

Religion Monitor 2008

Spain

Overview of religious attitudes and practices



Table of contents

Editorial by Liz Mohn Promoting mutual understanding among cultures and religions	3
Religiousness in Spain at a glance Key findings from the Religion Monitor	4
The Religion Monitor A comprehensive scientific survey of religiousness	6
A religious country—with major differences between age groups Results, analyses and interpretations	10
New efforts needed in communicating faith Interview with Cardinal Walter Kasper	18
Religion and national Identity deeply interwoven Interview with Fernando Vallespín	20
Spanish Religiosity by Prof. Dr. José Casanova	22
Spain's Religion at the Crossroads by Prof. Dr. Víctor Pérez-Díaz	30
www.religionsmonitor.com Internet portal for identifying individual levels of religiousness	44
The Bertelsmann Stiftung Working to promote responsibility in a liberal society	46
The Fundación Bertelsmann Strengthening civil society for the future	48
Publications Further information about the Religion Monitor	50
Contact information and publishing details	51

Editorial

Promoting mutual understanding of cultures and religions

Liz Mohn

Globalization and its impact on private and professional contexts are giving rise to a search for values and guiding principles within society. International understanding that goes beyond political and language barriers—which numerous public figures have called for—must also remain cognizant of the world’s diverse historical, cultural and religious roots. A person’s religious beliefs in particular determine his or her personal philosophy and actions to a degree that should not be underestimated.

To get a better idea of the role religion and faith play in modern life, the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Religion Monitor interviewed over 21,000 people from 21 countries around the globe. Representing millions of others, the survey’s respondents discussed their thoughts and beliefs, their conceptions of God, their values and numerous other aspects of their innermost lives. The survey’s findings are more than just statistics; they represent the many individuals who were willing to talk about their religious practices, world views and considerations of life’s larger meanings. The Religion Monitor thus provides us with an intimate look at the world’s religions and, as a result, allows us a better understanding of the globe’s diverse cultures.

Through its survey—carried out on each continent in a standardized manner—the Religion Monitor reveals in impressive fashion the degree to which the globe’s religions are in fact comparable. Clearly, despite their many centuries of divergent development and their resulting differences, the world’s faiths are similar in a multitude of ways, both in terms of structure and content.

With this brochure, the Bertelsmann Stiftung would like to introduce you to select findings from its Religion Monitor. Both the Bertelsmann Stiftung and I, personally, hope that the information it offers will help adherents of all religions better understand each other and, consequently, help increase tolerance among people everywhere.



Liz Mohn

Vice-Chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung
Executive Board and Board of Trustees,
Gütersloh, and President of the Fundación
Bertelsmann, Barcelona

Religiousness in Spain at a glance

Key findings from the Religion Monitor

A highly religious country

Compared to many other western industrialized nations, Spain is a highly religious country. Four out of five Spaniards (79 percent) are religious, while one in four (27 percent) can be considered highly religious. At the same time, Spain exhibits a lower level of religiousness than other largely Catholic countries such as Italy and Poland.

A high degree of homogeneity

In Spain today, religious belief means largely Catholic belief: 80 percent of Spanish citizens call themselves Christians, of whom 97 percent say they are Catholic.

The non-confessional

At 18 percent of the population, those who say they have no confession are, after Catholics, the second largest group in Spain. Overall, 45 percent of the non-confessional can be considered religious, one in three is interested in learning more about religious topics and one in five attends a church service at least once a year.

Across all generations

While the share of highly religious individuals is markedly greater among those 60 years of age or older (49 percent) compared to those between 18 and 29 years (11 percent), the share of young adults who can be considered religious is not significantly lower than among older Spaniards. The intensity of religious attitudes and practices thus varies across generations.

Primarily women

As in other countries, in Spain women are significantly more religious than men, with 34 percent of women being highly religious (men: 20 percent) and only 16 percent non-religious (men: 22 percent). This gender difference extends across all findings and is valid for every core dimension of religiousness in Spain.

Moderate religious feelings

Among those Spaniards who consider themselves religious or spiritual, positive religious emotions clearly predominate. In terms of their relationship to God, most Spaniards



experience emotions such as hope (41 percent), gratitude (40 percent) and love (38 percent); only few experience despair (7 percent) or rage (5 percent). At the same time, however, Spaniards have a less emotional relationship to their faith than the average European.

Positive image of God

People in Spain have a consistently positive image of God. The idea of a threatening, angry and vindictive God whom humans should

approach aware of their guilt is not one embraced by the Spanish to any significant degree.

Limited impact on everyday life

Religiousness in Spain is expressed through traditional public and private religious activities and has less impact on everyday life. As in other countries, this is especially true in the areas of politics and sexuality.

The Religion Monitor

An innovative, scientifically robust instrument that allows a comprehensive, interdisciplinary analysis of religious attitudes in today’s world

Are we about to experience a global renaissance of religious belief? What role do religion and other spiritual developments play in modern society and in individual lives? Are certain countries forging their own paths in this regard? The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Religion Monitor hopes to provide answers to these questions and others.

With the help of religion specialists, theologians, sociologists and psychologists, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has developed the Religion Monitor, an innovative tool that makes it possible to examine the various dimensions of religious belief in greater detail than has been possible up until now. How religious are people today? How religious are the societies in

Organizational chart for the Religion Monitor

	Sociology theology psychology	General intensity	Specific topics
Core dimensions	Intellect	Interest in religious topics	Religious reflexivity; religious search; meaning; theodicy; spiritual and religious books
	Ideology (belief)	Belief in God or something divine Belief in life after death	Notion of God; world views; religious pluralism; religious fundamentalism; other religious ideas
	Public practice	Church service; congregational prayer; attending temple	Interreligious practice
	Private practice	Prayer – Meditation	Prescribed prayer; house altar
	Experience	Personal experience; Experience of being at one	Religious feelings
	Consequences	General relevance of religion to everyday life	Relevance of religion to various aspects of life (e.g. family, politics); religious commandments
Centrality	Non-religious Religious Highly religious		Religious and spiritual self-perception



Worldwide findings:
Surveys for the Religion Monitor have been carried out in all countries shaded blue on the left.

which they live? How is this religiousness expressed? Which potential forces—both constructive and destructive—are inherent in it?

The Religion Monitor is based on a conception of religion that considers transcendence the key characteristic of religious experience and belief. It encompasses all forms of religiousness—both those that include a belief in one God or in many gods and those that represent a more individualized expression of spirituality. This allows the Religion Monitor to illuminate the entire spectrum of religious faith and religious experience independently of any affiliation with a house of worship.

The Religion Monitor comprises some 100 questions designed to examine six core dimensions of religious belief:

- Interest in religious matters
- Belief in God or the divine, belief in life after death
- Public religious practice
- Private religious practice
- Religious experiences
- Relevance of religion to everyday life

Background studies have shown that each of these six dimensions must be examined if a comprehensive and differentiated understanding is to be achieved of the role that religious belief plays, both for individuals and society as a whole. Such understanding, moreover, is not possible based on these dimensions in isolation. This makes the Religion Monitor unique relative to many other studies, which often limit themselves to only one aspect of religious ideology and to public expressions of faith.

The Religion Monitor differentiates between substantive aspects, i.e. concrete expressions of religiousness, and the issue of centrality, i.e. the significance of religion and the intensity of its presence in individual lives. The latter is of critical importance, since the greater role religious belief plays in a person's personality, the more it determines his or her behavior and experience.

In light of this, responses in all survey modules are evaluated using a point system and then collated in a "centrality index," which gives rise to the classifications "highly religious," "religious" and "non-religious."

Highly religious: This designates people for whom religious matters play a key role in their personality. Matters of faith are experienced intensively, determining their behavior and permeating their life experiences. Highly religious people use their religious convictions as a basis for participating in public discourse.

Religious: For this group, religious experiences and practices matter, but do not play a central role in their personality. Religious matters are experienced with moderate intensity and only influence a limited range of behaviors and perceptions.

Non-religious: Religious practices, beliefs and experiences hardly feature in the lives of these individuals. Religious beliefs play practically no role in their personalities and how they experience or deal with the world around them.

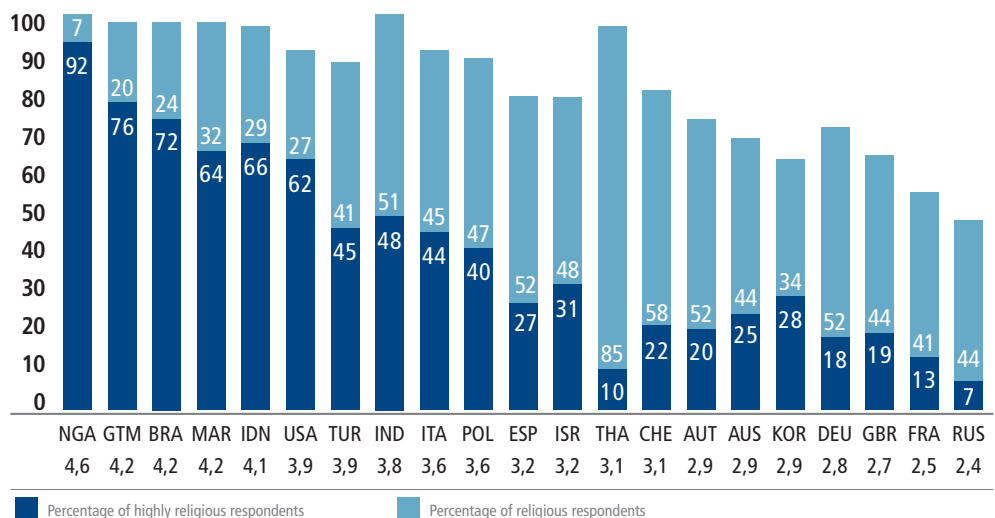
The above categories allow profiles for individual respondents to be generated, along with a comparative assessment of the relative

degree of religiousness found in different societies around the globe. The assessments, in turn, make it possible to identify potential social developments stemming from these attitudes.

