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# **The family in Navarre (Spain) today: a mosaic combining past and present**

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## **Abstract**

This article examines the development of household structures in the province of Navarre (Spain) between 1910 and 2001. The data show that the traditional coexistence of two family systems (stem and nuclear families) had already become diffuse by 1950 as a result of the spread of neo-local family structures. However, study of household structures within the perspective of the life-cycle shows that different family structure models have persisted within the region. The households of elderly people follow two patterns, reflecting the continued existence of different interpretations as to how their care should be organized.

## **Key Words:**

Spain, Navarre, Family history, geographical differences, 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## **Introduction**

It is difficult to imagine a society without thinking of the family. The decisions as to who to live with, how to take care of the elderly and who should do this, when one should marry or how many children one should have, are not exclusively individual decisions. Moreover, they are affected by issues of a demographic nature, such as life expectancy or infant mortality, and may also be influenced by state policies to support

parents or dependent people, among other factors. The study of the family is therefore a basic issue in sociology.

In Spain, sociology has focused much of its attention on what are termed “new family structures”, the appearance of different types of couple, the implications of women joining the workforce, the reduction in the size of the home, the fall in fertility and the growth of one-person households (Alberdi, 1999; Del Campo, 1991; Fernández and Tobío, 1998; Flaquer et al, 2006; Iglesias d’Ussel, 1998; Jurado, 2005; Meil, 2003; Requena, 2004). Historians, for their part, have observed household structures through the analysis of traditional family systems (Chacón, 1987; Ferrer, 2003; Mikelarena, 1992; Reher, 1988 y 1996).

Unfortunately, there has been little dialogue between these two approaches. Although the 20th century is “the period when the foundations of the main challenges facing Spanish families today were laid” (Reher, 2006), few studies are available which trace the developments in household structure over the entire century. Current sociological research tends to make little reference to the family forms that existed in the past. The focus tends to be on short periods of time (usually from the 1970s or 1980s onwards), which generates a mirage in which there appears to be a complete break with earlier family customs. The consequence of ignoring the traditions that preceded this period is that researchers completely omit some of the basic issues that have had a major influence on the type and intensity of the changes that have been wrought within the family system. On the other hand, historians generally do not attempt to identify the elements of traditional family systems that may still be present today. As a result, they implicitly assume that these household models belong to the past, and that they have disappeared without trace, giving way to new forms of family life.

This lack of communication between disciplines has generated an epistemological vacuum which provides the starting point for the present research. Did the 20th century see a complete, radical transformation of the family? Is it true that there was one kind of family in the past, which survived until well into the last century, and another kind today, in which new household structures have completely replaced the older ones? This study aims to build a bridge between the two approaches, between the sociology of the family and the historiography on family systems. Such a bridge is essential if we are to advance in our knowledge of the family today. Only by knowing how family systems worked in the past and how they have been transformed, will we be able to understand the family today in all its complexity and bring both new and traditional family forms into our field of vision. Setting out from this position, this article will explore what remains of the traditional family systems in the rural areas of Navarre today, and relate changes in the family to the demographic evolution of this region during the 20th century.

The concept of the family system, whether extended or nuclear (the two systems most frequently found in European contexts), makes reference to the network of relationships and means of managing resources which families used in the past. This concept is a staple of historical studies, but is rarely used in analyses of the family today. There is an assumption, which may or may not be acknowledged openly, that there has been convergence between these two models, that the differences between them have been eroded completely, and that it is no longer necessary to make reference to these systems. This study aims to rehabilitate this concept as a valid analytical tool which is necessary to understand the development of the family during the 20th century. By using this tool, we can build a bridge between past and present which is essential to understand the family today: our hypothesis is that the family in Navarre constitutes a diverse reality in which past and present come together. The earlier family tradition in

each part of the region, be it extended or nuclear, still functions as a variable with a high explanatory value if we try to account for the current strategies of family organization. It is therefore essential to look at the past in order to understand the specific features of family organization today.

### **Methodological aspects**

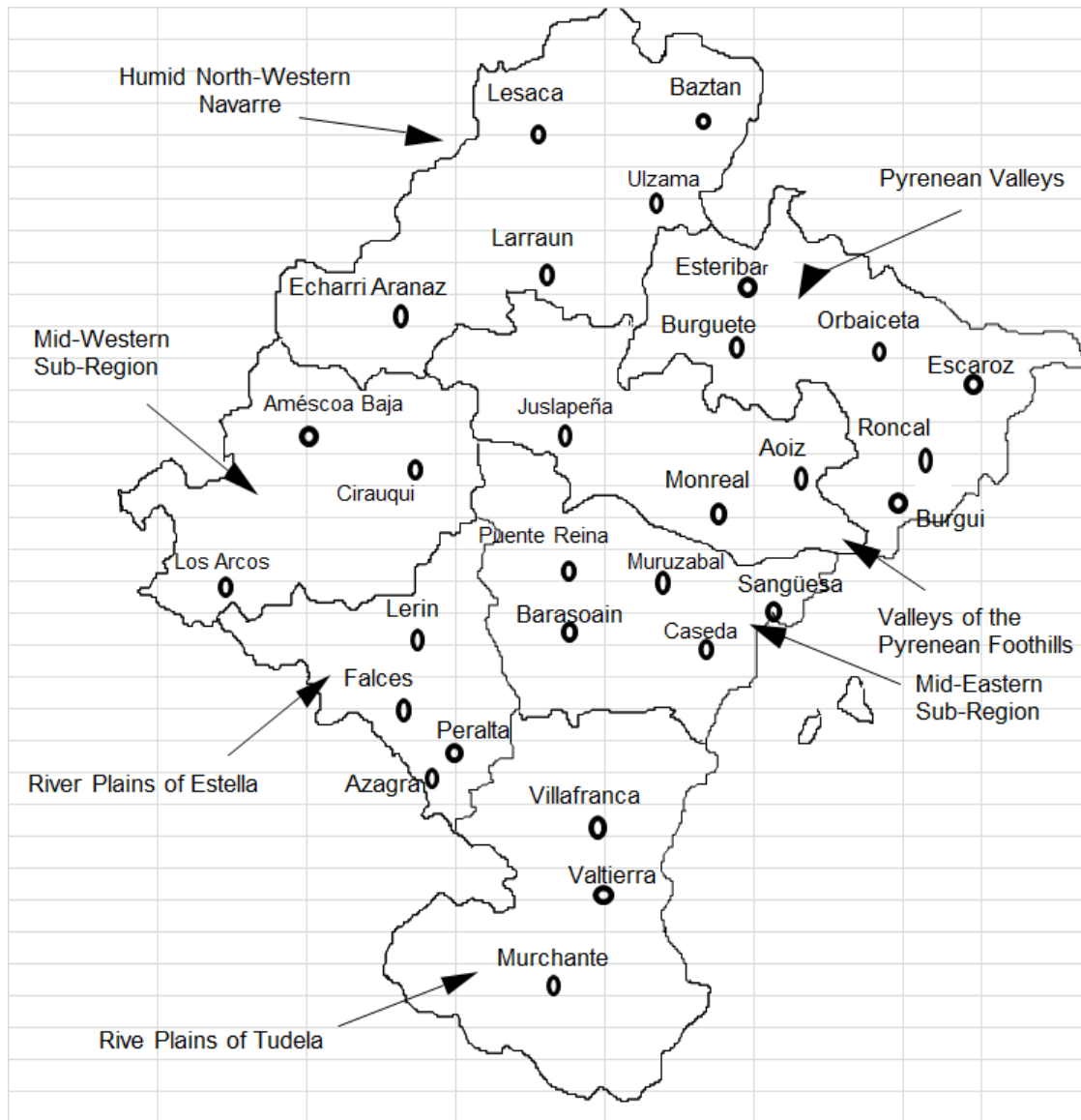
The empirical basis for this study is the analysis of the household structures obtained from censuses and municipal registers in Navarre from 1910 to 2001. The households were classified according to the system designed by historians in the Cambridge group (Laslett and Wall, 1972) which includes six types of home:

- 1) Solitaries: people living alone, with or without servants.
- 2) No family: two or more people living together who are not linked by a conjugal relationship.
- 3) Simple or nuclear family: parents and children living together. This is the commonest kind. Laslett says that the first person who is registered can be understood to be the head of the family.
- 4) Extended family: a married couple and one or more other relatives, in addition to the couple's children.
- 5) Multiple family: families containing two or more couples who are related by blood or marriage.
- 6) Indeterminate: the most typical examples are collective homes such as prisons, hospitals or convents.

