

*Focus on Spanish Society* is published by the Social Studies Office of Funcas. The aim of this publication is to depict the Spanish social situation and provide brief insights into some of its most relevant aspects. *Focus on Spanish Society* consists of three sections. The first one, "Spain in Europe", draws attention to recently published statistical data and puts the Spanish case in comparative perspective. The second section, "Public opinion trends", examines in more detail one particular social or political issue as perceived by the Spanish public and manifested through opinion surveys. Finally, the third section, "Follow-up social data", presents several social indicators related to demography and families, labour market and education, health and welfare benefits and services.

### **Section I. Spain in Europe**

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## Section I. Spain in Europe

### I.1. Higher activity rates: Women lead the change in the labour force

Activity rates (*i.e.*, the ratio between active persons –occupied or unemployed– and the corresponding total population) have increased in most European countries since the start of this century. Focusing on people aged 25-54, in 2001, Spain ranked, together with Italy, Greece and Ireland, in the group of countries with the lowest activity. All of these countries showed activity rates below 80%, in contrast to France and Germany (86% both), and particularly to the Nordic countries, whose rates approached 90% (Fig. I.1).

But except for Italy, those countries with low activity rates in 2001 have managed to significantly

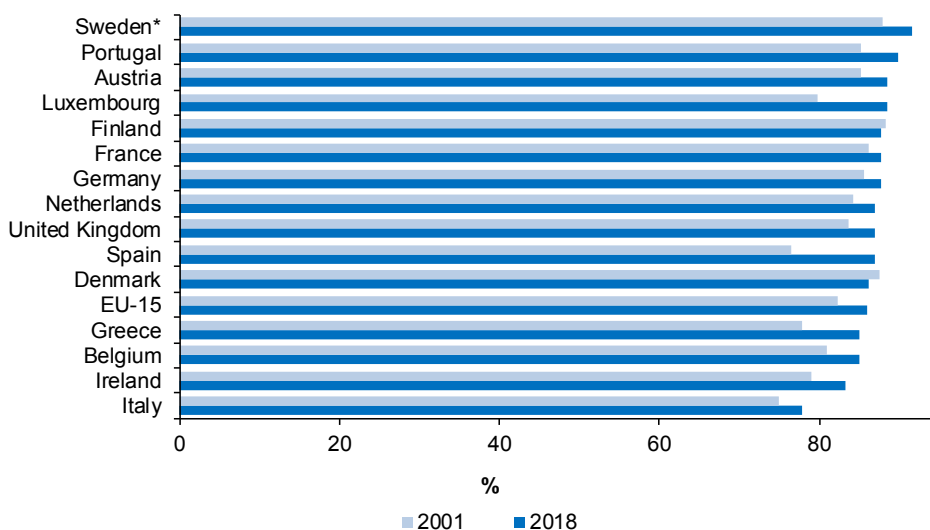
increase their proportions of active people. The evolution in Spain is remarkable: the activity rate of people between 25 and 54 years old living in Spain has increased by more than 10 percentage points since 2001 (76% to 87%) and was in 2018 above the EU-15 average (86%), while Italy, Greece and Ireland lingered below it.

The increase in the Spanish activity rate is due primarily to the behavior of women in the labour market (Fig. I.2). While male activity remained stable during the whole period (around 91-92%), female activity rates increased from 61% in 2001 (third quarter) to 82% in 2019 (third quarter). Female activity began its upward trend before the economic crisis and kept progressing during its most severe years, but has stabilized since 2013.

This impressive change in female labour activity is related with a change in the composition of the female population. The share of active women with higher education has increased year by year during the observation period (Fig. I.3). In 2001

Figure I.1

#### Activity rates (25-54) in European countries (2001 and 2018)

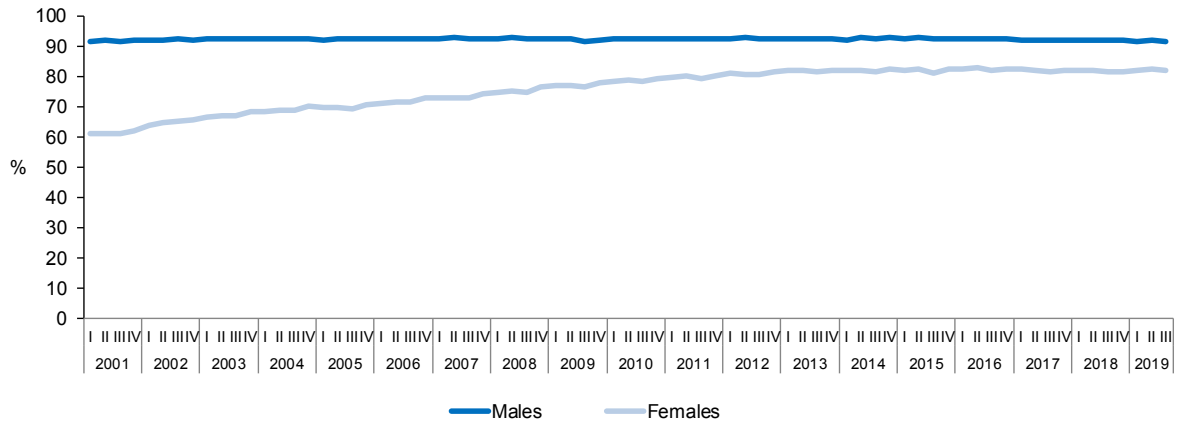


\* Provisional data

Source: Eurostat [lfsa\_argan].