The survey’s questionnaires have been translated into 20 languages, allowing respondents to be queried in a standardized manner in all countries. Individual questions were adjusted, moreover, to reflect faith-specific issues (allowing, for example, Hindus and Buddhists to be asked if they have an altar in their homes, and Muslims to be queried on how often they pray). For all questions a reply of “don’t know/no answer” was possible, as was, in some cases, an additional “have never given it any consideration.”

At the heart of the Religion Monitor is a representative survey carried out in 2007, in which 21,000 people from all continents and religious traditions were polled. The survey’s random sampling takes into account sociodemographic

Percentage of highly religious and religious respondents for 21 countries



Centrality of religion averages for each country are given along the x-axis below each acronym, on a scale from one to five

AUS=Australia, AUT=Austria, BRA=Brazil, CHE=Switzerland, DEU=Germany, ESP=Spain; FRA=France, GBR=Great Britain, GTM=Guatemala, IDN=Indonesia, IND=India, ISR=Israel, ITA=Italy, KOR=South Korea, MAR=Morocco, NGA=Nigeria, POL=Poland, RUS=Russia, THA=Thailand, TUR=Turkey, USA=United States of America



factors such as gender division and various age groups (from 18 years) as a percentage of the overall population. In Germany, quantitative data were supplemented with a qualitative survey (in-depth personal interviews and interviews with experts).

The countries were selected in light of the Religion Monitor's interreligious focus. The survey was carried out in the countries identified above (see graphic on page 7). Given circumstances specific to each country, interviews were carried out either by telephone or in a face-to-face setting. In Brazil, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Thailand, it was possible to conduct the survey only in certain regions.

Despite the different expressions of religiousness in individual cultures, the methodology in use makes it possible to measure and compare religious attitudes in various countries. The resulting "centrality index" (the share of highly religious and religious individuals within the general population) as it applies to 21 countries gives a first impression of the potential of such comparative observations.

Media response

◦ Correcting preliminary assessments

"The survey corrects impressions made by numerous headlines and preliminary assessments. This applies in particular to the 'return of religion,' hoped for and feared by many."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung

◦ Not just a private matter

"I'm amazed at these figures—and they are clearly welcome. At Bertelsmann, it's obvious that religion is not just a private matter, but a social phenomenon."

Felix Gmür, Secretary General, Swiss Conference of Bishops

◦ Revealing

"This study reveals the truth behind many clichés surrounding the significance of faith."

Welt am Sonntag

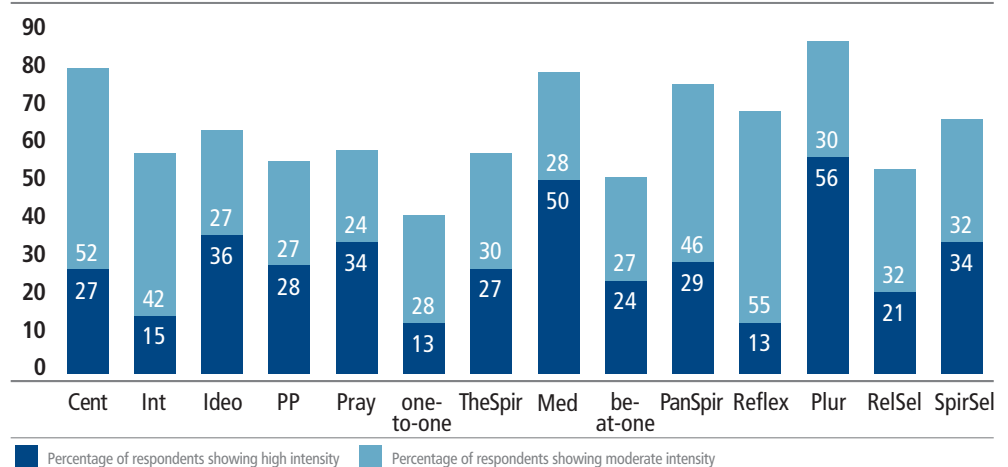
A religious country— with major differences between age groups

The Religion Monitor on religiousness and faith in Spain

Among European nations, Spain is influenced by religion to an above-average degree. Four out of five Spaniards (79 percent) are religious, and one in four (27 percent) is highly religious. As in the past, the Catholic faith

continues to predominate in the Iberian kingdom, with 78 percent of respondents saying they belong to the Catholic Church. When compared to other countries throughout Europe, the religious situation in Spain most closely

Respondents showing high intensity or moderate intensity of religiousness in Spain (core dimensions and basic contents)



Centrality of religion | Intellectual dimension | Ideological dimension (belief) | Public religious Practice | Prayer | one-to-one Experience | Theistic Spiritual paradigms | Meditation | Experience of Being-at-one with all | Pantheistic Spiritual Paradigms | Religious Reflexivity | Religious Pluralism | Religious Self-concept | Spiritual Self-concept

All data in percent.



resembles Switzerland, with its confessional division, and largely Catholic Austria. Yet religious belief plays a less dominant role in Spain compared to Poland and Italy, two other Catholic countries. The difference between the two Mediterranean countries is particularly striking: 44 percent of Italians are highly religious and another 45 percent are religious. Only 7 percent are non-religious, compared to 19 percent in Spain—more than two and a half times the Italian figure.

Yet how do people in Spain actually express their beliefs on a daily basis? While expressions of religiousness are present everywhere, most people are wholly or largely unaware of them—similar to background music. In Spain, 15 percent of respondents say they are highly

interested in religious issues, while 42 percent say they are not at all interested; another 42 percent say they occasionally reflect on such issues. Despite this relatively weak tendency to think about religious topics, 36 percent firmly believe that God or something divine exists and that life continues after death in one form or another. For 27 percent, belief and doubt are mixed when it comes to this topic, while 33 percent say they do not believe much or at all that this is the case. One in two Spaniards (54 percent) attends a church service more or less regularly, half of whom say they do so on a regular basis—meaning once a week or more. Conversely, 44 percent do not engage in public religious practices at all or to any significant degree.

Catholics in Spain

In addition to results for the entire Spanish population, the Religion Monitor makes it possible to identify traits that apply only to Catholics and the non-confessional. For example, 32 percent of Catholics, slightly more than among the general population, say that their faith is strongly marked by theistic spiritual patterns, a finding that arises from answers to the following questions: “How often do you pray?” “How important is personal prayer to you?” “How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?” In Spain, 15 percent of Catholics have often had the feeling that God is speaking to them or is intervening in life; 33 percent have had this experience on occasion. Almost half never have.

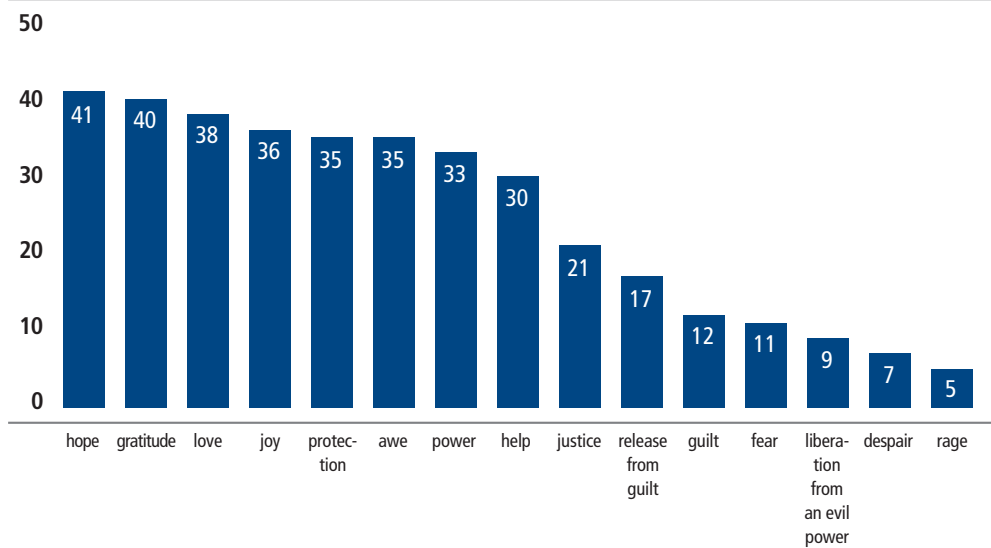
For 34 percent of Catholics, going to church is a regular part of their lives. Some 31 percent attend church less regularly and 34 per-

cent have so distanced themselves from the church that they never or rarely attend a service. A larger group, however, makes time for prayer: 36 percent of Catholics pray at least once a day, and another 18 percent at least once a week; 37 percent pray occasionally.

Images of God and religious sentiments

To the extent that they consider themselves religious or spiritual, how do Spaniards perceive God, less in terms of a personal encounter, but more in the feeling of being one with everything? In this respect most consider God to be a “higher power” (51 percent), followed by an expression of “nature” (49 percent). An equal number call God “a person with whom you can speak,” closely followed by an image of “energy flowing through everything” (48 percent). Overall, 47 percent of Spaniards say God is like “the greatest possible value,”

“How often do you experience the following in relation to God or something divine?” (answers: often / very often)*



* Selection: Respondents who do not describe themselves as “not at all religious” / “not at all spiritual”.

