

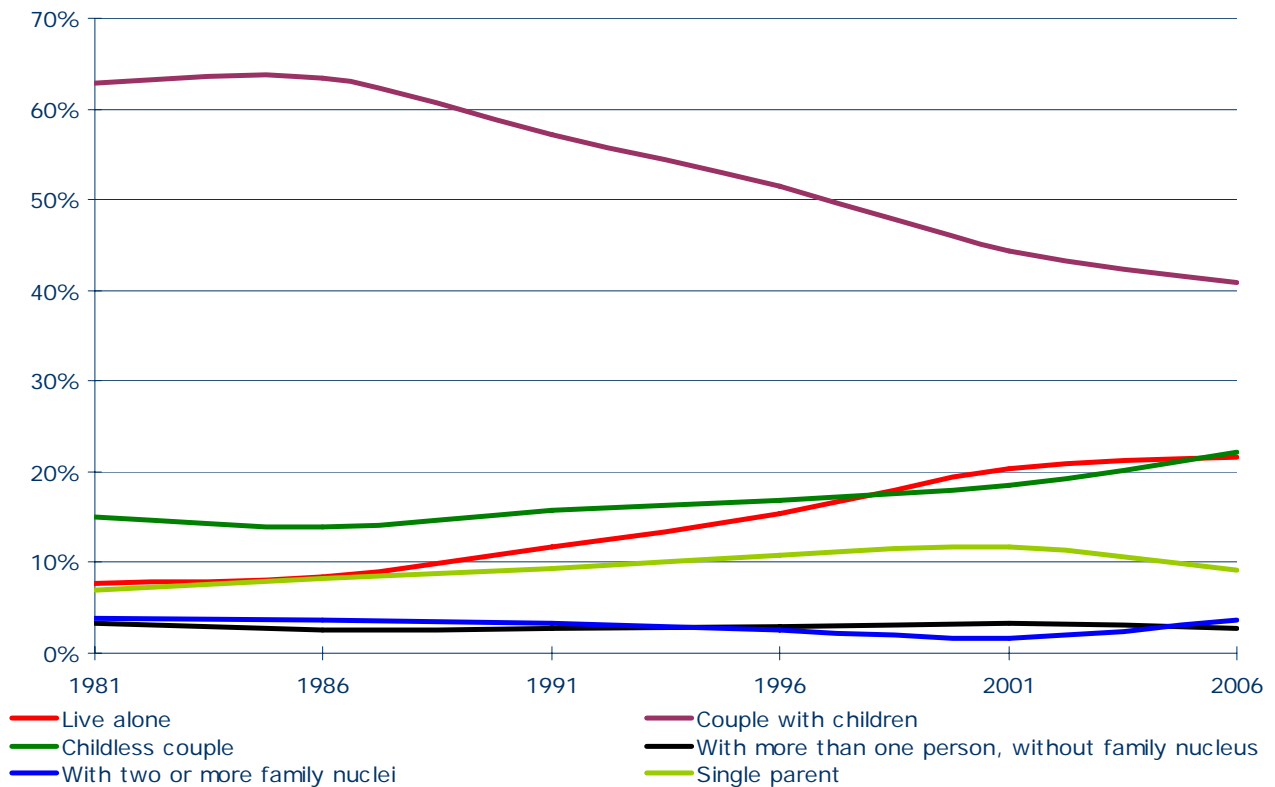
In the last 10 years the number of families has increased by 15%

Basque families continue to reduce in size, standing at an average of 2.64 people in 2006

Between 1996 and 2006 some 104,000 families were created in the A.C. of the Basque Country, meaning a 15% increase, according to Eustat data. In the first half of the period, the rhythm of growth was approximately 13,000 families a year, falling between 2001 and 2006 to around 7,700. This growth rate was much higher than that of the population, whose increase was almost 2% in the same period, leading to substantial changes in the structure and size of families.

As for size, the average number of people in the families of the A.C. of the Basque Country went from 3.05 in 1996 to 2.73 in 2001, coming to 2.64 by 2006. Over these ten years the decrease in the average size was 13.4%.

Evolution of family types. A.C. of the Basque Country. 1981-2006



The sum of single person families and childless couples outnumbered the traditional family with both parents and children for the first time

Over these ten years single person families increased by 61% and those of couples without children did so by just over 51%, with these representing 22% of the total in 2006. The composition of these two types of families was similar as regards age, since in 60% of both cases, the person of reference was aged 55 and over.

In the case of people living alone, just over 61% were women, single in 48% of cases and widows in 41.5%. While in 1996 there were 7,000 divorcées or separated women living alone, in 2006 this number was doubled, affecting around 14,400, 8.4%.

The number of families formed by childless couples grew by just over 59,000 after 1996, with a notable incorporation into this group by those who had less children in the 'eighties, so taking less time to become independent.

The proportion of families formed by both parents with children went down over twenty years from 63% in 1986 to 40.8% in 2006

The traditional family, formed by both parents and one or more children, went from representing 63% of the total number of families in 1986, to 51% in 1996 and to 40.8% in 2006. At the same time the average size reduced: from 4.3 people in 1986 to 3.9 in 1996 and to 3.7 in 2006. In absolute figures, 30,600 families of this type were lost between 1996 and 2006.

Immigration entails the increase of families with more than one family nucleus and the maintenance of those formed by individuals without conjugal or family ties

In 2006 the tendency towards the decrease of the number of families where there was more than one family nucleus was modified. In 1986 they accounted for some 21,300 families and in 2001 they fell to 12,000, but in the latest five-year period, however, they rose to around 28,500. The origin of this change of trend must be sought in immigration, since 13.4% of the reference persons of this type of family were born overseas, while in families overall, they only accounted for 3.7%.

As for families formed by individuals linked or not by kinship, but who have no family nucleus – there are no conjugal or family ties–, they decreased between 2001 and 2006 until they had practically the same weight as in 1991, although the incorporation of immigrants into this type of family slowed down the fall, with their number established at 21,300 families. In fact, 12.7% of the people of reference of these families were born abroad, just over 76% were single and over 65% were aged 45 and over. Five years earlier, the proportion of single people was a little lower (74.5%) and the proportion of those aged under 30 was double the latest figure (21%).

The number of single parent families decreased but their main characteristics were consolidated

From 2001 to 2006 single parent families decreased by around 16,000, but families with single fathers with children did so to a greater extent (30.4%) than those of single mothers with children (15.4%). In the case of single fathers, the proportion of widowers increased from 48% to 68%, while among single mothers, the proportion of widows remained practically unchanged (from 58% to 60%) and divorced and separated women went from 21% to 26%. The change of many single parent families in 2001 to single person ones in 2006, due to the children leaving the household, was not compensated by the creation of new ones due to the processes of separation or divorce.

The growth of single person families meant that the number of isolated people in nuclear families decreased

People who form part of a family with one or more nuclei but who do not belong to them went from around 56,700 in 1996 to almost 47,000 in 2006, which is to say a decrease of over 17%. In 2001 they came to 64,000, largely as a result of the family characteristics of the migrations in these years. The final decrease was due the fact that people who were left on their own because of bereavement or other causes joined other related families to a lesser extent, rather making up single person families. In fact the proportion of people in this type of family with one or more nuclei who are widowed went from 52% in 1996 to 47% ten years later and the average size of the families containing these people went down from 4.4 in 1996 to 4.1 people in 2006.

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