Censuses and municipal registers were used to build a database of households covering the entire province, which was divided into seven sub-reions (known in Spanish as *comarcas*): Humid Northeastern Region, Pyrenean Valleys, Valleys in the Pyrenean Foothills, Mid-Western Region, Mid-Eastern Region, River Plains of Estella and River Plains of Tudela. Our analysis centres on the rural areas of this province.

Navarre has a surface area of 10,421 km<sup>2</sup>. Located in the north of Spain, it spreads from the Ebro River Valley in the south to the western reaches of the Pyrenees in the north. Traditionally, Navarre has been divided into three large units: the *Montaña* or Mountain Region in the north, the *Ribera* or River Plains in the south, and the *Zona Media* or Middle Region, which is between the other two areas and can be considered a transitional zone. In this study I will focus strictly on the Mountain Region and River Plains in order to highlight both the geographic and demographic contrasts which may exist between these two zones. In Figure 1 one can observe the geographical division of Navarre and the municipalities discussed in this research.

**Figure 1. Province of Navarre (Spain). Municipalities forming part of our sample, 1910-1960**



As geographer Alfredo Floristán Samanes (1986) said, Navarre is a land of contrasts. These contrasts are present in terms of climate, relief, types of settlement and even cultural and political attitudes. The northern part of the region is mountainous, whereas the southern part is generally flat, although the former region also has some areas of low hills of under 400 metres, and the latter region has some mountains of a height exceeding 400 metres. From a climatic point of view, spatial contrasts are the most salient characteristic feature of the climate of Navarre, where a great variety of existing climatic nuances can be found in a relatively small space. It is probable that no

other Spanish region of similar dimensions offers such a wide variety of natural landscapes. Within a space of just 100 kilometres, there are very sharp climatic differences between the northern zone (which is very humid and has the mild temperatures typical of oceanic climates) and the southern one (where precipitation is very low and the temperature varies greatly, as is characteristic of the Mediterranean climate with continental influences of a semi-arid nature). Between these two extremes we find a succession of nuances created by the north-south gradient, the main features being the decline in humidity and rise in temperatures.

The Mediterranean culture is found in the River Plains and in most of the Middle Region. Its most notable characteristics are the three classic crops (cereals, grapes and olives), irrigation and nucleated settlement in large villages.

Atlantic cultivation patterns are found in the northwest of Navarre. Enclosed meadows, the rearing of cattle and sheep, ferns, intensive mixed agriculture and dispersed settlement characterize this region. In the part of Navarre where enclosed meadows are prevalent, the *ager* (cultivated land) is located alongside rivers and streams in the lower and flatter parts of valleys and in the form of cleared space alongside *bordas* and *caseríos* (traditional buildings destined, respectively, for animals and for human habitation), and in the midst of the *saltus* (non-cultivated space) on the less steep slopes.

Alpine-Pyrenean agriculture can be found across the zone of high mountains located in the northeast, known as the Pyrenean Valleys. Three important characteristics typify the region: the seasonal movement of sheep flocks between the mountain valleys and River Plains (transhumance), agriculture typical of highland areas (with huge forest fallow-lands), and the marketing of wood, fire-wood and organic coal. This is, in general terms, the geographical scene in which we performed the study.



For the period 1910-1960 we sampled 33% of the homes in each sample of 29 municipalities. Our whole sample contained 31,675 households, which were classified using the taxonomy described above.

For the years 1975 and 1996, the Statistics Institute of Navarre (Instituto de Estadística de Navarra) provided the information about the whole population of the province, so we were able to classify 100% of households (71,303 and 96,101 households respectively).

Finally, for 2001 we worked with data published by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España, INE). The types of household were calculated using the variable “Types of household, large types, disaggregated”. This information is available for all municipalities in Spain, which makes it possible to aggregate the results for the sub-regions and complete the chronological sequence from 1910 to the start of the 21st century<sup>1</sup>.

One important methodological point is that in this province the censuses for the period 1910-1960 underestimate the number of extended and multiple households. This is because these were frequently split into two or more units because of the way the census was organized: the census divided households with more than one economic unit. To overcome this problem, we designed a method for correcting the data which enabled us to ensure that extended and multiple structures would be represented correctly. The variables coded for the purposes of this article are: the sex, age and

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<sup>1</sup> The Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España (INE) follows a classification system for households which differs slightly from that of Laslett. To standardize the household types across the whole period we designed a methodology to convert the INE categories to those used by the Cambridge Group. This is explained in Appendix 1.

marital status of all the members of the household and their relationship to the head of the family.

The analysis of census data constitutes the core of this research. This quantitative approach facilitates objective empirical observation of the object of study, that is, the household structure. However, this study also aims to investigate the meanings and perceptions of the families themselves concerning the changes in norms of living together. To achieve this end, I performed methodological triangulation by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Twenty semi-structured interviews were carried out with groups of people matching two different profiles. Fourteen people identified as “elderly” were interviewed, selected in terms of two variables, namely age and place of origin<sup>2</sup>. All had lived for most of their lives in the municipalities where they were interviewed, and therefore knew the family customs that were most usual there, as well as the general opinions held about these. Six people were interviewed in the capacity of “experts” (social workers or professionals in the healthcare or social service sector). These people had everyday contact with the domestic reality of elderly people living in the rural areas of Navarre.

### **Issues in the evolution of traditional family models: the case of Navarre**

The bibliography on this subject in Spain is unanimous in stating that there was no single homogeneous family form, but rather a diversity of systems which were traditionally ordered in terms of the following geographical division: central and southern Spain, which was characterized by the predominance of the nuclear family

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<sup>2</sup> The distribution of the interviewees by sex was determined by the availability of informants. Among the group of elderly people, we were looking for older residents with good health who were willing to provide information. In the end we interviewed eleven men and three women.

with restricted co-residence of parents and children; and a northern area<sup>3</sup> where extended and multiple households were much more frequent (Chacón and Bestard, 2011; García González, 2008; Mikelarena, 1992; Reher, 1996).

This broad overview gives way to a more complex one if change our focus to take in the micro level, and the case of Navarre is a good example of this. This province traditionally had two family systems: the stem family and the nuclear family. The northern and middle regions of the province were characterized by the predominance of the stem family, while the so-called River Plain (Ribera) or southern region was dominated by the nuclear one. Many studies have shown that these two different patterns of family structure and organization existed there in the past. Erdozáin (1999), Mendiola (2000), Mikelarena (1995), Moreno and Zabalza (1999), Ruiz (2003) and Sánchez Barricarte (2002), among others, uses various different methodological approaches (family reconstruction, analysis of household types and review of notarial protocols) to identify the features that define each model.

The stem family is a system characterized by the parents' decision to choose one of their sons or daughters as the heir to their entire property. This heir would stay in the family home with his or her spouse and children, following what is known as the custom of "patri-local household formation". He or she would inherit the parents' name, house and all their property. In return, he or she would take responsibility for taking care of their parents and maintaining any unmarried siblings who stayed at home. In terms of household structure, this produced a large proportion of extended and multiple households (the sum of which is generally presented under the heading of complex households). The nuclear family, for its part, is organized according to the custom of

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<sup>3</sup> The northern region includes Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, the Basque Country, the Pyrenees, Navarre and Catalonia.

neo-local households and a system of inheritance which permits division of wealth. Each married couple means a new household because the two people concerned leave their parental home and start a new one. The inheritance is divided equally between all the children, and so none of them is obliged to live with the parents. Complex households are infrequent in this system.