Figure I.2

**Activity rates (25-54) by gender (Spain, 2001-2019)**



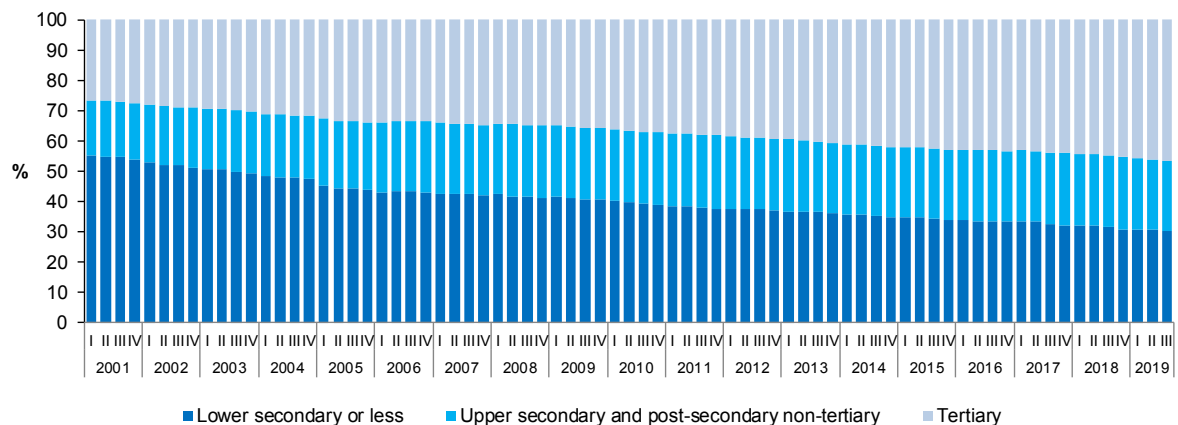
Source: Eurostat [lfsa\_argan].

(third quarter), women aged 25-54 with university degrees represented little more than a fourth (27%) of all women in that age group, whereas in 2019 (third quarter) they approach half (47%). As a matter of fact, higher educated women show the highest activity rates (Fig. I.4). True, their activity rates lag behind those of higher educated males, but they tend to converge.

It is furthermore noteworthy that female activity rates have increased in all educational levels. Less educated women have also decided to enter massively into the labour market: whereas in 2001 (third quarter) less than one out of every two women with lower secondary education or less (48%) worked or was willing to work, in 2019 (third quarter) the proportion has risen to seven out of ten (71%).

Figure I.3

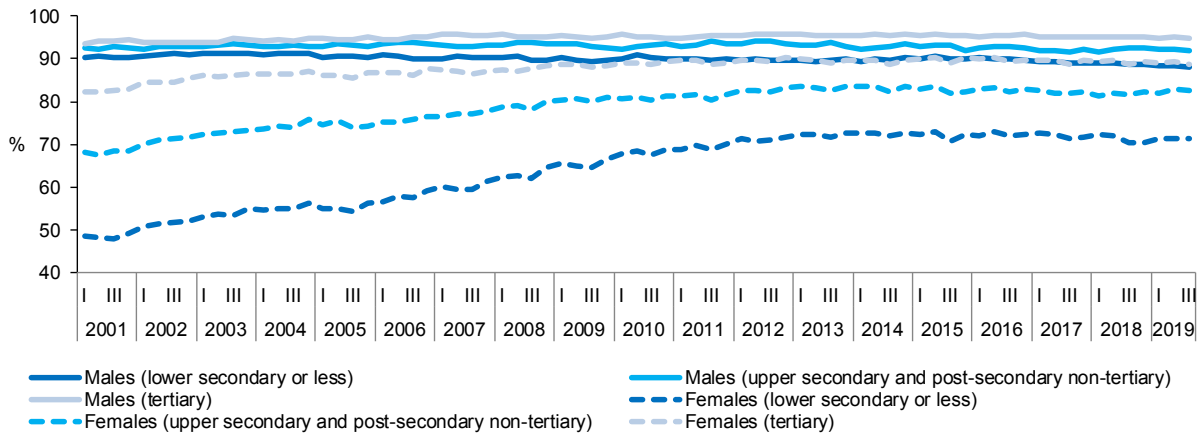
**Female population (25-54) by educational level (Spain, 2001-2019)**



Source: Eurostat [lfsq\_pgaed].

Figure I.4

**Activity rates (25-54) by gender and educational level (Spain, 2001-2019)**



Source: Eurostat [lfsq\_argaed].