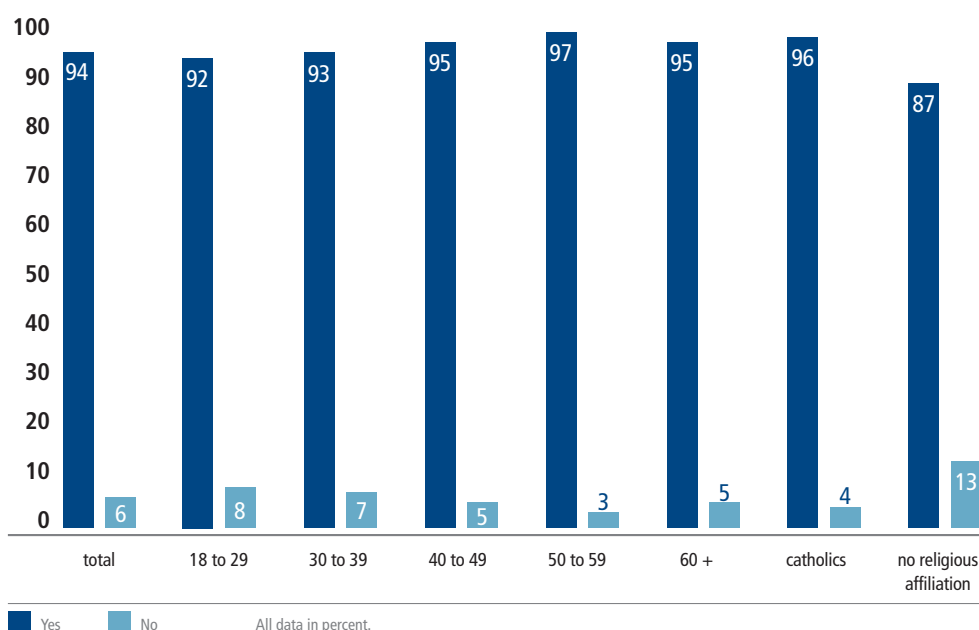
All data in percent.

and 39 percent see in God “a law that is valid throughout eternity.” Last among the images respondents identify with is the idea that God “is nothing more than a product of the human imagination with no reality in itself.” At the same time, it is remarkable that some 32 percent of all Spaniards and even 27 percent of Catholics hold this view. Comparable results can only be found in France (with 28 percent of all French people and the same number of Catholics feeling this way), the least religious country after Russia among those surveyed in Europe.

Capable of measuring a range of religious and psychological viewpoints, the Religion Monitor can also identify the emotions relating to religious belief. The feelings that religious Spaniards most often associate with God is “gratitude” (39 percent), a sentiment expressed on average by 41 percent of those in the other European countries surveyed. Another 37 per-

cent feel “hope” (Europe: 44 percent), and 39 percent say they feel “love” (Europe: 42 percent). Just as telling are the negative feelings that are mentioned, since they play a much less significant role in Spain as compared to other European countries. “Anger,” for example, is only experienced in association with God by 5 percent of religious Spaniards, compared to 10 percent of other Europeans. A similar situation can be seen with feelings of “despair,” experienced by 7 percent of Spaniards and 13 percent of Europeans. “Liberation from an evil power” is cited by 9 percent of Spaniards and 16 percent of Europeans. The idea of a threatening, angry and vindictive God whom humans should approach aware of their guilt is not one embraced by the Spanish to any significant degree. At the same time, however, Spaniards say they experience the positive emotions mentioned in the survey to a lesser degree than the average European.

“Has religion been part of your up-bringing?”



Religiousness in different areas of life

Religiousness impacts the life of people in Spain most strongly when it comes to family-related occasions such as births, marriages and deaths. Some 49 percent say it is very important in this area; 16 percent say it is moderately important. The area of second-most importance relates to life crises (40 percent say it is very important here, 17 percent say it is moderately important). Similar results can be seen when Spaniards are addressing the meaning of life (39 percent very important, 19 percent moderately important). When raising children, 35 percent of those surveyed in Spain say they rely on religion or faith to a high degree, with 16 percent saying they rely on them to some degree. A similar number of those surveyed also rely on religion or faith in their attitudes toward nature (35 percent high, 15 percent moderate). Religiousness has only a small influence on political attitudes, as is also true in

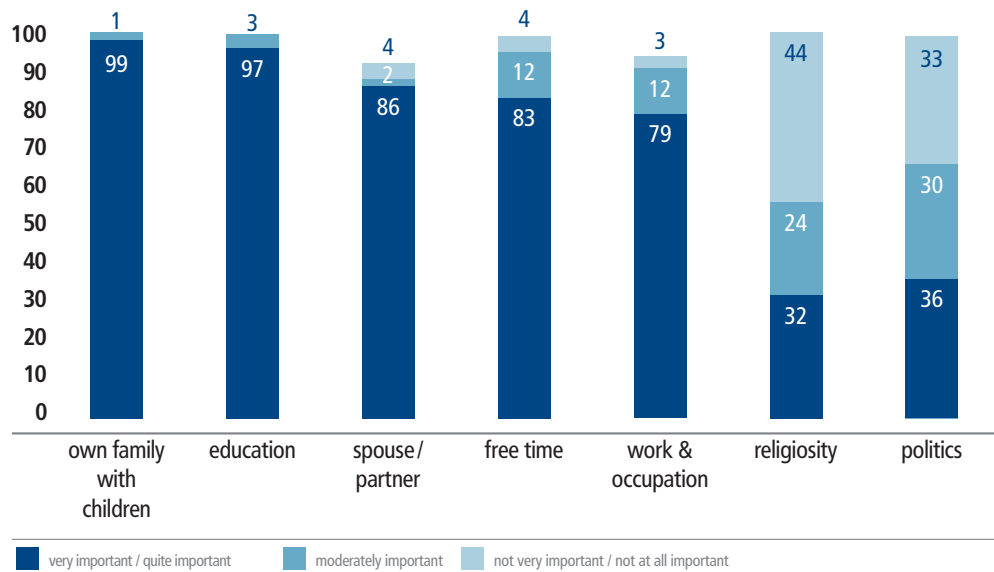
the other European countries surveyed, with only 17 percent saying it plays a highly significant role and another 12 percent saying it plays a moderate role.

Women and young people

The Religion Monitor cannot say how religion or faith will develop in Spain in the future, since any such prediction requires a series of findings collected over time. What can be said, however, is that as in many countries, women are the subgroup most strongly affected by religious feelings and attitudes. More than one in three (34 percent) are highly religious, something that is true of only one in five men (20 percent).

Other key trends are revealed by looking at the findings across generations, which reveals that highly religious attitudes are on the wane. Virtually every person in Spain says he or she

“How important are the following areas of live for you personally?”



All data in percent.

had a religious upbringing, regardless of age. Among young adults (between the ages of 18 and 29) 92 percent say this is true, compared to 95 percent of those over the age of 60. The number of religious Spaniards also remains constant across age groups, while the intensity of religious attitudes and practices differs markedly. The younger the respondent, moreover, the less likely it is that he or she is highly religious.

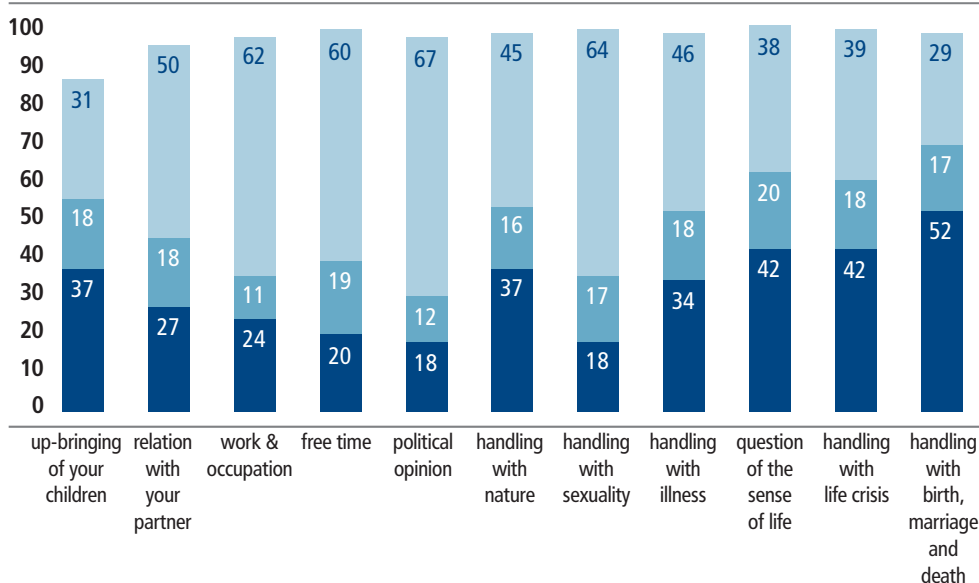
In looking at the entire Spanish population it becomes clear that when asked about various areas of life, young people give answers similar to those of their parents and grandparents. Their families and children are of greatest importance to most people, followed by education, and then their spouse or partner. Free time can be found in the middle of this list along with work and occupation, with politics and religiousness at the bottom. In the case of religiousness, however, the answers young

people give vary much more compared to the overall population. Religiousness is important or very important for 32 percent of all Spaniards, but only for 15 percent of young adults.