The studies by the authors mentioned above confirm that these models existed side by side in Navarre from at least the 15th century onwards, and persisted into the 20th century. The present study addresses the question as to whether these models disappeared in the course of the century, or whether this diversity is still present. In other words, did the process of socio-economic development and change which the province underwent in the 20th century put an end to these two systems?

The debate as to whether the processes of modernization, industrialization and urbanization are accompanied by homogenization of family structures centring on a nuclear family model often surfaces in studies on the family. The first author to pose this question was Le Play (1855), who stated that the move from the stem to the nuclear family was an inevitable process resulting from industrial development. According to this line of argument, the stem system was bound to disappear when industrialization arrived. Salaried work would put an end to children's dependence on their family inheritance, and so several generations would no longer need to live together in extended and multiple households, which would gradually disappear. Similar theories in sociology have posited that the modernization of the economy is associated with the spread of the nuclear family. The functionalist school, represented by Parsons (1978), held that this type of family was the result of a process of adjustment: the industrial labour market requires geographical mobility, and so the family reacts by modifying its structure. This adjustment is carried out through the reduction of household size as

relatives no longer live together and people have fewer children. As a result, the family structure is simplified and household size is reduced.

Regarding these theoretical questions, it is important to remember that the nuclear family already existed in many countries before the industrial era. Although there is a widespread belief that families in the past were very large with a complex structure, from the scholarly point of view it has been amply demonstrated that the nuclear family is not a product of the industrial revolution but actually pre-existed it (Hajnal, 1982; Laslett, 1983). On the other hand, complex home structures are still very common in countries like Japan or Korea, and have contributed to their industrial development (OECD, 2011; Saito, 2011). It therefore does not seem that there is any intrinsic incompatibility between economic modernization and the existence of complex households.

In Spain, and in general throughout southern Europe (Italy, Greece and Portugal), extended and multiple households still account for a fair proportion of homes today. Around 10% of all households in southern Europe were of this type in 2001, while the comparative figure for Finland or Denmark scarcely reached 3-4%<sup>4</sup>.

This phenomenon is discussed in a diverse and interesting bibliography which analyses the family from the point of view of its social functions within the welfare state (Esping Andersen, 1990; Flaquer, 2004; Reher, 2001). None the less, the debate as to whether the industrialization process has put an end to complex family structures and replaced the traditional diversity with a standard model of nuclear family is far from closed. It is true that families now resemble each other more than they did in the past. Various authors have shown that the patterns of people living together are simpler in

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<sup>4</sup> Eurostat Survey on Income and Living Conditions (2001).

Spain today than they were in the past, in terms of the family relationships between household members, and that households tend to be smaller (Alberdi, 1995; Solsona y Treviño, 1990). Nevertheless, the percentage of homes in each Autonomous Community with three or more generations living under one roof in 2001 is distributed geographically in a way that is very similar to what can be found in the figures for earlier years, or even centuries (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2004). There are clearly more of these domestic units in the entire northern area of the country, whereas they are rarer in the centre.

What was the impact of industrialization on the traditional diversity of family forms in Navarre? Study of the evolution of household models in the 20th century enables us to see how far this trend towards homogenization affected this province or alternatively whether distinct forms of household structure persisted.

**Table 1. Percentage distribution of types of household by sub-region (rural areas), 1910**

Type of household	North			Middle Region		South	
	Humid North-Eastern Sub-Region	Pyrenean Valleys	Valleys in Pyrenean Foothills*	Mid-Western Sub-Region	Mid-Eastern Sub-Region	River Plains of Estella	River Plains of Tudela
Solitaires	6,8	5,8	2,9	9,2	7,6	11,8	9,8
No family	3,3	1,8	1,2	1,7	2,3	2,5	1,1
Nuclear	56,2	58,3	62,6	62,0	66,7	78,7	75,4
Extended	20,5	20,0	18,7	15,1	16,3	6,1	9,4
Multiple	12,3	13,7	14,6	12,0	6,4	0,9	3,3
Indeterminate	0,9	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,7	0,0	1,1
Complex**	32,8	33,7	33,3	27,1	22,7	7,0	12,7

\* The data from the Valleys in the Pyrenean Foothills are from 1920 as no data are available from before this date.

\*\* Complex households are the sum of the extended and multiple households.

The family landscape in rural Navarre at the beginning of the 20th century was not very different from that of earlier centuries described elsewhere (Erdozain, 1999;

Mikelarena, 1995; Sánchez Barricarte, 2000). Families still organized their human and material resources in the same way as they had done hundreds of years before. In the northern and middle regions, complex homes accounted for 20 to 30% of all households, while in the south they scarcely amounted to 10%. The different systems of inheritance<sup>5</sup> were also reflected in the uneven distribution of one-person homes. It was very rare for people to live alone in the north and middle of Navarre. Unmarried or widowed relatives lived in the family home, and there was no point in a person's life at which the option of living alone was felt to be a normal alternative. In the south, however, this was more common. There, taking care of elderly people did not necessarily mean living with them, and there were more people who actually lived alone.

### **Demographic factors influencing changes in family patterns**

To understand how these family models developed over the 20th century, it is necessary to take into account the economic development of this province and, above all, to understand how this process affected the demography of rural areas.

Navarre was traditionally an area from which many people emigrated. The negative migratory balance of the 19th century (Arizcun, 2001; García-Sanz and

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<sup>5</sup> In Navarre, the legislation gave the testator complete freedom as to how to dispose of property (and still does today). This resulted in two culturally determined patterns of inheritance: inheritance of the whole estate in the north and middle of the province, and division of the estate among siblings in the south.

Mikelarena, 2000) persisted into the first half of the 20th century<sup>6</sup>, as a result of the economic stagnation of a province from which a large number of people emigrated in search of employment. The 1960s saw the tipping point from the economic point of view, as well as in terms of family and demography. The so-called Stabilization Plans (1959) and Programme for the Promotion of Industry (1964)<sup>7</sup> set the objectives of halting this emigration process which was endemic among the population of Navarre, by pursuing growth strategies that would create an industrial and service sector to absorb the workforce that could not be employed in agriculture. They achieved their aim: 23,000 new jobs were created (Arizcun, 2001) and the area's demographic flow was reversed. While in the first half of the 20th century the annual growth rate was around 0.5%, between 1960 and 1975 it rose to 1.2%. But migration did not stop, it simply changed its nature. In addition to the arrival of newcomers from other provinces, there was internal emigration within the province, as many people left the countryside for the few towns that offered new opportunities in terms of work and lifestyle. Industrial development and population growth were mainly concentrated in Pamplona and its immediate surroundings, the valleys of the Pyrenean foothills, and to a lesser extent, in the south. The rural areas, particularly in the middle and north, consequently lost a large proportion of their population. This internal emigration particularly affected the female population, as is shown by the increasing ratio of men to women in rural areas from the 1960s onwards.

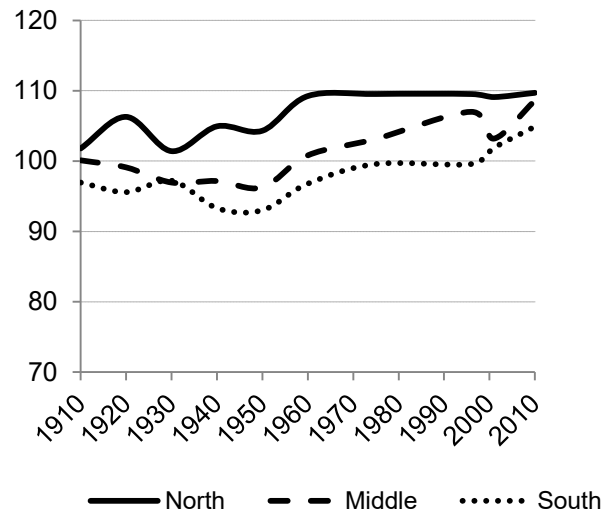
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<sup>6</sup> It has been estimated that 110,000 people emigrated from Navarre in the first six decades of the 20th century (García-Sanz and Mikelarena, 2000: 127). In 1910 this province had a total population of 312,235.

