

CENSUS ON POPULATION AND HOUSING. Families 2001

## The traditional family loses sway, representing less than half the number of Basque families

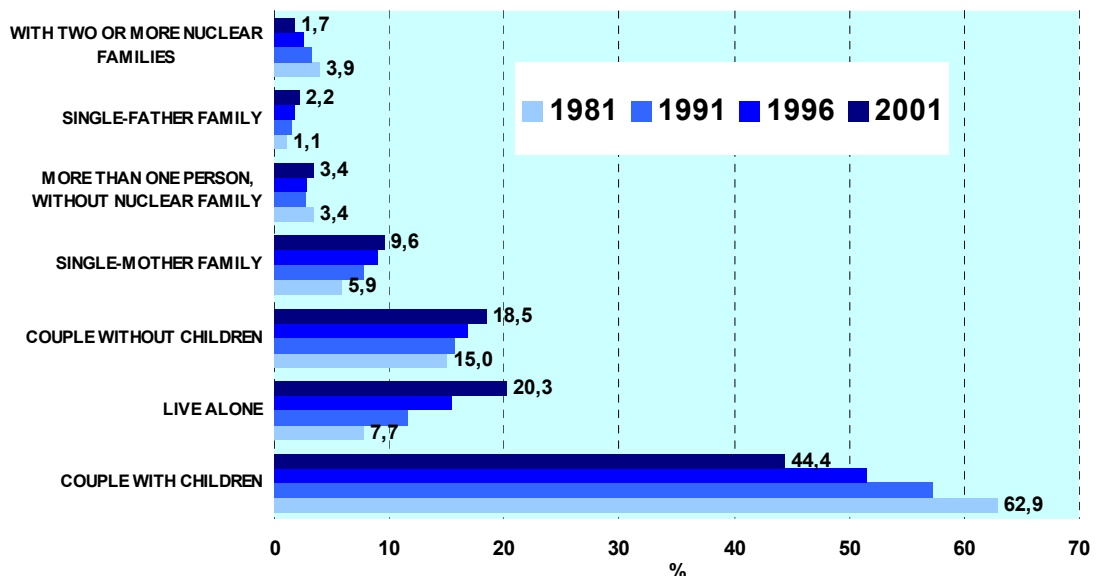
**Between 1996 and 2001 an average of 13,136 new families were formed per year.**

According to the results of the Census on Population and Housing 2001, published by Eustat, the section on Families showed that 116,892 new families were formed between 1991 and 2001 in the A.C. of the Basque Country. The rate during the first half of this period was approximately 10,242 families per year, rising, between 1996 and 2001, to 13,136. Growth in the final decade of the century, which was 18.5%, contrasted with the previous decade (1981-1991) when there was a more sluggish growth rate of 9.3%.

If the levelling off of the birth rate is added to the increase in the number of families, this explains the fall in the average size of families, which went from 3.32 people per family in 1991 to 3.05 in 1996, ending up at 2.76 in 2001.

This evolution presents an apparent contradiction: Bizkaia, which lost 2.8% of its population between 1991 and 2001, increased its family census by 14.4% -50,300 more families- and Gipuzkoa, which lost 0.4% of its population gained 22.8% more families -45,697. Álava augmented its population by 5.1% and also the number of families by 25.6% -20,895.

Evolution of family types. A.C. of the Basque Country.1981-2001.%



Source: EUSTAT

Bilbao, which lost 5.4% of its population in ten years, gained 13,480 families -11.5%-, Vitoria-Gasteiz, which grew by 5.2%, increased the number of households by 25.7%, an evolution very similar to that of Donostia-San Sebastián: its population census grew by 4% and the family one by 22%. The most important municipalities of the left bank of

Bizkaia such as Barakaldo, Portugalete, Santurtzi and Sestao, with population losses of around 10%, increased the number of families by 4%, in the case of the last-named, or as much as 11% in the case of Santurtzi.

Four municipalities managed to double the number of families in 10 years: Elburgo, Ribera Baja, Zuia and Zigoitia, while only one –Mutiloa- lowered the family census, which went from 61 families in 1991 to 58 in 2001.