This trend can also be discerned when respondents are asked about which religion they adhere to. While 90 percent of those 60 years old or older say they are Christians, only 72 percent of the 18- to 29-year-olds describe themselves as Christian. Conversely, the share of those who say they do not belong to any religious community rises from 9 percent for the over-60 subgroup to 24 percent for those between 18 and 29 years of age.

In some countries findings suggest that a certain religiousness still “resonates” with the non-confessional—a phenomenon that is not particularly evident in Spain, where 4 percent of this group are highly religious and 41 percent religiously only to some extent. In compari-

“To what extent do your religious beliefs affect the following areas of your life?”*



Legend: very much so / quite a lot (dark blue), moderately (medium blue), not much / not at all (light blue)

* Selection: Respondents who do not describe themselves as “not at all religious” / “not at all spiritual”.

All data in percent.

son, in Switzerland 9 percent of all non-confessional respondents are highly religious and 44 percent are religious; the corresponding figures in Italy are 6 percent and 43 percent.

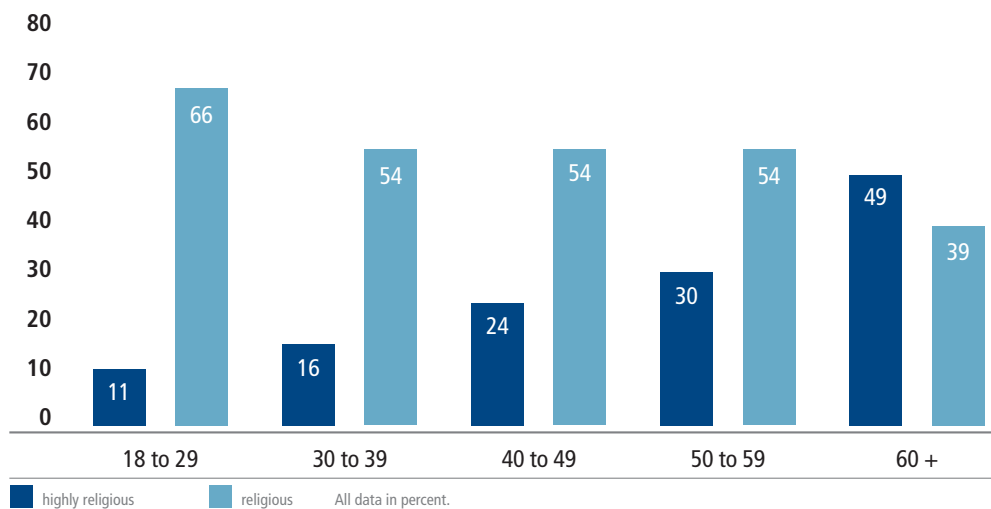
Religious tolerance

Despite the permanent and in some cases illegal influx of immigrants, especially from Africa, other religions still play a marginal role in Catholic Spain. Only 1 percent of all respondents say they belong to a non-Christian religious community, a number that is so small as to be devoid of statistical significance. At the same time, religious tolerance is also a timely issue in Spain. Some 57 percent of Spaniards agree with the statement that “for me, every religion has some core of truth and one should be open to all religions,” while 30 percent have no definite opinion and 10 percent disagree. Compared to other European countries (where 67 percent agree, 25 percent have no definite opinion and 6 percent disagree), Spain can thus be considered pluralistic only to a limited degree.

If one asks how often respondents are critical of their own religious beliefs and how important it is to consider religious topics from a variety of vantage points, 13 percent of Spaniards say very often, 54 percent say occasionally and 28 percent say (almost) never. This places the country squarely in the middle of its European peers.

Do respondents in Spain believe in superstitions? Yes, but only moderately. Overall, 7 percent of Spaniards believe in the efficacy of supernatural powers, a belief that is particularly widespread (13 percent) among seniors (60 years or above), and twice as prevalent among Catholics (8 percent) as among the non-confessional (4 percent). Similar figures can be seen regarding a belief in angels (8 percent), which is again particularly popular among older Spaniards (13 percent). Few people believe in the efficacy of evil powers, i.e. demons (3 percent), while more tend to believe in astrology (5 percent), which has a relatively high number of adherents among younger people (7 percent) and seniors (6 percent).

Highly religious and religious respondents by age





Conclusion

While findings from the Religion Monitor require more in-depth analysis, a first examination leads to the following conclusion: compared to other European countries, Catholic Spain is religious to an above-average degree, but is less religious than Poland or Italy, Catholic countries that are usually assumed to be similar to Spain. Religiousness in Spain tends to be expressed through traditional public and private religious activities and has less of an impact on everyday life. The belief in one God, moreover, is even questioned by a considerable number of Catholics. Finally, religiousness in Spain has less emotional resonance than for the average European.

New efforts needed in communicating faith

Cardinal Kasper, in your opinion, how useful might a survey like the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor be?

First, I would like to express my gratitude for a tremendous undertaking. I would also like to express my esteem for the fact that a private foundation with no religious or church-related affiliation is prepared to commit the substantial logistical, academic and financial resources needed to take on so difficult a challenge as the cross-national comparison of religiosity.

What consequences do Religion Monitor findings have for the Catholic Church and its pastoral praxis?

The results for Germany, Austria and Switzerland show that the bishops of these countries face major challenges. The Religion Monitor helps us to more clearly define several problems already recognized as such. However, the survey has also prompted me to consider several other questions. Are we, as a church, prepared to face the writing on the wall? At the same time, the Religion Monitor shows just how open and willing people are to contemplating issues pertaining to religion. Indeed, the Religion Monitor offers ample opportunity to consider issues from different perspectives and to explore various approaches to resolving problems, including pastoral solutions.

The Religion Monitor shows the United States, Latin America and Africa to have a high degree of religiosity. Do these empirical findings reflect what you have seen in your personal experience abroad?

Clearly, from a cultural-historical perspective, Western Europe represents an exception. The case of the United States vividly demonstrates that modernization and secularization do not necessarily go hand-in-hand—a fact that stands in direct contradiction to the secularization thesis that was popular here on the continent in the 1970s and 1980s. The Religion Monitor has empirically disproven this thesis. Latin America, for its part, continues to be considered a “Catholic” continent. However, several visits to various Central and South American countries as well as Religion Monitor data clearly show that this continent is undergoing religious upheaval. As the bishop responsible for international ecclesiastical affairs with the German Bishops’ Conference, I have traveled frequently to several African countries. Religious services in Africa are always imbued with festivity—a fact that never fails to move me. Indeed, for Africans, religion comes naturally—a fact also borne out by the findings for the Religion Monitor. In terms of the growth of Christianity, Africa—unlike Europe—remains a continent of hope, despite all of the political and economic catastrophes to which it has been subjected.

“Spain has a long path ahead of it in preparing for World Youth Day, and the lively exchange with all of its expected international guests will—I hope—bring new momentum to the Iberian Peninsula.”



The results for Spain show a lower percentage of highly religious than other similarly “Catholic” countries such as Poland and Italy. Did this surprise you?

Unfortunately, I’m not familiar enough with Spain to make any strong claims here. However, I had thought that Spain was a religious country shaped by Catholicism. When we think of Spain, we see a major Christian culture that has been with us for centuries. Watching the numbers fall is painful and raises the question: How does this happen?

The Religion Monitor shows that the intensity of religious beliefs and practices decreases considerably among younger age cohorts in Spain. What challenges does this pose?

During my days as a bishop in Germany as well as in my current capacity, it has become abundantly clear to me that we need to do more to make religion relevant to young people. In traditional terms this is referred to as initiation and catechism. How might we do this? Each country has to identify its own windows of opportunity to see how each culture might take up certain issues in its debates. Why else discuss the substance of religion when people have no faith in God and Jesus Christ and even less know what Christianity has to say about God and Jesus Christ?

Given Religion Monitor findings for Spain, how significant do you think the World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid will be for the country?

Hosting World Youth Day is always a phenomenal event for the host country. I was there in Poland, the United States, France and Germany. I heard that in Australia, there has been a major shift in the public mood and that the Catholic Church is growing significantly on the continent. I hope that Spain will experience a similar trend. In addition to traditional structures, there are several new communities and youth groups in Spain. Indeed, Spain has a long path ahead of it in preparing for World Youth Day, and the lively exchange with all of its expected international guests will—I hope—bring new momentum to the Iberian Peninsula.

Walter Kardinal Kasper, Dr. theol. habil. Dr. h.c., is President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Religion and national Identity deeply interwoven

Professor Vallespín, in your opinion, what use might the Religion Monitor findings have for various social spheres in Spain?

The Religion Monitor findings are useful insofar as they support the findings of previously conducted surveys and censuses. The classification of Spain as a “highly religious” country does surprise me, however, because it does not, in my view, correlate with the findings of other surveys such as those of the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey (ESS). I think one of the unique things about the Spanish case is the discrepancy between the expressed affiliation with Catholicism—which is at a near 80 percent—and the general practice of religion among Spaniards, which is significantly lower. These findings might shed light on an indisputable though seemingly paradox situation: the fact that Spain is a Catholic country, albeit not a very religious one. The difficulty in examining the religiousness of such a country in which national identity is so deeply interwoven with the proclamation of a specific religious faith lies in the fact that it is nearly impossible to distinguish aspects of one’s actual religiousness from those relating to one’s identity. Spaniards’ distance to several religious contents doesn’t prevent them from participating—in large numbers and with great frequency—in processions, popular religious festivals and traditionally “religious” events such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc. which are still ubiquitous. However, as I already mentioned, Spaniards’ participation here has more to do with the affinity felt toward popular traditions rather than toward actual religious substance.