<sup>7</sup> Development programmes established by the Regional Government of Navarre.



**Figure 2. Changes in the ratio of males by geographical region, 1910-2010**



Own sources.

This uneven distribution of male and females meant a shortage of women in rural areas which reduced the chances of marriage for people who decided not to emigrate, particularly among men.

The demographic trends in Navarre during the last century thus left the rural areas with a low reproductive capacity, which later gave rise to a major change in family structure in those areas.

### **Changes in households in rural Navarre in the 20th century**

Broadly speaking, developments in household structure in Navarre over the 20th century were characterized by two phenomena which paralleled the ongoing changes all over Spain:

- The number of grandparents living with their married children fell considerably in the north and middle of the province. These complex household structures had already declined sharply over the 19th century. But this trend accelerated in the 20th century, and was one of the first indicators of the waning importance of the stem family structure.
- The increase in one-person households was the most striking change in quantitative terms. In areas where such households traditionally accounted for only 5% of the total, they now reached 20%. This phenomenon is related both to the ageing population and to changes in attitudes towards living with elderly relatives.

Let us examine the most significant aspects of these developments in the different sub-regions of the province.

**Table 2: Percentage distribution of types of household by sub-region (rural areas), 1910-2001.**

Humid North-Eastern Navarre									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	6,8	5,5	5,9	9,4	9,7	7,7	6,9	16,2	19,4
No family	3,3	4,2	4,4	5,6	6,5	5,4	5,6	5,8	6,4
Nuclear	56,2	57,2	59,0	59,4	58,4	60,3	63,3	63,0	58,4
Extended	20,5	20,7	19,4	16,4	17,7	15,6	16,0	10,9	11,7
Multiple	12,3	11,6	10,2	8,1	7,0	10,1	8,1	4,0	4,1
Indeterminate	0,9	0,8	1,2	1,2	0,8	0,9	0,2	0,2	-
Complex	32,8	32,3	29,5	24,5	24,7	25,7	24,1	14,9	15,8
Pyrenean Valleys									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	5,8	6,1	9,5	9,7	8,7	10,1	14,4	22,6	29,2
No family	1,8	2,0	2,4	4,0	4,5	5,1	8,5	10,8	11,5
Nuclear	58,3	59,1	59,7	63,4	59,5	57,5	53,8	47,4	40,2
Extended	20,0	17,2	17,6	13,5	15,4	16,1	15,7	14,5	15,2
Multiple	13,7	15,1	10,2	8,7	11,0	11,1	7,5	4,7	3,9
Indeterminate	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,9	0,1	0,1	0,1	-
Complex	33,8	32,3	27,8	22,2	26,4	27,1	23,3	19,2	19,1
Valleys of the Pyrenean Foothills									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	-	2,9	4,2	4,2	9,8	6,2	4,4	13,4	16,3
No family	-	1,2	2,3	3,5	3,3	6,5	3,3	3,0	4,5
Nuclear	-	62,6	63,6	64,1	64,1	56,2	76,2	74,8	67,7
Extended	-	18,7	16,4	19,6	11,9	17,8	11,2	6,8	8,5
Multiple	-	14,6	13,3	8,7	11,0	13,0	4,6	1,9	3,0
Indeterminate	-	0,0	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,2	0,1	-
Complex	-	33,3	29,7	28,2	22,9	30,8	15,9	8,7	11,5
Mid-Western Navarre									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	9,2	6,7	-	6,2	-	-	12,7	21,6	25,7
No family	1,7	2,9	-	3,0	-	-	4,9	5,8	7,6
Nuclear	62,0	64,6	-	71,9	-	-	66,1	60,1	51,2
Extended	15,1	14,1	-	15,7	-	-	10,9	9,5	11,5
Multiple	12,0	11,6	-	3,2	-	-	5,3	2,9	4,0
Indeterminate	0,0	0,2	-	0,0	-	-	0,1	0,1	-
Complex	27,1	25,7	-	18,9	-	-	16,2	12,4	15,5
We did not make use of data from 1930, 1950 and 1960 because defective lists were included in one of the selected municipalities.									
Mid-Eastern Navarre									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	7,6	9,6	8,2	8,3	10,0	7,8	10,6	18,2	22,2
No family	2,3	2,1	2,6	3,0	3,6	3,7	5,1	5,4	6,4
Nuclear	66,7	66,4	67,4	70,6	68,1	66,8	65,5	65,1	58,2
Extended	16,3	12,3	13,1	13,5	11,2	12,7	12,7	8,6	10,1
Multiple	6,4	9,0	8,1	3,9	6,7	8,5	5,9	2,5	3,1
Indeterminate	0,7	0,6	0,6	0,8	0,4	0,6	0,2	0,2	-
Complex	22,7	21,3	21,2	17,3	17,9	21,2	18,6	11,1	13,2
River Plains of Estella									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	11,8	10,3	11,3	8,4	10,9	15,1	11,6	16,4	19,2
No family	2,5	1,3	1,8	3,1	1,8	1,4	2,6	2,7	4,7
Nuclear	78,7	82,3	78,8	81,5	80,6	76,7	72,7	70,0	63,6
Extended	6,1	5,5	7,2	5,9	6,1	5,3	8,7	8,1	9,2
Multiple	0,9	0,4	0,6	0,9	0,6	1,4	4,5	2,7	3,3
Indeterminate	0,0	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,4	0,1	-
Complex	7,0	5,9	7,8	6,8	6,7	6,7	13,2	10,8	12,5
River Plains of Tudela									
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1975	1996	2001
Solitaires	9,8	8,2	6,9	8,6	7,7	9,6	10,8	16,4	19,9
No family	1,1	1,7	1,6	2,9	1,9	2,1	2,3	2,5	4,3
Nuclear	75,4	77,4	78,6	80,1	77,0	77,3	72,3	70,2	64,0
Extended	9,4	9,7	10,8	7,1	11,1	7,9	10,2	8,1	9,0
Multiple	3,3	2,4	1,7	0,9	2,1	2,6	4,3	2,5	2,8
Indeterminate	1,1	0,7	0,5	0,5	0,2	0,5	0,9	0,2	-
Complex	12,7	12,0	12,5	8,0	13,2	10,5	14,5	10,6	11,8

Own sources. For 2001, these figures were compiled using INE sources.

In 2001, the highest percentage of complex households was in the northern sub-regions of Navarre. Even though the proportion of these had decreased throughout the entire period, in the Pyrenean Valleys they still accounted for 19% of the total number of households (almost twice the Spanish average of 10%). Nonetheless, their composition bears witness to the changes that had taken place with regard to the traditional stem family. The classic structure, consisting of the husband, wife, the son or daughter destined to inherit, and his or her spouse, was infrequent (37% of all complex households)<sup>8</sup>, since the children of the elderly couple had probably emigrated and no longer lived in their birthplace. The other households consisted of a married couple plus an unmarried sibling. These figures show that families have adjusted their own tradition to the current demographic situation. So although it is not possible to live with one's children because they have emigrated, another of the features of the stem family is being maintained: unmarried brothers and sisters stay in the family home and are not expected to live alone.

The classic structure is most frequent in the north east (amounting to 66% of the complex homes there). This area is close to the Basque Country, which means that more jobs were created in the industrial sector, allowing the population to stay in their home towns or villages<sup>9</sup>. Emigration from this area was not so intense, and so it is not unusual for some of the children to live in the same village as their elderly parents. This has meant that the custom of elderly parents living with their children has been preserved in more cases.