**I.2. Increase in young people outside the labor market**

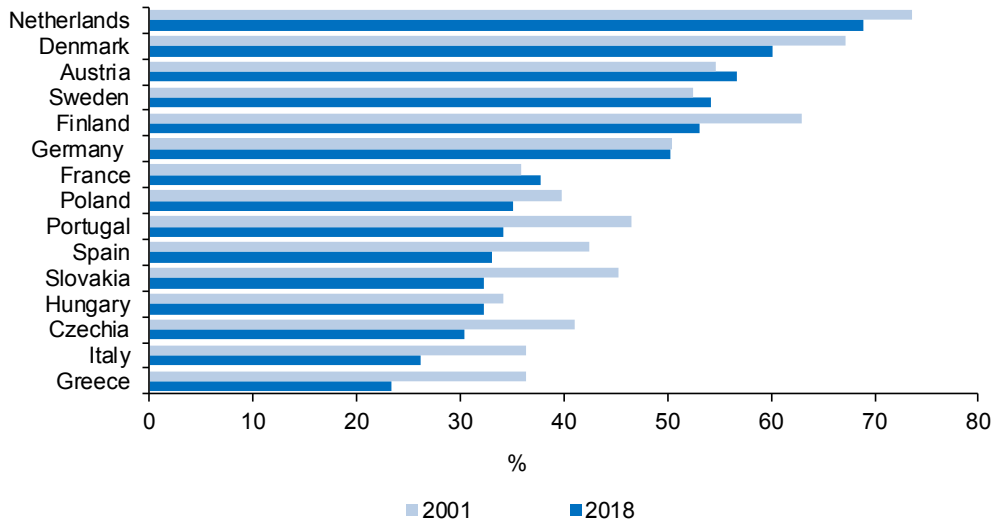
Contrary to the evolution shown by the population aged 25-54, young people’s labour activity rates have decreased in many European countries between 2001 and 2018. This is particularly the case in Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia, among others). At the beginning of this century, in all of these countries, people under 25 showed comparatively low activity rates, but in 2018, they were even lower: in Spain and Portugal, only one out of every three people under 25 was active in 2018; in Italy and Greece, merely one out of every four (Fig. I.5). Even if the main explanatory factor of this evolution lies in the decrease in activity of people under 20, strong activity drops have also affected the group between 20 and 24 years old (Fig. I.6). The growing proportion of people under 25 outside the labor market suggests that more youths are devoted full-time to formal education.

Yet, some European countries with labour markets and welfare states usually considered strong and sound show much higher activity rates among young people. While in Southern and Eastern Europe, the shares of active people under 25 range between 25-35%, in Germany, Finland, Sweden and Austria they reach 50-57%. In Denmark and the Netherlands, the proportions are still higher (60% and 69%, respectively). This does not necessarily mean that young people in Central and Northern Europe are less dedicated to studying, but rather that many are used to working part-time while being students. Thus, part time employment of people aged 15 to 24 amounts to 80% of their total employment in the Netherlands, the corresponding figures for Denmark and Sweden being 64% and 49% (Eurostat [lfsq\_epgais]).

In sum, the labour situation of young people in Southern Europe is usually depicted as grim because of high unemployment, but a very decisive though often overlooked factor is low activity rates. Both factors are almost certainly related (low employment perspectives at a young age and with a comparatively low educational degree disincentivize early entry into the labour

Figure I.5

**Activity rates (15-24) in European countries (2001 and 2018)**



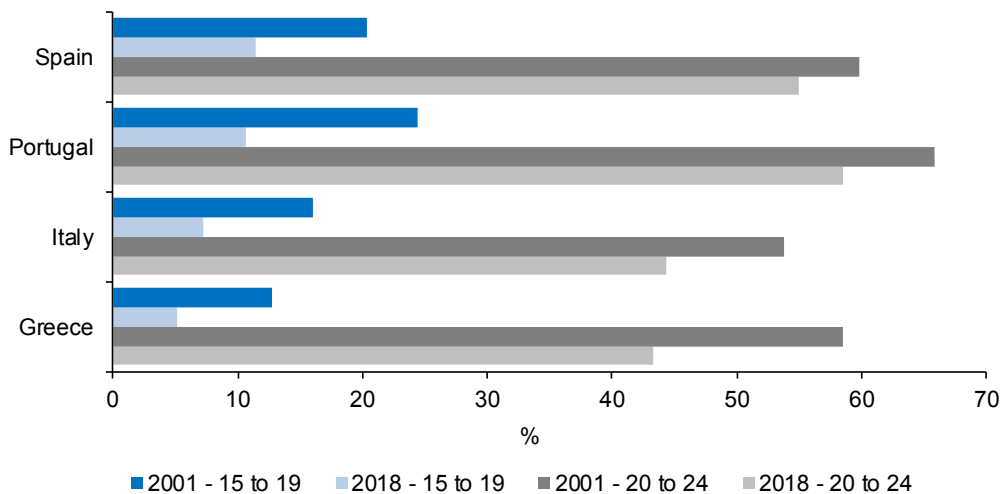
Source: Eurostat [Ifsa\_argaed].

market), but low activity among youths also signals a scarcely flexible labour market and a

social preference for extending the educational period in the first stages of the life cycle.

Figure I.6

**Activity rates (15-19 and 20-24) in Southern European countries (2001 and 2018)**



Source: Eurostat [Ifsa\_argaed].