Do Religion Monitor findings shed light on unique aspects of the relationship between the state and the Church in Spain?

The Church’s sustained and unusually strong position in Spain is particularly noteworthy. Given the religious emotions of most Spaniards, the Church holds a disproportionately high degree of power. The Church also lacks strong social legitimacy. According to CIS surveys, only Spain’s political parties enjoy even lower degrees of trust. The Church’s undisputed social power arguably has to do with its ability to control the administration of those resources that are frequently embedded in public practices (e.g., processions, the sacraments, etc.). However, it could also have to do with the Church’s secure access to the mass media and the fact that it has never relinquished its powerful position within the education system. Furthermore, there are a few religious groups—such as Opus Dei or the Legion of Christ—that remain influential within certain elite circles in society.

“One of the unique things about the Spanish case is the discrepancy between the expressed affiliation with Catholicism—which is at a near 80 percent—and the general practice of religion among Spaniards, which is significantly lower.”



It is striking that Poland and Italy—two other European countries shaped strongly by Catholicism—appear to show a significantly greater degree of religiousness than Spain. What is so different about Spanish society?

I think there are two issues to consider here. First, there is the fact of the Franco regime’s deep involvement with Catholicism, which resulted in a considerable portion of the population turning away from the Church and even religion itself. Second, there is the rapid process of secularization, which is a consequence of a modernization process in “catch-up” mode that is developing more quickly than, for example, modernization in Italy. In Poland, the continued importance of religiousness has to do with its role in the opposition to communism. As I said before, we see the opposite effect resulting from Francoism in Spain.

The impact of immigration to Spain will presumably not be visible until the survey is conducted again in a few years. What changes relating to immigration do you see taking place currently in the religious field of Spanish society?

Immigration has already led to the appearance of new religious minorities that are breaking up the Catholic Church’s monopoly. The increasing number of Muslims in Spain is particularly noteworthy, not only because this is affecting the Church’s monopoly but also because it affects the secularization of Spanish society in general. This change constitutes in no way a threat to a truly secular state, but, rather, helps the state achieve a breakthrough insofar as it no longer has to devote itself to a specific religion or group of believers and can play a more neutral role in religious matters.

Prof. Dr. Fernando Vallespin is a professor of political science at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and has taught as visiting professor in Harvard, Maryland, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Malaysia and Veracruz (Mexico), among others. From 2004 to 2008 he was president of the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) in Madrid.

Spanish Religiosity

Some Comments on the Religion Monitor Results for Spain¹

by Prof. Dr. José Casanova

The 2008 Religion Monitor in Spain confirms the image we had from many other surveys of the drastic secularization of Spanish society since the 1960s. Although the image per se is a static one, the availability of data on five different groups from 18 year olds to those over 60 permits some reliable extrapolation on clear accumulative trends. All three main indicators of religiosity, “affiliation,” “belief” and “practice,” show a significant decline and the decrease is consistently progressive across the five age groups.

There is one very important fact—namely the presence of a substantive gender difference—that is noticeable throughout the survey in almost every measurable dimension of religiosity. Females are consistently and significantly more religious than males across the survey in levels of affiliation, belief, practice, experience, reflexivity, open-mindedness, and individual self-image.

The overwhelming majority of Spaniards (79 percent) still define themselves as Catholic, while only 1 percent of respondents claim to belong to a different Christian confession and another 1 percent affirms belonging to a non-Christian religious denomination. The number of Spaniards with “no religious affiliation,” however, already surpasses 18 percent. These figures reveal, first of all, a very low level of religious pluralism and the absence of any meaningful religious competition in Spain. The Catholic Church has a nearly absolute monopoly on the Spanish religious market.

1 This is an abridged version of “Spanish Religiosity: An Interpretive Reading of the Religion Monitor Results for Spain”, which is published in *What the World Believes: Analysis and Commentary on the Religion Monitor 2008*. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008.

The author

Prof. José Casanova is a professor of sociology and Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. Dr. Casanova received his B.A. in Philosophy from the Seminario Metropolitano in Saragossa, Spain and an M.A. in Theology from the University of Innsbruck. He also received both an M.A. and his Ph.D. in Sociology from the New School for Social Research in New York, where he taught as a professor of sociology from 1987 to 2007.



But there is, secondly, a consistent progressive growth of those without religious affiliation, which in the case of Spain means those who explicitly affirm that they no longer “belong” to the Catholic Church.

There seems to be, however, some new dynamic of change in religious denominational affiliation among the young, since the number of those who belong to other religious denominations has already reached 5 percent. Most likely, however, this reflects above all the growth of newly arrived immigrants, who are likely to belong to other religious denominations. Indeed, one may suspect that new immigrant religious minorities, Muslims, Eastern Orthodox, and Latino Protestants, may be underrepresented in the relatively small sample of 1,001 respondents on which the survey is based. This issue is particularly relevant insofar as Spain—like the rest of Western Europe—may be in the process of becoming a religiously pluralistic country once again and for the first time since the expulsion of Jews and Muslims 500 years ago.

A majority (51 percent) of Spaniards affirm a strong belief in God, if one includes in this category those who believe very strongly (31 percent) and those who believe quite strongly (20 percent). The number of Spaniards who declare absolutely no belief in God amounts to 19 percent of the population and appears to have remained basically unchanged since the 1998 survey conducted by the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). The number of “unbelievers” matches exactly the number of Spaniards with “no religious affiliation”. The significant religious change in Spain over the last decade appears to have been the explicit move of unbelievers, that is those “belonging without believing,” out of the church. The proportion of unbelievers appears to have stabilized and indeed, there is practically no change in the number of unbelievers (23 percent) among the three lower deciles of the adult population (i.e., those between 18 and 49 years old).

Other traditional religious “beliefs” associated with Christianity and with popular religion are significantly lower. Only 18 percent of Spaniards strongly believe “in life after death.” Only 21 percent of respondents affirm some strong belief in the “influence of angels.” The belief in demonic agency appears even weaker and skepticism about it is generally more consistent across the entire Spanish population and among all age groups. This is undoubtedly one of the most compelling pieces of evidence for the triumph of a secular social imaginary that, according to Charles Taylor, is characterized by the experience of a “buffered self,” which is immune to external supernatural forces, and the experience of a disenchanted world.²

In terms of church attendance, one can divide the Spanish population into three roughly equivalent groups. Approximately one third of Spaniards (34 percent) attend religious services with some regularity. Over one third of Spaniards (38 percent) attend religious services irregularly. Just over a fourth of Spaniards (28 percent) claim that they never attend Mass. There are, however, significant differences between the five age cohorts. The attendance rate of the two middle cohorts is significantly lower than that of the oldest cohort. The decline becomes even steeper with the two youngest deciles. In fact, for the first time, the proportion of those who never attend is significantly larger than the number of regular churchgoers.

Looking at the private religious practice of personal prayer, the overall numbers are somewhat higher, but not that dramatically different from the numbers for church attendance. For 41 percent of respondents, prayer is of little or no importance, a figure that corresponds exactly with the number of those who said they never or only rarely pray. Prayer is important only for 38 percent of the Spanish population. Clearly the decline in church religiosity is not being compensated for by a vibrant individualized and private religiosity. Indeed, the levels of self-reported religious experience are relatively low. Only 14 percent of Spaniards claim to experience frequently the sensation that God or something divine wants to communicate with them, while the number of those who have either never or very rarely had such a communicative experience with God rises to 66 percent.

The Religion Monitor is able to probe in depth at the Spanish religious and social imaginary. Spaniards tend to associate God with largely positive sentiments. The most frequently experienced God images are love, hope, gratitude and joy (near the 40 percent range). At a slightly lower level (in the 30-35 percent range), Spaniards claim to associate God in their lives frequently with the sentiments of reverence, protection, force and help. Those would seem to be, therefore, the predominant sentiments of the Catholic divine imaginary. At significantly lower and decreasing levels one finds the association of God with justice (21 percent), release from guilt (17 percent), guilt (12 percent), fear (11 percent), despair (9 percent) and rage (5 percent), all sentiments more typical, it would seem, of Reformed Christianity than of Catholicism.

Indicators of religious knowledge, religious reflexivity, and religious search are also markedly low. Only 11 percent of Spaniards, for instance, claim to read religious or

2 Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge 2007.



spiritual books with some frequency. The number of those who think frequently about religious issues is significantly higher (31 percent), but much lower nonetheless than the proportion of those who practically never think about religion (42 percent). There is also not much evidence of a critical, reflexive attitude towards one's religious beliefs. Indeed, Spaniards seem to be generally content with their religious attitudes. Only 22 percent of Spaniards are disposed to rethink certain aspects of their religious views. Only 16 percent of Spaniards have a strong interest in experiencing more about religious themes. A clear majority (51 percent) express little or no interest in religious searching.

Given the relatively low scores on the intellectual, critical and reflexive dimensions of religiosity, it seems rather surprising that there should be high scores on the indicators of religious tolerance and the rather positive attitudes towards religious pluralism and towards other religions. One can only suspect that the responses measure not so much a critical well-thought-out engagement with those issues, but rather a relative indifference to those issues, as if they were merely matters of taste. A majority of Spaniards (52 percent) agrees strongly with the sentiment that each and every religion has a core of truth, while only 25 percent disagree with this position. Interestingly enough, self-confessed Catholics appear to be much more open (59 percent)

to this than those without confession. Of this last group, only 22 percent agree with the proposition that each religion has some core of truth, while 61 percent strongly disagree.