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<sup>8</sup> The last year for which we have disaggregated information on the relationships between household members is 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Growth rates in the second half of the 20th century were negative, but close to 0 (ranging from 0% to -0.23%).

In parallel with the decline of the complex household, another striking change in household structure has also taken place: what could be termed its “de-nuclearization”. In the Pyrenean Valleys, one-person households or households made up of people who are not linked by a couple relationship (so-called “no family”) now account for 40% of all homes. To understand this major change, we must take various aspects into account: from 1960 to 1975 the population of these valleys fell by around 30% because young people emigrated; the balance between the sexes changed, with men accounting for 110% in 1960 and 114% in 2001 (that is, there were many more men than women); and the rate of people who stayed single all their lives<sup>10</sup> was very high (figures ranged from 20 to 35% for both sexes between 1960 and 2001).

The combined effect of these phenomena transformed the structure of this sub-region in terms of age and sex, and altered the decisions people made as to who they should live with. Households without a family structure have become very frequent (11% in 2001). In 70% of cases, these consist of homes made up of two or more unmarried siblings who have continued to live in their family home after their parents’ death. Our interviewees explained that these unmarried people did not feel the need to set up home independently, but simply carried on living with their parents. When the latter died, these households fell into the category of homes with “no family”.

The middle region also underwent a similar change. Homes here with a married couple as their nucleus became increasingly infrequent as a result of high emigration and the large number of people who never married (the percentage of men remaining unmarried went from 15 to 25% in the second half of the 20th century; while for women it remained around 15%).

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<sup>10</sup> Calculated as a percentage of the population of each sex remaining single at the age of 45-49 years.

Quantitatively speaking, the increase in one-person households is the most important change, and is directly related to the ageing population. In Navarre there is a significant statistical correlation between the ageing of each sub-region and the presence of one-person households<sup>11</sup>. The sub-region of Navarre with the most ageing population in 2001 was the Pyrenean Valleys (27% of the population were over 65), and this was also the place with the largest percentage of one-person homes (29%). This heavy presence of people living alone contrasts with the fact that complex households are still so frequent. To understand this apparent paradox, we must take into account the point that behind many of the people registered on the census as living alone there is a whole series of strategies of caring for family members<sup>12</sup>. Parents and children often live together on a temporary basis in these areas, particularly when a parent is widowed. Such strategies elude the census, but have to be taken into account if we are to understand the true nature of these one-person homes.

In the middle region, living alone is also an increasingly common choice among the elderly. In many cases, there is no longer a possibility of living with children, because they have all left the area, and so older people stay in their own homes as long as they can.

The north-eastern sub-region is the area of Navarre with the youngest population, which means that even though one-person homes have increased considerably (doubling between 1950 and 2001), they are less significant as a

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<sup>11</sup> Calculation of Pearson's correlation gives us a statistically significant correlation of 0.893 between the index of ageing and the percentage of one-person households.

<sup>12</sup> Focusing on homes when studying the family makes it difficult to identify family support networks that go beyond the confines of the household. Interviews help us to overcome this limitation and understand such inter-generational solidarity strategies better.

percentage. Elderly people delay going to live with a son or daughter until they clearly need special care, and sometimes they never do so. This is a major break with the family tradition of a few decades before, in which the elderly always lived with the son or daughter who would inherit.

The family customs on the River Plains (Ribera) were much more stable throughout the 20th century than those in the rest of the province. The main change was the increase in one-person homes. But this was due not to changing habits concerning the care of the elderly (the mean age of people living alone hardly varied across the century), but to the increase in the proportion of elderly people within the population as a whole. In other words, since there were more people aged 65 and over, their way of living came to account for a greater percentage of the whole. From this point of view, we could say that the way of organizing the household barely changed in the River Plain sub-regions in the course of the 20th century. The norm of forming a household on marriage has remained the same, and the way of caring for the elderly has not changed.

Finally, the analysis of household structures in the valleys of the Pyrenean foothills reveals a pattern quite different to that of the other parts of the province. Because this area is close to Pamplona, it received a considerable influx of migrants from other sub-regions and from elsewhere in Spain, and therefore experienced strong demographic growth<sup>13</sup>. As far as the family is concerned, the stem system of single inheritance was the only one until just forty years ago. But in the last few decades, complex households have halved and now 76% of families are nuclear. Most of the incoming people adopted the nuclear pattern in their households, changing the traditional structure of homes in this area. On the other hand, this sub-region is not as

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<sup>13</sup> In index numbers (taking a base of 100 in 1910), it reached 331 in 2001.

subject to ageing as the other parts of Navarre (16% of people are aged over 65), which means that it also has fewer one-person households.

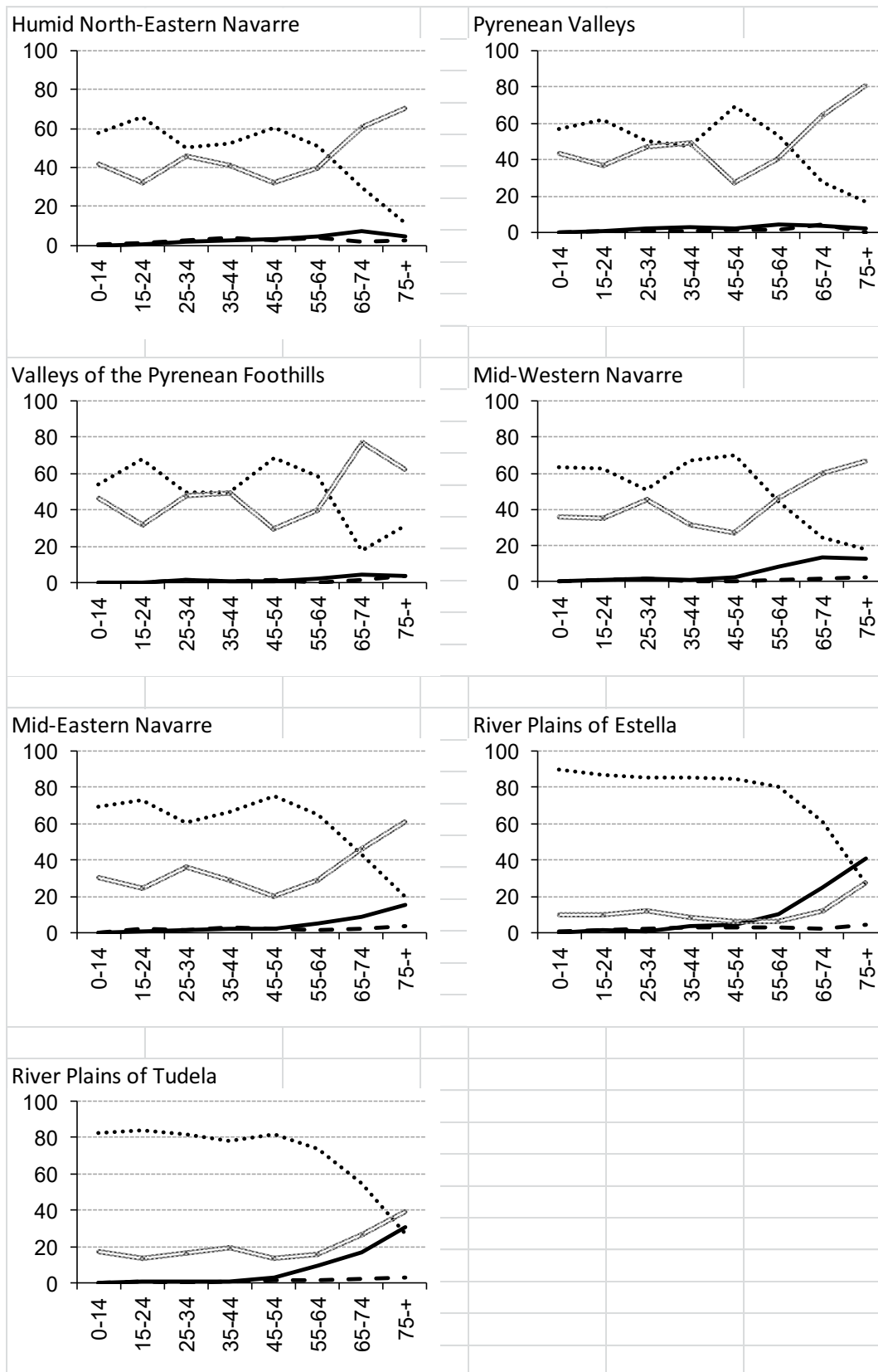
### **Evolution of household structures over the lifecycle**

Family lifecycles are the different forms that the home takes as the roles of its members change over time (Del Campo y Navarro, 1985). These roles are associated with predictable structures that change as individuals proceed through the different stages in life (people marry, children are born, they grow up, leave home, return, and so on). Changes in the structures of the household according to the age of its members make it possible for us to understand the differences between regions in terms of how they organize family life at each of life's stages.