## Section II. Public opinion trends

### Advancing secularization

The latest public opinion data support sentiment that Spain is becoming more secular. True, the vast majority of Spaniards (18 and over) define themselves as Catholic as shown by recent public opinion surveys published by the Center for Sociological Research (CIS). However, the last twenty years have witnessed a decrease in the percentage of people declaring their Catholic faith. At the end of the last century, four out of every five respondents acknowledged being Catholic; today, only two out of every three. By contrast, the share of people stating their agnosticism or atheism has doubled between 1998 and 2019 (from 14% to 28%), while the share of believers of other religions remains very small (Figure II.1).

In addition, religious practice by Spanish believers has also declined. Those who declare being Catholic or professing other faiths attend Church (or other religious institutions) less often. In 1998, 40% admitted that they never or hardly ever did this, while in 2019, 64% provided this answer. During the same period, the percentage of those attending Mass (or other religious services) at least two times monthly decreased from 38% to 20%. More concretely, the share of those who fulfil the religious precept of weekly practice has virtually halved from 25% to 14% (Fig. II.2).

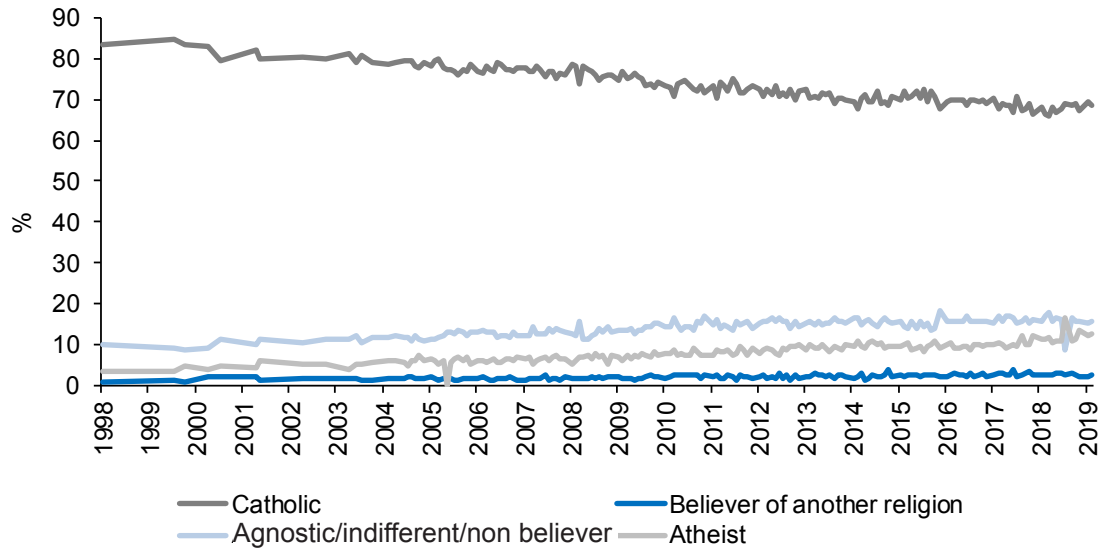
Age is a highly influential variable when explaining religiousness and religious practice in Spain. The percentage of people defining themselves as Catholic increases with age: while about half of those less than 35 admit to being Catholic, the corresponding share among people 65 and over is approaching 90% (Fig. II.3). Elderly believers

are also the most practicing: more than a third attend Mass (or other religious services) at least twice monthly, while the percentage of people under 35 declaring this frequency in religious practice amounts to slightly more than 10% (Fig. II.4).

Territorial differences are also noteworthy. The more Catholic autonomous communities (*i.e.*, the regions with the highest percentage of people defining themselves as Catholic) are Murcia, Andalusia, Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha. On the contrary, the autonomous communities with a lower share of people who declare being Catholic are Melilla (where Muslims are the majority), Catalonia and the Balearic Islands (Figure II.5). Catalonia is also the region where religious believers go less often to Church (or attend other religious services). Practice is likewise weak in the Valencian Community and the Balearic Islands, as well as in both the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla. In all of these territories, less than three out of every ten people who define themselves as believers attend Mass (or other religious services) at least several times yearly. By contrast, in Navarre and Castilla-La Mancha the majority of believers practice their religion no less than several times in the year (Figure II.6).

Figure II.1

**Self-definition in matters of religion (1998-2019)**

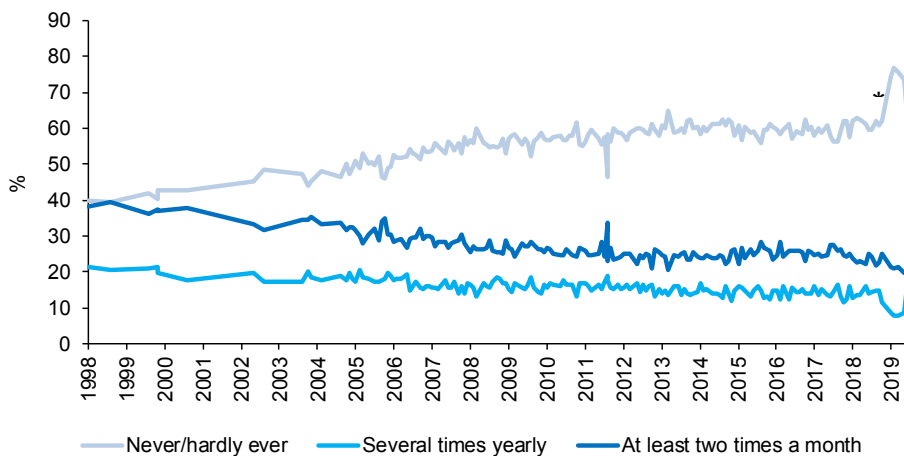


Question: "How do you define yourself in matters of religion: a practicing Catholic, a non-practicing Catholic, a believer of another religion, an agnostic, an indifferent/non-believer or an atheist?".