**In 10 years, the number of people living alone doubled, accounting for one in five households.**

The most important rise was produced in the number of people who live alone: it went from 73,648 in 1991 to 151,855 in 2001, a process that gained momentum between 1996 and 2001, during which 60% of new cases were concentrated. 59% of these people were women, who were single in 48% of the cases and widowed in 36%, although the trend points to an increase in the proportion of men –from 34% in 1991 to the latest figure of 41%. While divorce or separation caused almost 3,900 people to live alone in 1991, this figure tripled in 10 years, affecting 11,930. Two in five were in work – 60% of men and 27% of women- and 42% stated themselves as being not in work.

**The traditional family, formed by both parents and their children, loses sway in the family structure, dropping from 51.5% in 1996 to 44.4% in 2001.**

The traditional family, formed by both parents and one child or more, went from representing 63% of the total number of families in 1981, to 57% in 1991 and to 44.4% in 2001. Additionally, there was a continued reduction in the average size: from 4.4 members in 1981 to 4.1 in 1991 and to 3.8 in the latest census. In absolute figures, there was a loss of 29,086 families of this type between 1991 and 2001, two thirds of them between 1996 and 2001.

**Although women are the heads of four in five single-parent families, those headed by a father are growing faster.**

The number of families formed by one of the two parents and their children grew by almost 50% over the decade, accounting for 11.7% of the total number of families – 87,880. Of this type of family, 81.5% were headed by the mother. However, there was a steeper growth of single-father families: a 33.5% increase between 1996 and 2001, compared to 16.8% of single-mother families.

Children leaving the family home and couples not having children produced an appreciable increase in childless nuclear families, which went from 15% in 1991 to 18.5% ten years later.

The evolution of households in which several nuclear families cohabit was negative, going from 3.3% of the total in 1991 to 1.7% in 2001. Families made up of individuals who may or may not be related, but are not part of the nuclear family –there are no conjugal or filial ties- recovered the weight that they had in 1981 –3.4%- , mainly growing between 1996 and 2001, partly due to family situations arising out of the latest migrations.

**In five years, the number of nuclear families made up of people who had previously gone through an earlier marriage or lived with another person tripled.**

The growth in the number of families was also the result of newly-appeared family types. Between 1996 and 2001 couples formed by unmarried partners –common law marriages- grew 27.5%, even though this variation belied a more modest amount: 16,322 couples in 2001 –2.8% of the total number of nuclear families. This evolution seems to indicate that this type of relationship and cohabitation is a transitional phase towards another type of family; in fact, only 16.4% of these couples had children.

So-called reconstructed families, formed by members who have been part of an earlier marriage or common-law marriage, went from a mere 1.9% out of the whole of nuclear families to represent 6.3% in only five years. Two-thirds of these families were formed by people in their second marriages and the rest by people who had previously lived with another partner but without marrying. In almost 90% of the families in the first group, one of the spouses had children from the previous relationship, compared to 60.5% from the second group.

There was an increase of 33.2%, between 1996 and 2001, in the number of nuclear families proceeding from a divorce or separation, totalling 42,186 cases. 78.3% were headed by the mother. This type of household accounted for 7.2% of the total.

### **Young people break the trend of lengthening their stay in the family home.**

The evolution of the census data related to the age of the head of the household revealed that young people broke the trend of remaining in the family home for a longer time and, although timidly, began to form their own families at an earlier age. In 1996, only 2.5% of young people aged 20 to 24 were the head of a household; by 2001 it was 5.6%. 15.7% of 25 to 29 year-olds were the heads of households in 1996 and 18.9% in 2001.

### **There was an increase in the number of elderly people remaining in their home: over half of the population aged 90 or over continue to be heads of their household in 2001.**

At the opposite end of the population structure, there was an appreciable increase in the length of time that the elderly population, including the most senior citizens, remained in their own home, thanks to the improvement in health care, home visits and support. In 1981, 37% of the population aged 90 or over were head of a household, a percentage that rose to 42.8% in 1991 and to 54.9% in 2001. If we take the largest group, those aged 75 or over, an even greater can be seen: from 46.6% of this age group remaining in their home in 1996 to 65.5% in 2001.

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