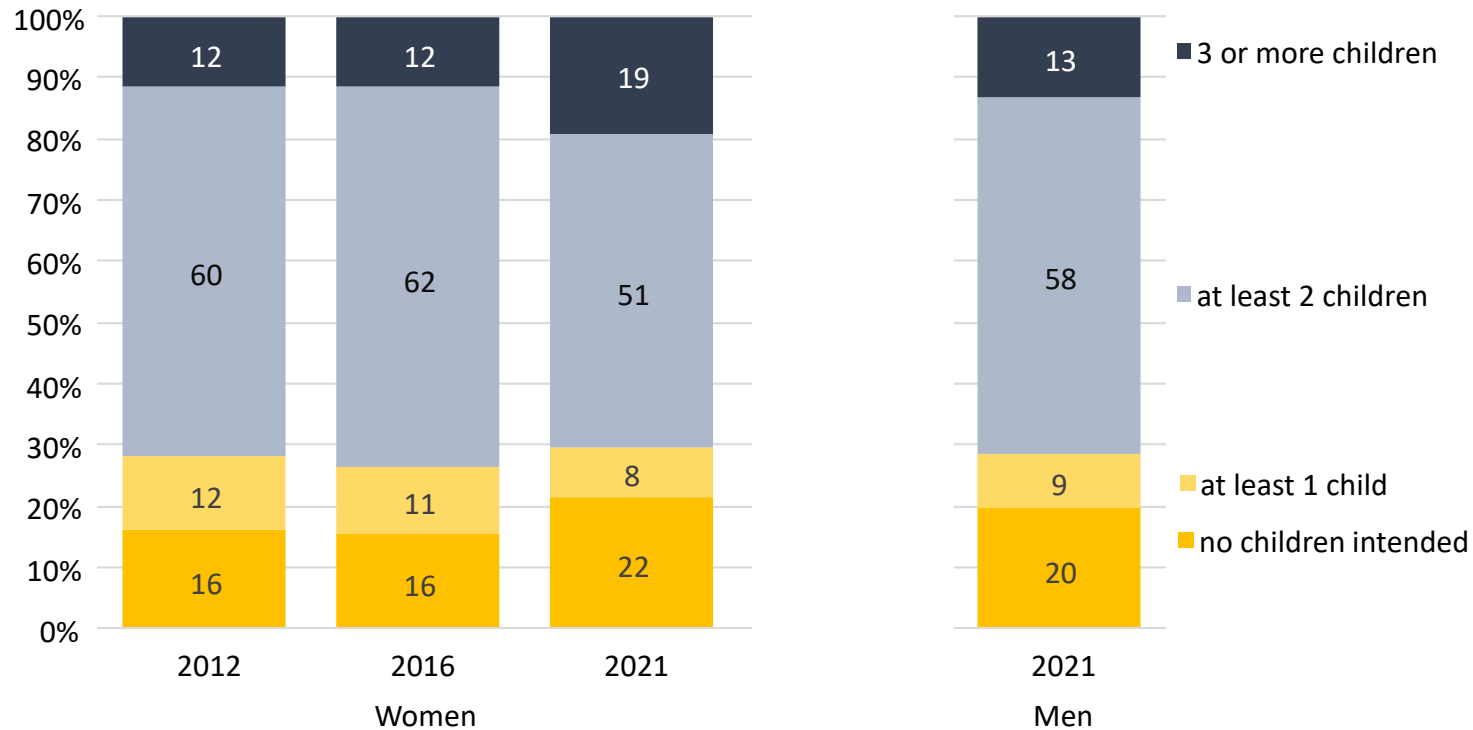
Intended childlessness (2021)

Share of men and women intending to remain childless by age and education (%)



- In 2021, the share of people aged 20 to 29 who had no children and did not intend to have a child was nearly identical for men and women (17% and 18%, respectively).
- However, intended childlessness among women and men differed at older reproductive ages: a higher proportion of women (17%) than men (12%) in their 30s did not have and said they do not intend to have children.
- Intended childlessness does not vary by level of education among women.
- By contrast, among men aged 30 to 40, intended childlessness is highest among the lower-educated, who are often without a partner (not shown here).

Fertility intentions of childless women and men aged 20–29



- Between 2012 and 2021, the share of women aged 20–29 who had not given birth increased from 76 to 85% (not shown in the figure).
- Childbearing intentions among childless women and men in their 20s were very similar in 2021.
- In this category, the proportion of women who did not intend to have children grew from 16 to 22%.
- The proportion of women who intended to have three or more children also went up.
- Two-child family remained the most popular option, with five out of ten childless women intending to have two children in 2021. This share, however, dropped from 2016, when six out of ten women intended to have two kids.

Birth Barometer: Monitoring Fertility in Austria

Data Source: Microcensus Labour Force Survey (LFS). STATISTICS AUSTRIA.

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