Source: CIS, *Opinion Barometers* (September 1998-October 2019).

Figure II.2

**Frequency of religious practice (1998-2019)**



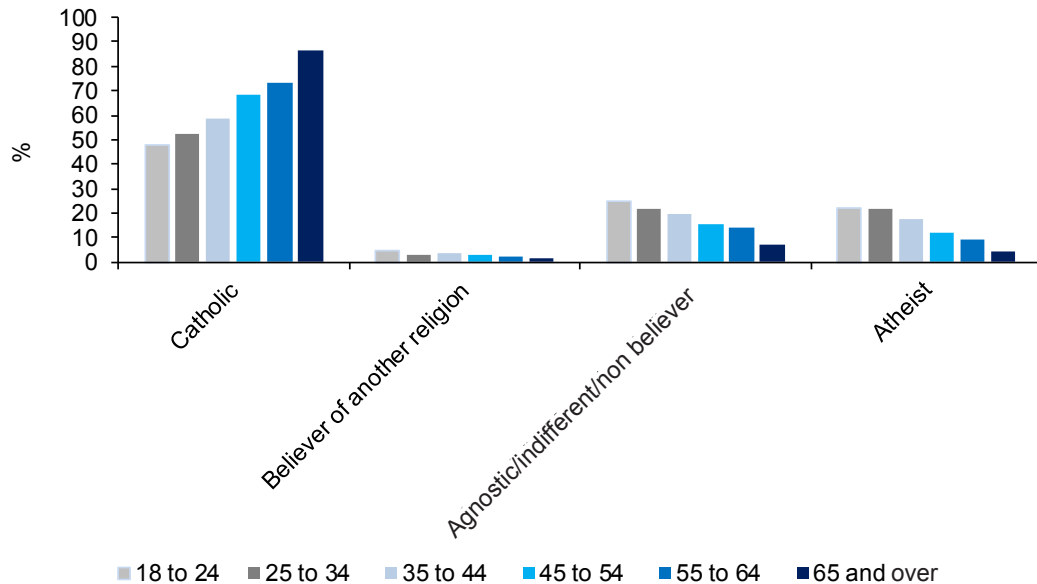
Question: "How frequently do you attend Mass or other religious services, social celebrations like weddings communions or funerals not included?".

\* Break in the statistical series.

Source: CIS, *Opinion Barometers* (May 1998-October 2019).

Figure II.3

**Self-definition in matters of religion by age (2019)**

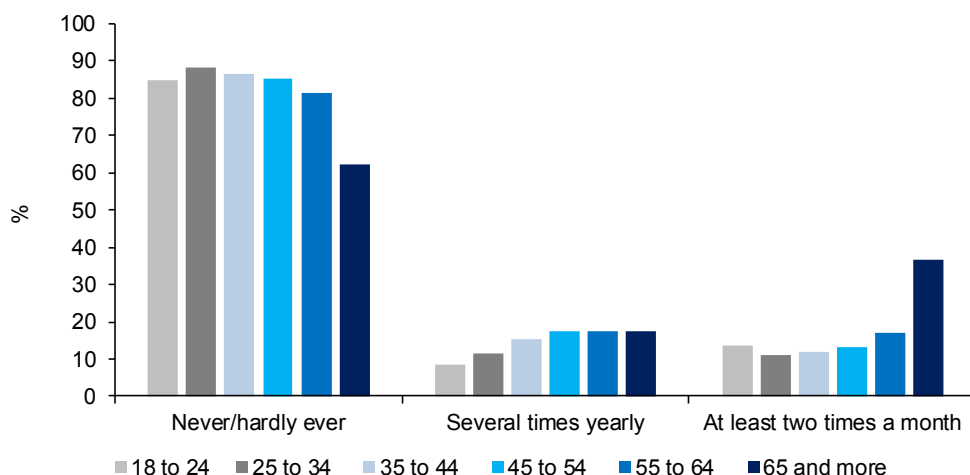


Question: “How do you define yourself in matters of religion: a practicing Catholic, a non-practicing Catholic, a believer of another religion, an agnostic, an indifferent/non-believer or an atheist?”.

Source: CIS, *Opinion Barometer 3267* (October 2019; N=4,805).