An even larger majority (75 percent) of Spaniards agrees that one should have an open mind to all religions. Once again self-proclaimed Catholics agree with the proposition to a larger extent than those claiming to be non-religious (77 percent and 63 percent, respectively). But the disparity between those who disagree with and those who agree with the proposition is larger and therefore more revealing. Thus, it appears that religious people are more open to other religions than non-religious people, who appear to have a more negative attitude toward all religions. In this respect, these responses appear to serve as an indicator of secularist prejudices towards “religion,” better than they do as measurements of a genuine pluralistic or tolerant open-mindedness toward other religions.

Either way, at least in principle, the acceptance of religious pluralism in Spain and the attitude of tolerance toward other religions appear to be rather high, which confirms what appears to be a rather surprisingly widespread, positive global trend across all the countries included in the Religion Monitor and within all the world religions.³

Two types of questions in the Religion Monitor serve to measure the relative importance of religion in the lives of Spaniards. One series of questions asks about the personal importance of religion when compared to other areas of life such as family, spouse/partner, education, free time, work and occupation, and politics. One’s own family and children appears at the top of the scale of relevance and as the highest value for practically all Spaniards (99 percent). Following family and children in (still relatively high yet decreasing) importance are: education (97 percent), spouse/partner (86 percent), free time (83 percent), and work and occupation (79 percent). By contrast, the relative personal importance of religiosity pales in comparison. The proportion of those for whom religion is of little or no importance (44 percent) is much larger than the proportion of those for whom it is very or quite important (32 percent). At the same time, however, politics are not more personally relevant for Spaniards than religiosity is. The proportion of Spaniards who attribute personal importance to politics is only slightly higher (36 percent) than the proportion of those who attribute a similar positive importance to religiosity (32 percent).

A second measurement of the relative importance of religion for personal and social life comes from the responses to questions concerning the influence of one’s religion upon other spheres of life. Spaniards clearly separate their religious beliefs mostly from their political opinions, from their free time, from their work and occupation, and—most surprisingly—from their attitudes toward sexuality. Two thirds (67 percent) of Spaniards claim that their religious beliefs have practically no influence on their

3 See Stefan Huber und Constantin Klein. “International Findings for the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Religion Monitor: An Abridged Report.” Gütersloh 2008. www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bst/de/media/xcms_bst_dms_23407_23408_2.pdf (accessed June 5, 2008).



political opinions. The differentiations between religion and both work and free time appear to be equally rigid. Most striking, however, and specially considering the emphasis Catholic doctrine puts on sexual morality, is the clear separation which Spaniards make between their religion and their attitudes toward sexuality. Only 6 percent of Spaniards claim that religion is of great importance when it comes to sexuality, and an additional 12 percent claims that religion has quite an influence upon their sexuality. By contrast, the majority (51 percent) of Spaniards claim that religion has absolutely no influence upon their attitudes toward sexuality, while an additional 13 percent claims that it does not have very much influence. Spanish sexual mores have been clearly secularized and appear to be completely differentiated from religious morality. It is rather significant that gender differences are minimal when it comes to this issue and that the only significant age differences are those between the three youngest cohorts and the two oldest ones.

The proportion of Spaniards for whom religion assumes quite a degree of significance becomes much larger only when it comes to coping with life crises, questioning the meaning of life, raising children, or dealing with vital events in one's family.

It would seem that Spaniards tend to undercount their own religiosity. The proportion of Spaniards who define themselves either “very” or “quite religious” (21 percent) is, for instance, much smaller than the proportion of those who express strong belief in God (51 percent), significantly smaller than those who attend religious services at least monthly (34 percent), and much smaller than those who claim to pray at least weekly (43 percent). The discrepancy between the higher self-reported rates of religious belief and practice and the lower rates of religious self-image would seem to indicate that Spaniards prefer to think of themselves as less religious than they actually are. This, in turn, could be interpreted as evidence of an increasingly prevailing secular culture in which to be religious is not considered to be a positive personal trait. This discrepancy is consistent across gender and across all age cohorts, although it is much more pronounced among males than among females, and is particularly pronounced among the youngest cohort, which could be read as confirmation of social pressure to conform to secular norms.

If my interpretation is correct, it could be viewed as evidence that secular assumptions render the secularization thesis a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁴ When one defines modernity as being secular and when people would like to identify themselves as being modern, then people will also prefer to define themselves as secular, even to the point of denying or discounting their remaining religiosity. By contrast, Spaniards seem to be less reluctant to define themselves as “spiritual.” It would seem that to be spiritual but not religious carries a positive self-image.

The Spanish religious worldview is still predominantly a theistic one, with surprisingly positive images of God. Nonetheless, impersonal (“a higher power”), and even pantheistic (“an energy which permeates everything”) images of God are held as frequently as more traditionally Christian ideas of God such as “a person to whom one can talk” or as “somebody who cares personally for each person.” By contrast, the proportion of those who think that “God is solely a human idea without a separate existence” is much smaller.

The Spanish social imaginary appears to maintain a tension between a more traditional religious conception anchored in Christian transcendence and a more secular conception grounded in immanent, exclusive humanism. Nearly one half (49 percent) of the respondents disagree with the proposition that “life only has significance because there is a God,” while only 41 percent agree that “life has significance because there is something after death.” In fact, the overwhelming majority (85 percent) of respondents affirm that “life only has significance if you make it significant yourself.” Moreover, 80 percent of Spaniards appear to believe that life is meaningful in any case, while only 11 percent agree with the proposition that “life has little significance.”

Furthermore, such an optimistic attitude toward life is held in conjunction with typically modern scientific conceptions of the universe. Practically the same proportion of Spaniards agrees with the proposition that “life is only part of natural evolution”

4 José Casanova. “Religion, Secular Identities, and European Integration”. Religion and European Integration. Edited by Peter Katzenstein and Timothy Byrnes. Cambridge 2006.



(72 percent) and that “ultimately, our life is determined by the laws of nature” (75 percent). At the same time, the proportion of Spaniards who believe that “there is something divine within me” is larger (40 percent) than the proportion of those who do not hold this belief (36 percent). As is to be expected, a belief in personal divinization is particularly high (77 percent) among the highly religious. At the same time, however, even 14 percent of those without a religious confession believe in human divinization.

Spain's Religion at the Crossroads

Understanding religion as a matter of context and narrative

by Prof. Dr. Víctor Pérez-Díaz

1. General remarks

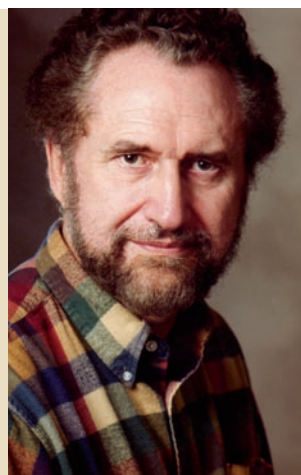
The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor is a most welcome, extremely useful instrument for global comparative research. The challenge is to take it as a reference and starting point in order to engage in a fruitful discussion of religion today—both its life forms and its social imageries, its practices and beliefs.

The unit of comparison is the country. To this effect, a representative sample of the general population was asked to make verbal statements about their religious experiences and beliefs. What, however, is the nature of the religious experiences and beliefs that make these countries homogeneous enough, so as to make the comparison meaningful or relevant? Clearly, in order to answer this question we have to treat religion as responding to temporal situations—in a sense non-religious ones—and as being part of an ongoing process. In other words, we need to introduce a dose of context and narrative.

First, the context. We cannot compare populations as aggregates of individuals that may respond to poll surveys; this is just an abstraction and not what the countries are really about. We are dealing with structured mixes of churches and lay societies, of religious and non-religious competitors who have alternative comprehensive world-views, all of whom face each other and influence each other. These actors operate within an institutional framework, one that makes a crucial distinction between religious specialists, who are in positions of power or authority, and a laity that stands in a largely subordinate position. This is a simplified depiction, applying mostly to theistic religious societies, and, in particular, to Christian ones. Moreover, there are various ways to address the difference between the church and laity in Christian societies, and in this regard these societies have gone through momentous changes and are still changing. In addition, we have to see these two actors in the context of a larger field in which they meet a third: “the others,” so to speak, meaning other reli-

The autor

Prof. Dr. Víctor Pérez-Díaz is professor of Sociology at the Complutense University of Madrid and Founding Director of Analistas Socio-Políticos (ASP), a private research center and think-tank whose main areas of interest are civil society and the public space, European integration and regional development, and politics and public policy in a variety of fields. Víctor Pérez-Díaz holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in Law as well as Sociology from Complutense University.



gions or, simply, a non-religious part of society. Prominent in this respect are the secularist elites and their mass followers—at times a very large following, indeed.

We may understand their relations in many ways. Some scholars see it in terms of a religious market, in some cases an open market. In others, church elites are seen to control supply, operating to a large extent in a monopoly (or quasi monopoly) market, meeting the population's demands for meaning, salvation and community, if and when these are articulated in religious terms. Yet even then, sooner or later there appear competitors, whom these religious specialists have to resist, persuade or handle one way or another.¹

Second, the narrative. Enlarging the dramatis personae of the play goes to the heart of the matter, because in order to understand today's religious forms and imageries, we have to understand how they came to be in the first place. This includes the memories and narratives or stories these players take into the drama. These narratives shape people's current expectations, motives and feelings about what is happening. Even if we focus on a peculiar corner of west Eurasia that happens to be Europe, the narratives of what has been taking place in France, Spain, Poland, Germany, Sweden or Italy are so different that unless we deal with these trajectories so different from each other we cannot understand any of them and, therefore, cannot know what the object of comparison is.