This section complements the results presented in the earlier ones by analysing to what extent people's age and the distribution of roles among the members of a household give rise to different household structure in each region. For this analysis, we have taken people as our unit of reference, to study the types of household in which the population of each age group lived during the period analysed, in 1910, 1950 and 2001.



**Figure 3: Percentage distribution of population by type of household and age, 1910**



Own sources.

In 1910, the household structure changed in the course of the lifecycle in sub-regions where the stem family predominated, whereas the biographies of families from the River Plains sub-regions were more stable. These results are consistent with those obtained by other authors focusing on other Spanish regions where the nuclear family was traditionally established, such as Cuenca (Reher, 1988).

The family biography of a person born in Navarre was heavily determined by the sub-region in which he or she was born. In the south, he or she would very probably be born into a nuclear family. This was the case for 90% of the children in the River Plains of Estella sub-region and over 80% in the River Plains of Tudela, who lived the early years of their lives (0-14 years) with their parents and siblings alone. This situation was much less frequent in the case of the northern region: over 40% of children were born into households with a complex structure. The children of the middle region experienced a situation which was somewhere between the two.

The structure of homes in the south of Navarre varied little in the course of the lifecycle. Children left home when they married, and a new home was created. This was a new domestic unit in which they played a new role, but which still had the same structure as the one in which they had been brought up. In the River Plains of Estella, the high percentage of people living in nuclear households (between 80 and 90%) from birth to age 65 leaves us in no doubt concerning the prominence of this model in this sub-region. The figures are very slightly lower, but still high, in the River Plains of Tudela (75-85%). After 65, living alone was a relatively frequent option: 28 and 20% of the population aged over 65 lived alone in the River Plains of Estella and River Plains of Tudela respectively, and this percentage increased after the age of 75.

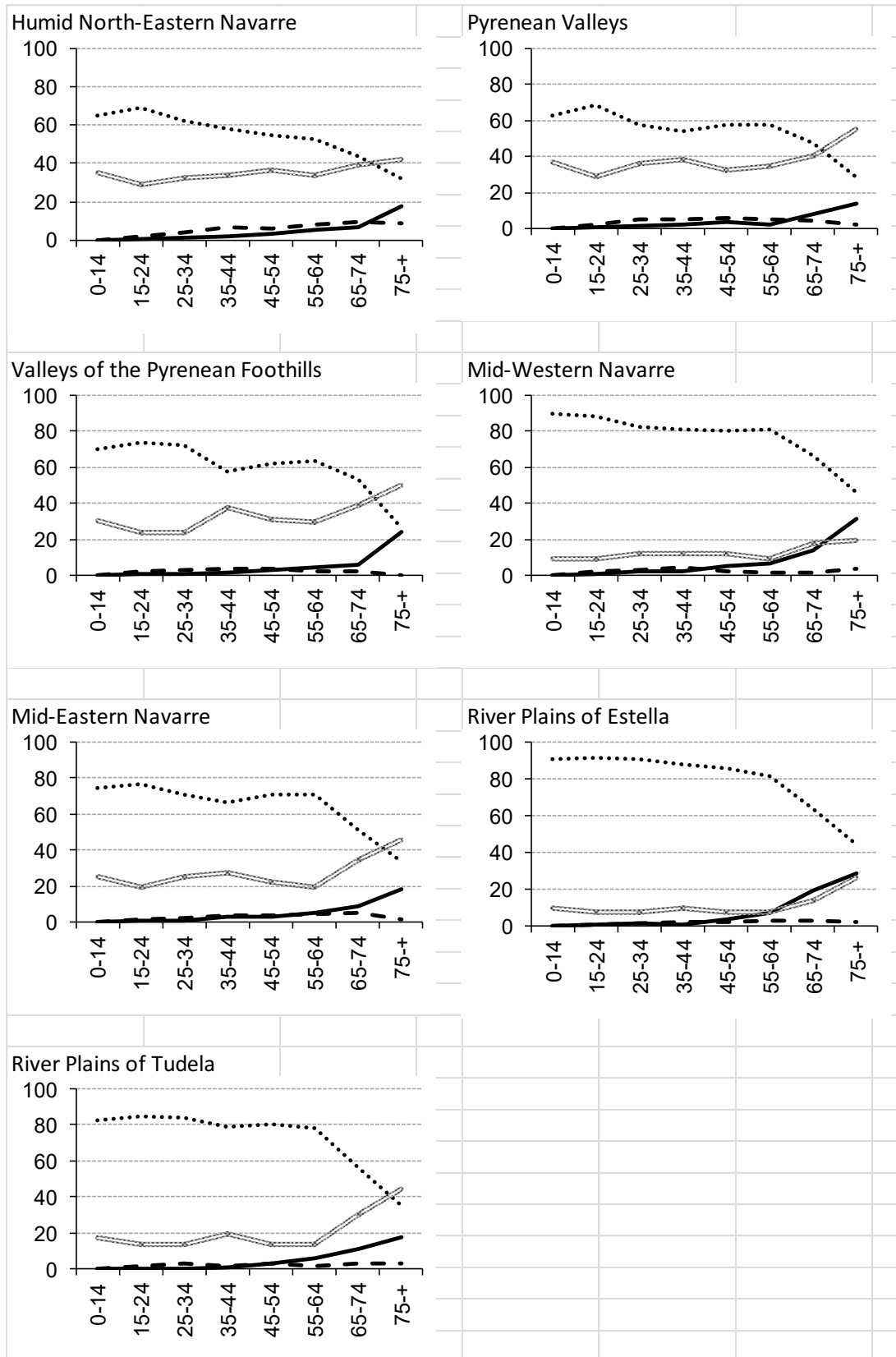
In contrast to this, family biographies in the other two sub-regions (northern and middle Navarre) bear witness to numerous variations as a result of the sequence of demographic factors that happened in the family. Births, marriages and deaths all left their mark on a family structure which was organized around the stem family and the family home.

Most marriages took place between the ages of 25 and 34. In 1910, men in Navarre married at an average age of 28.5 years, and women at 26.4 (Cachinero, 1982). At this age, the number of people living in extended or multiple homes increased, since such homes were formed through the marriage of the son or daughter who would inherit. From then on, until the age of 45-54, the percentage of people living in nuclear families increased. The death of the older couple when the son or daughter reached this age converted what had been complex households into nuclear ones. And from that time on, as people got older, the percentage of people living in complex structures increased again, since their children started to marry once they (the parents) were around 55, and so the home once again took in more than one conjugal unit.

In this way, the stem family survived individual demographic events in a sort of permanent cycle of family life, in which new and old members came in or went out, and to whom the domestic group adapted. The stem system can be seen to be a flexible structure which would ensure the survival of the family group, as well as its productive and reproductive work, and the task of caring for family members.