Figure II.4

**Frequency of religious practice by age (2019)**



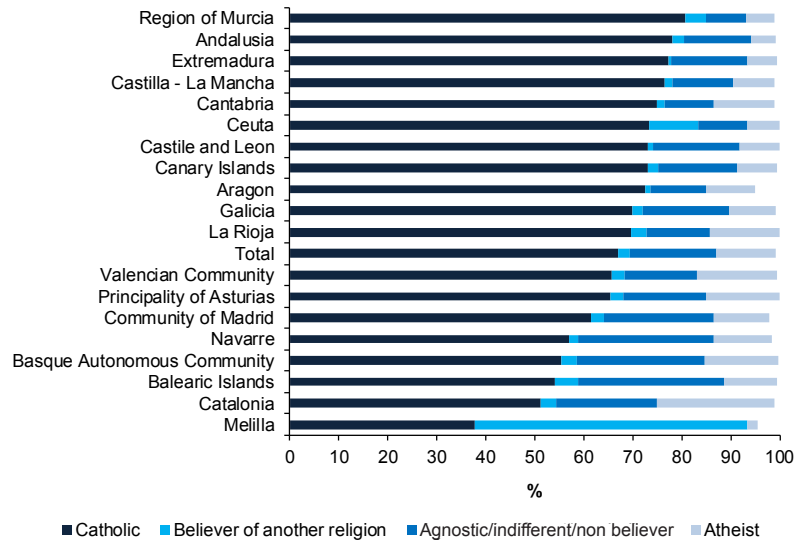
Question: “How frequently do you assist to Mass or other religious services, social celebrations like weddings, communions or funerals not included?”.

Source: CIS, *Opinion Barometer 3267* (October 2019; N=4,805).



Figure II.5

**Self-definition in matters of religion by autonomous community (2019)**

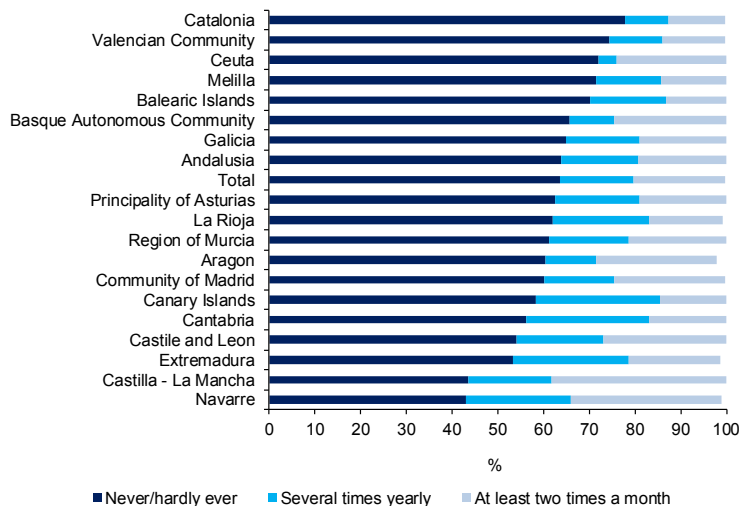


Question: "How do you define yourself in matters of religion: a practicing Catholic, a non-practicing Catholic, a believer of another religion, an agnostic, an indifferent/non-believer or an atheist?".

Source: CIS, *Opinion Barometer 3267* (October 2019; N=4,805).

Figure II.6

**Frequency of religious practice by autonomous community (2019)**



Question: "How frequently do you assist to Mass or other religious services, social celebrations like weddings, communions or funerals not included?".

Source: CIS, *Opinion Barometer 3267* (October 2019; N=4,805).

## Section III. Follow-up social data

Table III.1

### Population

	Total population	Average age	65 and older (%)	Life expectancy at birth (men)	Life expectancy at birth (women)	Dependency rate	Dependency rate (older than 64)	Foreign-born population (%)	New entries (all nationalities)	New entries (EU-28 born) (%)
2008	46,157,822	40.8	16.5	78.2	84.3	47.5	24.5	13.1	726,009	28.4
2010	47,021,031	41.1	16.9	79.1	85.1	48.6	25.0	14.0	464,443	35.6
2012	47,265,321	41.6	17.4	79.4	85.1	50.4	26.1	14.3	370,515	36.4
2014	46,771,341	42.1	18.1	80.1	85.7	51.6	27.4	13.4	399,947	38.0
2015	46,624,382	42.4	18.4	79.9	85.4	52.4	28.0	13.2	455,679	36.4
2016	46,557,008	42.7	18.6	80.3	85.8	52.9	28.4	13.2	534,574	33.4
2017	46,572,132	42.9	18.8	80.4	85.7	53.2	28.8	13.3	637,375	39.3
2018	46,722,980	43.1	19.1	80.5●	85.9●	53.6	29.3	13.7	760,804	25.8
2019●	47,007,367	43.4	19.3			53.6	29.6	14.3		
<i>Sources</i>	EPC	EPC	EPC	ID INE	ID INE	EPC	EPC	EPC	EVR	EVR

EPC: *Estadística del Padrón Continuo.*

ID INE: *Indicadores Demográficos INE.*

EVR: *Estadística de Variaciones Residenciales.*

Dependency rate: (15 or less years old population + 65 or more years old population)/ 16-64 years old population, as a percentage.

Dependency rate (older than 64): 65 or more years old population/ 16-64 years old population, as a percentage.

● Provisional data.