1 I have applied this schema to the Spanish situation in Víctor Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society: The Emergence of Democratic Spain*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 108-183.

2. The Spanish case: the long story, and the short one from the 1930s to the 1970s

The situation of religion in Spain at the beginning of the 21st century can be seen as an ongoing story. We may leave aside, for the moment, the larger historical background—the long story—with the exception of a couple of cursory remarks that show its relevance to the situation at hand.

First, Spain is an overwhelmingly Catholic country. Still, in the last 10 years its population has risen to 46 million from 40 million, mostly due to the arrival of almost 5 million immigrants. Many of them are North-African Muslims, East-European Orthodox Christians and Latin Americans, an unknown number of which may have been influenced by the current wave of Evangelical Protestantism. Every group has its own social imagery. In the social imagery of the about one million Muslim immigrants, Spain might be understood as the current incarnation of another entity, Al-Andalus, which was Muslim for some four to eight centuries, depending on the region. (Then again, this might not be the case; it remains a matter of empirical inquiry.) Thus, people who may look to the autochthonous population like guests in an alien country may look to themselves as if they harbor a moral claim to the co-ownership of the country they have arrived in.

Second, and on another note, the church in Spain has been embroiled for one to two centuries in the contentious games of peripheral nationalisms in two regions—the Basque country and Catalonia—with the local churches trying to remain as close as possible to their immediate constituencies. The end result may prove frustrating for the church, since it has not worked to reinforce its links with those regions (as in analogous situations in Poland and Ireland, for instance), since the church's efforts to be pro-Spain in the rest of Spain and who-knows-exactly-what in these two regions have coincided with a remarkable weakening of Catholic practice and belief. The point is, however, that this matter lies very much at the heart of today's public debate on politics and religion.

Remote Muslim past and peripheral nationalisms aside, let us focus on the general situation and on more recent times. Spain's Catholic Church and population have lively memories of the period from the 1930s to the present. The story starts with a period of civil war, understood by the church as a time of martyrdom and crusade, and as a time of reckoning for the anti-church forces prevailing on the republican side. Memories here are not a matter of words, but of more than 6,000 corpses of priests, nuns and people from various religious orders killed in cold blood in the first weeks of the war. Those memories have never been forgotten, and the current (secularist) government is in the process of reactivating them in an indirect but quite eloquent way, by stirring memories of the people killed on the other side of the war (the one supported by the church itself). These are the kind of memories that are coming back, in full, at this very moment.

Then, from the late 1930s to the mid-1970s, a triumphant church imagined a revival similar to the 16th and 17th centuries when the Counterreformation gave rise to a unity of church and state. Seeming feasible (at last), the church did its best to attain such a position, i.e. a virtual monopoly of the religious market. The public sphere was under the church's watch and its strong influence. Practically everybody belonged



to the church and went, duly, through the sacraments of baptism, marriage and last rites. The situation was attended to by a medium-size apparatus of about 20,000 priests (the number did not change much during the whole period) and members of various religious orders, whose numbers rose from about 50,000 to near 80,000.² They managed any number of activities, in particular a powerful educational system. In fact, the church had a prominent position in secondary education, so that most of the elites of the 1970s through the 1990s were under the church's influence in crucial parts of their formative years.

Traditionally, the church sent two messages to the faithful: one for "the few," who might be induced to become religious enthusiasts, and another for the population at large. We have been told by historians and anthropologists that folk, Mediterranean Catholicism has always been this way, from olden times. According to this system,

² See Albert Carreras and Xavier Tafunell, eds., *Estadísticas históricas de España. Siglos XIX-XX*, (Bilbao: Fundación BBVA, 2005).

the church provided the masses with a message of meaning, salvation and community, in which a mix of otherworldly salvation and a modicum of the good things in life may be attained through negotiation with a personal God, with the help of privileged intermediaries of different sorts: celestial figures (the Virgin Mary, saints and angels) and the visible church here on earth, in particular by means of the sacraments. Taking part in these sacraments and exhibiting good behavior would fill the layman's part of the deal. Laymen would not need to be religious seekers as such, just people interested in a sensible management of life's crises when they arose. Underlying this modest, sort of realistic assessment of the religious needs of the majority, however, is a certain religious shallowness. There is little room for living while waiting for God's calling; less so in the case of a more personal calling with a strong emotional resonance (of love or fear or both). This would imply a substantial leveling between the religious specialists and the laymen and would suggest a cultivation of a religious attitude that reflects one of the possible meanings of religio: a readiness for a *relegere*, an attentive reading of God's ways and words. This is not what the Catholic Church would have traditionally encouraged. Hence, expecting to find many religious readers in that milieu, among the Catholic masses, was not realistic.

Such bargaining amounted to keeping a distance from God and sticking to a position of subordination to Him, but with room for maneuver. And in that "in-between" space there appeared a number of intermediaries who are part of the bargain, ordered hierarchically. Thus structured, this religious space looked akin to and showed an obvious affinity for the arrangement of powers in the temporal order, both in the politics and in the social and economic spheres of many European societies of the last two to three centuries. So here was a reinforcing mechanism that added plausibility to the status quo in both directions: from the temporal order to the celestial order and vice versa, both in terms of social imageries and social life forms.

The stability of the system was facilitated by limited rates of economic development. This made the goods available at any given time seem fairly limited: the image of a "limited good."³ This would inhibit initiative and make prudent management of what is near-at-hand and a focusing on the local horizon seem the right things to do. Beyond that, there would be negotiations with larger-than-life figures, who were to be approached with a mix of apprehension and limited trust (be they religious specialists, political officials or social or economic caciques). Starting in the 1950s and 1960s the situation gradually changed as everything got moving: rapid economic growth, migration, an opening to Europe, political dissent. As a long wave of changing circumstances came into the picture, more and more moral energy went into the new possibilities of economic improvement and upward social mobility (which could be very well justified in terms of traditional morality, both in terms of enhancing the family's prospects and family cohesion; in this respect, it can be said consumerism was only a small part of a larger picture). A loosening of social pressure came along with migration, urban growth and new forms of transport and communication.

3 George Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," in J. Potter, M. Díaz and G. Foster, eds., *Peasant Society* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967).



Then, the lay religious enthusiasts got caught in a new imagery and mystique regarding how to deal with the seculum. It must be noted that in Spain at the time the place was not in tune with a general attitude of *contemptus mundi*; it never was. The legacy of the triumphant church was that the world could be shaped by religious enthusiasm of some sort. The original idea was to achieve it by means of a revival of 16th- and 17th-century Spain, with some practical adjustments to the present. But now, gradually, temporal salvation received a new name, that of “progress,” and it was to be seen in a different vein. So much more so since the economic and social changes came hand in hand with a new definition of the historical horizon. From then on it did not make sense to try to construct Spain from within, outside of the European context. Hence, constructing a better world was now to mean creating a liberal democracy and a more just order. In the end, this translated into making Western Europe the model for Spain, following the lead of the Catholic Church elsewhere in Europe. Engagement in this task meant the church had to find a new language.

The new language implied a break with the past. Civil war was not, now, to be seen as a crusade, which is the way it was understood by those who went through it. At the same time, however, having indulged such an idea for a long time (some would say, for about 100 years starting with the Carlist wars of the 19th century), the church

seemed at least co-responsible for what now looked like a tragic misunderstanding, one that made for a violent split between the church and the secularist elites and their followers. Given its responsibility for the course of events, the church, some felt, should also ask forgiveness for it. In any event, an alliance of 30 years with Franco's regime was not something to pass over without a comment. In sum, the church went through a period of self-doubt about its record, the reach of its social influence and its very ability to handle the new situation. In this context, we may understand that religious enthusiasts invested their energy in the temporal drama of the democratic transition of the 1970s partly as a way of getting away from these embarrassing and complicated explanations, and, possibly, in a search for certitudes of some sort, such as fighting for liberal democracy and a modicum of social justice. In fact, around this time many thousands of priests and members of religious orders abandoned their vows.

3. The situation from the 1970s through the early 21st century

Thirty years later, what has happened to the Catholics in Spain? Statistics show that once a regime of political freedom was established, belonging to the church became a mark of identity not for everybody but for a very large majority—around 70 to 80 percent of the population. This has not changed much in 30 years. This questions the view of “two Spains,” a Catholic one and “another” Spain, roughly of equal size—two subsets that are, upon further examination, of differing magnitudes. According to this rather gross account, either Spain had been largely Catholic all along (including in the 1930s), or the church's strong influence, bordering on coercion here and there, and its persuasive capacity as of the 1940s had been a success of sorts after all, even though the number of religious specialists had dwindled. True, the present number of priests is roughly the same as in the early 1940s, but the Spanish population has more than doubled since, so that the ratio is significantly lower. In addition, membership in religious orders has fallen back to the levels of the 1930s.