In short, in the early 20th century, the particular sub-region of Navarre in which a person was born would determine that person's expectations concerning the domestic patterns in which he/she would live throughout his/her life.

**Figure 4. Percentage distribution of population by type of household and age, 1950**



Own sources.

Forty years later, in 1950, the types of home at each stage in life had changed, and these modifications were consistent with the developments in the types of household explained in the previous section.

Let us recall that in the sub-regions in the middle of the province the percentage of complex households fell from 25 to 30% during the first half of the 20th century. The lifecycle data enable us to confirm that this drop happened because there was a change in the rules for forming homes. Complex structures did not increase in the age-group from 25 to 34. People marrying in 1950 no longer stayed in the family home as often as in the past, but set up nuclear homes, which shows that the patri-local system – one of the fundamental characteristics of the stem model – was being abandoned.

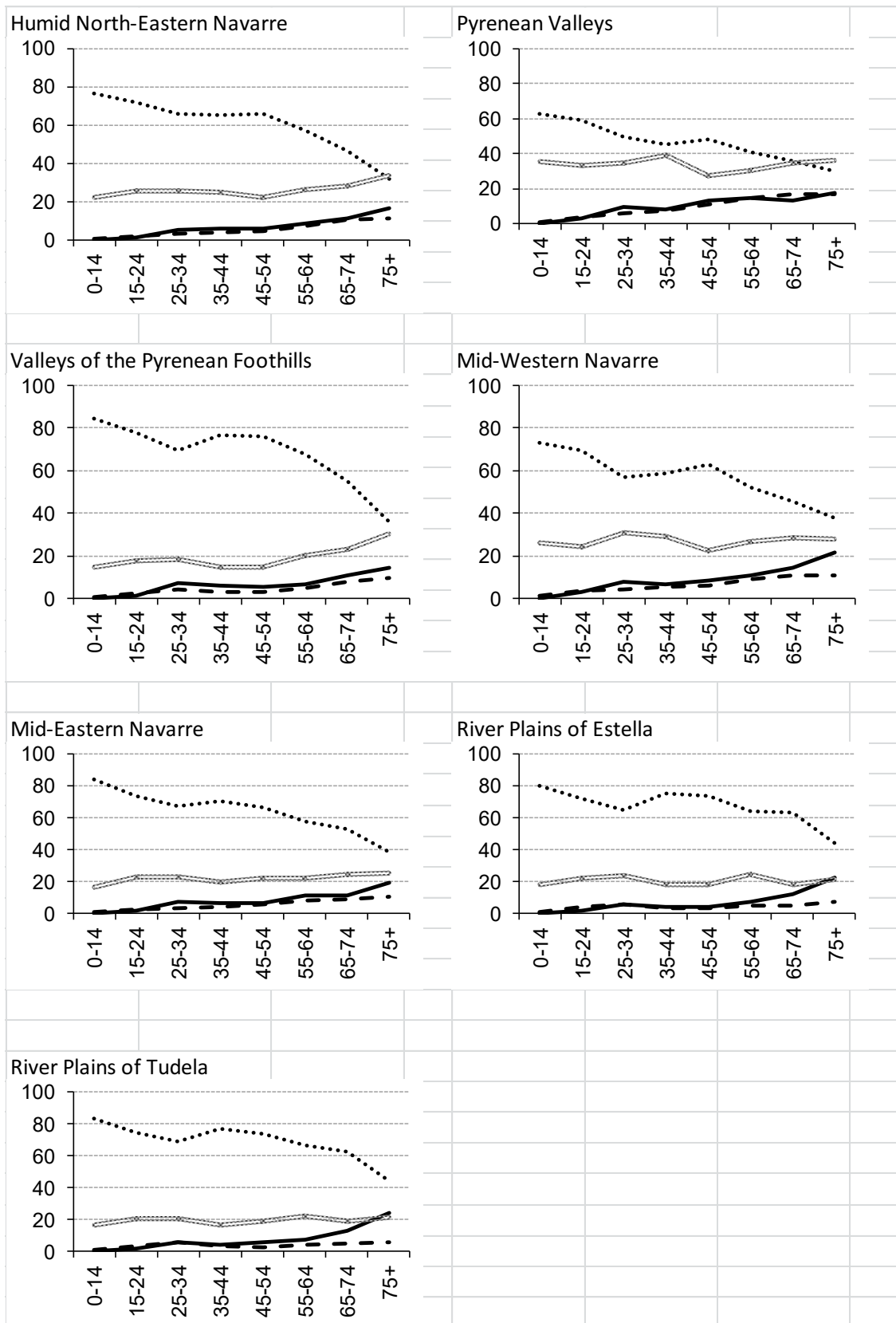
The sub-regions of the River Plains kept up patterns of family life that were very similar to those at the start of the century, a finding which reflects the stability of household types described above.

The major decline in the number of complex households in the northern sub-regions during the first half of the 20th century can also be explained by the changes in the customs about forming a home. Let us recall that at the beginning of the century there were three moments in a person's life when it was most likely that there would be two conjugal units living under the same roof: i) at birth, because both parents and grandparents would be alive; ii) on marriage, because the heir would bring his/her spouse to live with his/her parents; iii) among people aged 55 to 64, the age at which the heir would be of marriageable age and the home would again come to have an extended or multiple structure. At these three times, the percentage of people living in complex homes increased and the number of people in nuclear households correspondingly decreased. Thus if we compare the homes in which people in these three age groups lived in 1910 and in 1950, there is an obvious difference. By 1950, the difference

between the percentage of complex and nuclear homes had increased, the latter being the more frequent.

The rise in the age of marriage during that period might partly account for this change. Between 1940 and 1950, the women in the north married later (at the age of nearly 28). This delay would explain why there were fewer people between 25 and 34 living in complex households. The marriage rate could therefore be thought to be the factor which was responsible for this change. However, there is another indicator which confirms that, quite aside from the influence of demography, the way of forming households was changing. The percentage of children (0-14 years) born into complex households in 1950 had fallen in all three northern sub-regions since 1910. These were children whose parents had married during the intervening years and who had formed nuclear families, which would tend to confirm that the traditional way of forming homes in these areas was changing and that the patri-local system was losing its vigour.

**Figure 5. Percentage distribution of population by type of household and age, 2001**



Own sources.

If we look at the lifecycle of the home today, we can see that a large proportion of the traditional differences concerning how and when a particular kind of home is formed have been eroded. In 2001, the mean age at marriage was 29 for women and 32 for men. However, the types of household did not vary significantly in the age group from 25 to 34 in most sub-regions. Most households were nuclear, which permits us to conclude that the neo-local household type has spread across the whole of rural Navarre, and the traditional differences between stem and nuclear families have been lost. This extension of the neo-local system is the main evidence that we have for the loss of the stem family in Navarre.

The mid-eastern sub-region and the Pyrenean valleys are the only exceptions to this, since here we can observe a fluctuation of home types among people aged 25-34 which might point to a greater presence of patri-local home types in these two sub-regions (though one which is much lower than in the past).

If the analysis of the type of household among people aged 25 to 34 indicates the existence of a much more homogeneous type of family than in the past, the comparison of the types of household where people aged over 65 live in each sub-region suggests that the regional differences still persist. The population still has different ideas about how old people should live, and with whom. The elderly more often live in complex homes in areas where the stem family was common than in areas where the nuclear family has always predominated. Around 30% of those over 65 live in complex households in the north of Navarre and the mid-western sub-region, while fewer than 20% do so in the River Plains areas.



## **Household structure and the understanding of care: two converging indicators**

The analysis of household structures using quantitative data enables us to conclude that even though the family structures found in Navarre at present are more homogeneous than in the past, there are still some differences concerning the way family life is organized. Different answers are to be found to the question about who one should live with, but what factors have a bearing on the answers that people give? To account for this phenomenon, it is necessary to move into the area of social meanings, that is, how families interpret the idea of living with relatives. With this purpose in mind, a process of methodological triangulation was carried out using interviews to establish what meanings people give to these household structures and how these relate to the reality around them.