Table III.2

### Households and families

#### Households

	Households (thousands)	Average household size	Households with one person younger than 65 (%)	Households with one person older than 65 (%)
2008	16,742	2.71	12.0	10.2
2010	17,174	2.67	12.8	9.9
2012	17,434	2.63	13.7	9.9
2014	18,329	2.51	14.2	10.6
2015	18,376	2.54	14.6	10.7
2016	18,444	2.52	14.6	10.9
2017	18,512	2.52	14.2	11.4
2018	18,581	2.51	14.3	11.5
2019■	18,680	2.52		
<i>Sources</i>	LFS	LFS	EPF	EPF

Table III.2

**Households and families (continued)**

<b>Nuptiality</b>						
	People getting married (per 1,000) (Spanish)	People getting married (per 1,000) (foreign population)	Divorce rate	Mean age at first marriage (men)	Mean age at first marriage (women)	Same sex marriages (%)
2008	8.5	8.4	2.39	32.4	30.2	1.62
2010	7.2	7.9	2.21	33.2	31.0	1.87
2012	7.2	6.7	2.23	33.8	31.7	2.04
2014	6.9	6.5	2.17	34.4	32.3	2.06
2015	7.3	6.5	2.08	34.8	32.7	2.26
2016	7.5	6.8	2.08	35.0	32.9	2.46
2017	7.3	6.9	2.10	35.3	33.2	2.67
2018●	6.9	6.4				2.90
<i>Sources</i>	ID INE	ID INE	ID INE	ID INE	ID INE	MNP

<b>Fertility</b>						
	Median age at first child (women)	Total fertility rate (Spanish women)	Total fertility rate (foreign women)	Births to single mothers (%)	Abortion rate	Abortion by Spanish-born women (%)
2008	29.3	1.36	1.83	33.2	11.8	55.6
2010	29.8	1.30	1.68	35.5	11.5	58.3
2012	30.3	1.27	1.56	39.0	12.0	61.5
2014	30.6	1.27	1.62	42.5	10.5	63.3
2015	30.7	1.28	1.66	44.4	10.4	65.3
2016	30.8	1.27	1.70	45.8	10.4	65.8
2017	30.9	1.24	1.70	46.8	10.5	66.1
2018	31.0	1.19	1.63			
<i>Sources</i>	ID INE	ID INE	ID INE	ID INE	MSAN	MSAN

LFS: *Labour Force Survey*.

EPF: *Encuesta de Presupuestos Familiares*.

ID INE: *Indicadores Demográficos INE*.

CGPJ: *Consejo General del Poder Judicial*.

MSAN: *Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad*.

MNP: *Movimiento Natural de la Población*.

Marriage rate: *Number of marriages per thousand population*.

Divorce rate: *Number of divorces per thousand population*.

Total fertility rate: *The average number of children that would be born per woman living in Spain if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years and bore children according to a given fertility rate at each age*.

Abortion rate: *Number of abortions per 1,000 women (15-44 years)*.

● Provisional data.

■ Data refer to January-September.

Table III.3

**Education**

<b>Educational attainment</b>				
	<b>Population 16 years and older with primary education (%)</b>	<b>Population 30-34 with primary education (%)</b>	<b>Population 16 years and older with tertiary education (%)</b>	<b>Population 30-34 with tertiary education (%)</b>
2008	32.1	9.2	16.1	26.9
2010	30.6	8.6	17.0	27.7
2012	28.5	7.5	17.8	26.6
2014	24.4	6.1	27.2	42.3
2015	23.3	6.6	27.5	40.9
2016	22.4	6.6	28.1	40.7
2017	21.4	6.6	28.5	41.2
2018	20.5	6.4	29.2	42.4
2019■	19.4	6.4	30.2	44.7
<i>Source</i>	<b>LFS</b>	<b>LFS</b>	<b>LFS</b>	<b>LFS</b>

**Students involved in non-compulsory education**

	<b>Pre-primary education</b>	<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>Vocational training</b>	<b>Under-graduate students</b>	<b>Post-graduate students (except doctorate)</b>
2008	1,763,019	629,247	472,604	1,377,228	50,421
2010	1,872,829	672,213	555,580	1,445,392	104,844
2012	1,912,324	692,098	617,686	1,450,036	113,805
2014	1,840,008	690,738	652,846	1,364,023	142,156
2015	1,808,322	695,557	641,741	1,321,698	171,043
2016	1,780,377	687,595	652,471	1,303,252	190,143
2017	1,767,179	676,311	667,984	1,287,791	209,754
2018●	1,747,374	667,426	677,083	1,293,892	214,528
<i>Source</i>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>MECD</b>

**Education expenditure**

	<b>Public expenditure (thousands of €)</b>	<b>Public expenditure (% GDP)</b>
2008	51,716,008	4.63
2010	53,099,329	4.91
2012	46,476,414	4.47
2014	44,846,415	4.32
2015	46,597,784	4.31
2016	47,578,997	4.25
2017	49,458,049	4.24
<i>Sources</i>	<b>MECD</b>	<b>INE</b>

LFS: *Labour Force Survey*.MECD: *Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte*.INE: *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*.

● Provisional data.

■ Data refer to January-September.

Table III.4

**Social protection: Benefits****Contributory benefits\***

	Unemployment		Retirement		Permanent disability		Widowhood	
	Total		Total	Average amount (€)	Total	Average amount (€)	Total	Average amount (€)
2008	1,100,879		4,936,839	814	906,835	801	2,249,904	529
2010	1,471,826		5,140,554	884	933,730	850	2,290,090	572
2012	1,381,261		5,330,195	946	943,296	887	2,322,938	602
2014	1,059,799		5,558,964	1000	929,484	916	2,348,388	624
2015	838,392		5,641,908	1,021	931,668	923	2,353,257	631
2016	763,697		5,731,952	1,043	938,344	930	2,364,388	638
2017	726,575		5,826,123	1,063	947,130	936	2,360,395	646
2018	751,172		5,929,471	1,091	951,838	946	2,359,931	664
2019	790,808■		6,029,367♦	1,137♦	956,807♦	975♦	2,360,761♦	711♦
Source	BEL		BEL	BEL	BEL	BEL	BEL	BEL

**Non-contributory benefits**

	Social Security			
	Unemployment	Retirement	Disability	Other
2008	646,186	265,314	199,410	63,626
2010	1,445,228	257,136	196,159	49,535
2012	1,327,027	251,549	194,876	36,310
2014	1,221,390	252,328	197,303	26,842
2015	1,102,529	253,838	198,891	23,643
2016	997,192	254,741	199,762	21,350
2017	902,193	256,187	199,120	19,019
2018	853,437	256,842	196,375	16,472
2019■	902,139	259,147	193,685	15,207
Sources	BEL	IMSERSO	IMSERSO	IMSERSO

BEL: *Boletín de Estadísticas Laborales*.

IMSERSO: Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales.

\* Benefits for orphans and dependent family members of deceased Social Security affiliates not included.

■ Data refer to January-September.

♦ Data refer to January-October.

Table III. 5

**Social protection: Health care****Expenditure**

	<b>Total (% GDP)</b>	<b>Public (% GDP)</b>	<b>Total expenditure (\$ per inhabitant)</b>	<b>Public expenditure (\$ per inhabitant)</b>
2008	8.29	6.10	2,774	2,042
2010	9.01	6.74	2,886	2,157
2012	9.09	6.55	2,902	2,095
2014	9.08	6.36	3,057	2,140
2015	9.16	6.51	3,180	2,258
2016	8.98	6.34	3,248	2,293
2017	8.84	6.25	3,370	2,385
2018	8.90	6.20	3,323	2,341
<i>Sources</i>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>OECD</b>	<b>OECD</b>

**Resources**

	<b>Medical specialists per 1,000 inhabitants</b>	<b>Primary care doctors per 1,000 people assigned</b>	<b>Specialist nurses per 1,000 inhabitants</b>	<b>Primary care nurses per 1,000 people assigned</b>
2008	1.8	0.8	3.0	0.6
2010	1.8	0.8	3.2	0.6
2012	1.8	0.8	3.1	0.6
2014	1.8	0.8	3.1	0.7
2015	1.9	0.8	3.2	0.7
2016	1.9	0.8	3.3	0.6
2017	1.9	0.8	3.4	0.6
<i>Sources</i>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>

**Satisfaction (0-10 scale)****Time on waiting list (days)**

	<b>With the working of the health system</b>	<b>With medical history and tracing by family doctor or pediatrician</b>	<b>Non-urgent surgical procedures</b>	<b>First specialist consultations</b>
2008	6.4	7.0	71	59
2010	6.6	7.3	65	53
2012	6.6	7.5	76	53
2014	6.3	7.5	87	65
2015	6.4	7.5	89	58
2016	6.6	7.6	115	72
2017	6.7	7.5	106	66
2018	6.6	7.5		
<i>Sources</i>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>	<b>INCLASNS</b>

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.  
 INCLASNS: *Indicadores Clave del Sistema Nacional de Salud*.

Table III.6

**Labour market**

	Employment		Unemployment				Social Security affiliation		
	Men (in thousands)	Women (in thousands)	Men (in thousands)	Women (in thousands)	Rate (men)	Rate (women)	Men (in thousands)	Women (in thousands)	Foreign population (in thousands)
2006	11,809	8,131	801	1,040	6.4	11.3	10,955	7,641	1,822
2008	11,805	8,665	1,320	1,276	10.1	12.8	10,884	8,121	2,052
2010	10,424	8,301	2,536	2,104	19.6	20.2	9,710	7,872	1,841
2012	9,608	8,025	3,131	2,680	24.6	25.0	9,034	7,705	1,693
2014	9,443	7,902	2,917	2,694	23.6	25.4	8,853	7,639	1,555
2015	9,760	8,106	2,559	2,497	20.8	23.6	9,154	7,864	1,608
2016	10,001	8,341	2,213	2,268	18.1	21.4	9,421	8,097	1,688
2017	10,266	8,559	1,905	2,011	15.7	19.0	9,758	8,369	1,802
2018	10,532	8,795	1,675	1,805	13.7	17.0	10,058	8,643	1,947
2019	10,725■	8,992■	1,535■	1,731■	12.5■	16.1■	10,283♦	8,877♦	2,088♦
Sources	LFS	LFS	LFS	LFS	LFS	LFS	BEL	BEL	BEL

BEL: *Boletín de Estadísticas Laborales*.

LFS: *Labour Force Survey*.

■ Data refer to January-September.

♦ Data refer to January-October.

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