This triangulation of interview findings and census data reflects a high degree of consistency. The discourses we identified about the way people understand the care of elderly parents proved to be very different in the south from those in the rest of the province. The different perceptions that our interviewees expressed about how to care for the elderly largely reflected the presence or absence of complex households in the sub-region in question. Complex households are more common in the sub-regions where living with the elderly is regarded positively as a way of ensuring that they are looked after, while they are less usual in the southern sub-regions, where living independently is valued more highly.

A clear difference can be observed between those sub-regions where the stem family (and sharing a home with the elderly) used to be the norm, and the River Plains sub-regions, where caring for the elderly does not imply living with them. In the former areas, the extended family home is still quite widespread. Living with grandparents on a temporary or permanent basis is mentioned in the areas with a tradition of stem families

as a frequent way of looking after them when they lose their spouse. The discourses of our interviewees reflect an interpretation of care which implies living with the elderly. Expressions of the kind “their children persuade them to go and live with them”, “they go to live with their children” or “they bring them home with them” are frequent in the areas where the tradition of the stem family existed. Living alone is associated with greater vulnerability, so that wherever possible people try to ensure that the elderly do not have to live on their own. The social interpretation of caring for the old reflects the stem family tradition, in which care of the elderly was guaranteed by the patri-local system.

On the other hand, such expressions are not found in the interview data from the south, where statements of another kind are found: “My daughters can come to my house as often as they need to ... but they should be in their house and me in mine”, “basically they live alone”, “there’s a lot of contact, but people don’t live together”. In the south of Navarre there is no generalized view that living in the same house is the most appropriate way of organizing care. Living alone is not necessarily associated with vulnerability. Independence is more highly valued socially and so types of care strategy are developed other than living together. These strategies are possible because parents and children live close at hand, an option which is not available in other areas where there was more emigration. But beyond the question of whether or not the possibility exists, it is striking that people have such a different interpretation concerning what is best, with repeated references to the importance of each person living in his/her own home for as long as this is possible.

These divergent views concerning how to take care of the elderly coincide with the uneven presence of extended households even today across the different sub-regions of Navarre, which we discussed above. In addition, however, it is important to note that

the informants agree that the family is the institution that is responsible for guaranteeing that its members are looked after. The functional specialization of the family around activities relating to care and affect (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) would account for the high percentage of extended households present even today. There is a broad social consensus that living with the elderly is a way of “caring properly” for the elderly in those sub-regions where the stem family traditionally prevailed.

No automatic relationship between these complex homes and the original concept of stem family can – or should – be established. This family type in Navarre was a much broader reality, which took in economic and demographic aspects and even formed part of people’s identity. Such characteristics are hard to find in any of the extended households that still exist today. Living with children now tends to happen when elderly people are widowed, which is the point at which many families put the mechanism of intra-family solidarity in motion in the form of home-sharing. It is unusual for this to happen when both of the elderly spouses are alive. The explanation as to why this is still found relatively frequently, despite the decline in shared homes, lies in the functional specialization of the family as the agent that provides care of various kinds, as well as the broad social acceptance of the idea that care can be provided when people live under the same roof.

## **Conclusions**

Our analysis of changes in household structure in Navarre during the 20th century provides insights into the wider process of change affecting the family by showing patterns of cohabitation taking in different generations.

By establishing the main distribution patterns of household types in different rural areas, complemented with a life-cycle perspective, we can identify changes in family structure as a phenomenon that extends over time. Even though reference is often made to the rapid nature of changes in the family, the data available for Navarre show that these developments began in the 19th century, if not earlier, and continued throughout the 20th century, falling into two distinct stages. In the first phase, from the 19th to the mid-20th century, family structures became simpler in the areas where stem families had traditionally been the norm. With a drop in complex households of up to 30% over just 40 years, the disaggregated analysis by age groups confirms that during these years, the population in these regions gradually adapted to changes in the way households were formed. The cohorts born in the 1910s and 1920s were already making different decisions about who to live with when they married. In a study of the mid-western region of Navarre, Erdozáin (1999) suggests that the stagnation of the rural economy during this period led families to modify their concept of stem family, since it had become unviable to maintain family homes of this kind. This situation, which could also have influenced the other rural areas, probably had a bearing on the gradual abandonment of the patri-local system.

In the second half of the century, trends differed more from one sub-region to another, as did their demographic development. The ageing of the population and the depopulation of certain areas, particularly the Pyrenean Valleys and mid-Navarre, gave rise to a stage in which households lost their family structure or nuclear structure. One-person homes, or households “with no family structure” gained ground among the elderly population, as these were the options open to them after their relations had emigrated and/or they had not formed families of their own (the rate of people who never marry has been very high for decades). In the River Plains area, however, family

structures did not experience major changes over the 20th century, and the patterns of household formation and care of the elderly are still very similar to those of centuries gone by.

The most striking development in the second half of the 20th century is the change in the household structures containing elderly people in the northern and middle sub-regions. It is on this point that we need to discuss the survival of traditional customs, as well as merely reporting change. Although we have seen that living with one's children in one's old age is less usual than in the past, it is important to stress that the proportion of elderly people living with relatives is still higher in the sub-regions with a tradition of the stem family than in those where the nuclear family has always predominated. This is shown not only by the census data, but also by our analysis of the interviews. The population still believes that caring for the elderly often means living with them for longer or shorter periods, depending on the type of support that they need.

The proportion of extended and multiple households, frequent for centuries in the northern and middle sub-regions of Navarre, has dwindled significantly, but they are still more common than the Spanish average in the sub-regions that formerly had a tradition of stem families. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Navarre, as several authors have obtained similar results in other regions of Spain, emphasizing the continuing importance of multiple complex household structures in rural areas (Requena, 1995: 75).

On the other hand, even though the ways of managing the care of the elderly have changed (since it is now much more common for them to live alone), this phenomenon should be understood within a context in which there are now many alternatives to living in the same home.

Solidarity mechanisms within the family seem to have continued to operate beyond the needs established by the system of inheritance and changes in household formation customs. People fulfil their perceived family obligations according to the sense of responsibility that exists in each area, and their attitudes are different from one sub-region to another when it comes to understanding what the best way of caring for the elderly is.

The patterns of household structure after the period of industrialization in Navarre are the result of a process by which families adapt to circumstances. The demography of the Pyrenean Valleys, for example, makes it difficult for extended or multiple households to continue as in the past, simply because a large proportion of the population no longer has children in the same municipality. But the change in family structures is due not only to demography, but to changes in socially-acquired expectations concerning whom one should live with and how. Both of these factors, demography and socialization, have influenced the process of change that has given rise to the present-day map of household structures in Navarre. In the end, even though homes today are much more similar to each other than they were in the past, different interpretations remain as to who the elderly should live with. The different answers to the question as to how they should be cared for accounts for the different types of home structure that are still to be found.

**APPENDIX 1: Methodology used to convert the household classification used by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) in the 2001 Census to the household classification defined by the Cambridge Group.**

Cambridge classification	INE classification	
	Type of household (large groups)	Type of household (aggregated)
Type 1: solitaries	One-person household	One-person household
Type 2: no family	People living together who do not form a family	No family
	A family without other people	No nucleus
	A family with other people who are not related	No nucleus
Type 3: simple or nuclear family	A family without other people	Just one nucleus
	A family with other people who are not related	Just one nucleus
Type 4: extended family	A family without other people	One nucleus with other related people
	A family with other people who are not related	One nucleus with other related people
Type 5: multiple family	A family without other people	Two or more nuclei without other related people
		Two or more nuclei with other related people
	A family with other people who are not related	Two or more nuclei without other related people
		Two or more nuclei with other related people
	Two or more families without other people	Two or more nuclei without other people
	Two or more families with other non-related people	Two or more nuclei with other non-related people

Own sources.

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