Before we look into the church's strategy in more recent times, a question about the church's character may be in order, since it is most likely that strategy flows from character rather than the other way around. The church's character has been shaped by having been trained in the game of power relations with the state—first the Francoist state and then a liberal one—while putting in second place the problem of helping an active and self-reliant laity to progress—a world of religious entrepreneurs so to speak. At the same time, this last task was not made any easier by the circumstances of the day. For the reasons already alluded to, religious enthusiasts had a crisis of sorts in the last period of Francoism, from the 1950s through the mid-1970s. They were left on their own, seemingly lacking institutional resources. “Catholic politics” seemed out of the question; revival of a Christian Democratic party was not in the cards at a time when the prototype, the Italian Democratic Party, was in deep crisis. Social action and organization overtly based on Christian beliefs was losing steam, and most Catholic activists were joining socialist or communist unions. “Christian intellectual life” sounded too parochial. To the intellectuals, it suggested losing opportunities and cutting themselves off from the avenues of prestige and influence of the time. Something analogous may apply to the interesting (and understudied) world of ex-priests or ex-members of religious orders—who probably number around 30,000. They remained faithful to the church and kept their Catholic identity. Prob-



ably deeply religious in their lives, and possibly restless but with no outlet for their restlessness, they slipped to the margins, feeling they were of no use for anybody; in time, many of them joined civil society organizations.

For the time being, the church thus had to do with lesser numbers of religious specialists and to recreate a network of lay religious enthusiasts. This required time and led to a period of trial and error. In the meanwhile, the church had to handle the situation as best it could, and its first reaction was to follow established routines and do what it had been trained to do. Hence, it focused on the public sphere and institutional games with the government, a variant of the games it had played for the previous 30 years.

The main issues the church has since tried to handle in the public sphere concern financing, education and issues of public morality. Let us look first at financing. The church was used to a vast amount of public funding for a variety of historical reasons. It then thought it had a permanent deal with the new liberal state thanks to an international treaty, a Concordat, the terms of which, however, were ambiguous enough to allow for a drastic revision of the government's contribution were the government to decide it wanted one, thereby forcing the church to persuade its faithful to fund its

activities. This is the situation now, with only about 33 percent of taxpayers agreeing to finance the activities of the Catholic Church.⁴ Next, the church has also tried to keep alive a church-controlled system of education. It could have tried to do so by having parents choose religious schools in an open educational market. On the contrary, the church's deal with the government led it to accept public subsidies in exchange for government supervision, at the risk of diluting the religious character of its own schools. On top of that, the church has focused on making sure Catholic instruction is part of the curriculum in public schools, something that, in the end, is dependent on parents and the students asking for it. The data show that interest in religious education is decreasing, in particular in secondary schools, where the choice of subject matter is most influenced by the students themselves (53 percent of students in late secondary school opted for a course on religion in 2005 – 2006). Finally, the church has engaged in a number of battles in the public sphere to limit the effects of a broad and unremitting strategy by the current government for civil marriage being extended to homosexual couples and for divorce and abortion being made as accessible as possible. In fact, public support for the church's position is lukewarm.

What might be the reasons for the public's reticence to financing the church, and its limited enthusiasm for Catholic education and the church's desire to engage in moral issues?

Regarding the latter, we may intimate people's attitudes by looking at their actual behavior. The statistics indicate a trend in family life that may have consequences for the practice of the sacraments and for the intensity of individuals' religious experiences and their feelings of belonging to the church. Divorce rates have been going up, something that has been particularly true in recent years, due to a deliberate strategy by the current government to ease the terms of divorce, as well as abortion. (In 2007 there were about 200,000 marriages and 125,000 divorces; in 2006 it was estimated that 17 percent of all known pregnancies ended in an abortion). In addition, the practice of civil marriages has risen fairly dramatically, so that now nearly half of all new marriages are civil ones (45 percent in 2007). The practice of cohabitation without marriage is also fairly widespread, as indicated by the numbers of births outside marriage (about 28 percent of all births in 2006). Unless reversed in the future, the trend suggests there will be a substantial decrease in the practice of the sacrament of marriage, and this may translate in time into a substantial reduction in the number of baptisms. On the other hand, the traditional practice of burial on holy ground is being slowly displaced by that of cremation and giving the remains to the family (to be placed, presumably, on family property). Everything seems to be taking place as if a virtual threshold has been crossed. As social pressure to conform to established mores of Catholic baptism, marriage and burial wanes, more people may be expected to consider and to make crucial transitions in their own lives as if they were disconnected from religion.

4 Statistical data on these matters (public funding, attendance in religion classes) and on divorce rates, abortion rates, civil marriages and births out of wedlock come from Juan Carlos Rodríguez, "La religiosidad de los españoles y la Iglesia Católica: unos datos y una hipótesis", in ASP Research Papers, 82(a) (2008).



4. The current situation: A large Catholic population, but fragmented personalities and fuzzy beliefs, with a touch of magic

And here is where the Spanish data from the Religion Monitor⁵ may very well fit in; to begin with, in terms of those who belong to the church, a designation that applies to about four-fifths (79 percent) of the population. We then have about one-third who are highly religious. If we put these numbers side by side with those of regular churchgoers, the numbers have not moved much in 30 years. Perhaps this has been the case for a long time; we do not know for sure. If so, this would bear witness to a remarkable “Catholic resilience” on the part of one-third of the population and to its will-

⁵ Carefully analyzed in José Casanova, “Spanish Religiosity: An Interpretative Reading of the Religion Monitor Results for Spain,” in: Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), *What the World Believes: Analysis and Commentary on the Religion Monitor 2008*, Guetersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008.

ingness to stick to it, through thick or thin. The rest includes another third of moderate Catholics, and about a quarter of non-denominational individuals (with a large share of non-religious people).

We must, however, also look into religious life forms and imageries, into practices and beliefs. In order to understand them, it may well be that the concept of secularization is of little help. Here I suggest another approach, one that looks into the shape of practices and beliefs in terms of the degree of coherence of conduct on the whole and of the degree of clarity of the belief system.

One-third of the population, then, practices in public, and a larger proportion of it prays or feels it gets in touch with God or the divine. For most of the population, however, life as a whole seems impregnated by religious considerations only to a point. Here the striking thing about the Spanish data seems to be that family life is deemed to be both quite important in itself and quite influenced by religion. Still, the data referred to above suggest increasing strains in family life, given the rising rates of divorce, unmarried couples, births outside of marriage and abortion. In view of this, sex could be expected to be seen as somehow connected to family life and, therefore, somehow touched by religious considerations. But the fact is, Spaniards' answers suggest that they feel as if sex was both quite important and quite unconnected to religion; as if it was seen as something not to be influenced by religious considerations.

Politics, too, is seen as outside of the religious picture. Possibly "politics" is implicitly understood as "real politics," that is, as "power politics" (the modern view), not as a search for a common good (the classical view). It may well be that the church's baroque political trajectory is included in that view. The church that identified with Franco's Spain exhibited a sort of split personality, with a democratic church playing a very significant role, at the last moment, in favor of the transition to democracy. Yet the whole episode left some people with the impression that there was a measure of opportunism in the game, and that from then on the orientation of the church might vary at will. At the same time, however, the effects of the church's hesitations must be seen in context. Analogous changes have been common in other quarters as well. The ex-Francoists became the main protagonists of the transition and were mostly responsible for its success. In time, the socialists went through a period of verbal radicalism and then took a very moderate stand, ending in an unlikely—although probably genuine—full embrace of the market economy and NATO. Communists, in turn, either became socialists or followed suite. For all of them, a judicious handling of their own ambiguities was the name of the game. The church's ambiguities were thus part and parcel of a general ambiguity, encompassing both the elites and the people. In fact, for most of the period from the 1950s onward, popular resistance to Franco was rather modest, contrary to the emerging myths of the new (democratic) regime, which likes to imply a sort of "tacit resistance" by the people to Franco's dictatorship.

Consequently, there seem to be signs throughout Spanish life of a fragmentation of personal experience, one in which, in every area of experience, we find a mix of instrumental rationality regarding some details and fuzzy beliefs regarding other details and the larger picture. This we may see as a Spanish variant of a more general modern (or postmodern) phenomenon, or as an extreme, limiting case. In any event it fits in with the low degree of reflexivity indicated by the Religion Monitor data for Spain.



The data also show that ideas about angels and the afterlife seem remote, while, at the same time, there is a sizable interest in astrology. We may surmise that the weakening of interest in angels and the afterlife do not bear witness to a weakening of magic thinking, but rather to a change in direction. The fact is, in modern, so-called secular times, magic thinking is alive and well, even though it may be oriented differently, represented by a displacement of the sacred and a re-enchantment of the world, moving away from the traditional field of religion and into other fields, such as the political, scientific and economic. Thus, an argument could be made regarding the crucial importance played by the sort of “magic spell” attached to many modern political slogans, such as the recent surge towards the slogan of “the ark of progressivism,” a clear allusion to the ark of a new alliance; but every day brings a new slogan of a similar character. “Left” and “right” may work this way, depending on context and on the symbols and emotions attached to their use.⁶ It is pretty obvious that many

⁶ On the “magic” use of these political symbolisms see Víctor Pérez-Díaz, *El malestar de la democracia* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2008), 105-202.

modern political movements can be better understood as ersatz religious movements (“gnostic,” according to Voegelin’s strictures).⁷ Belief in progress has, of course, a component of millennial delusion underlying it. We must also remind ourselves that, on the ground, our very modern scientific practices and institutions work to some extent with magical thinking and practice. Keith Thomas already pointed out, in his study of 16th- and 17th-century England, that for the time being modern medicine works more or less the same way that pre-modern medicine did, with laymen being largely unable to understand it, thus explaining the therapeutical importance of the placebo.⁸ The market economy and the government’s attempt—or pretense—at managing it share, often, in the trickster’s magic. The recent financial turmoil reminds us of this, with a vengeance. It shows that markets may tend to convey less and less information (and not more and more, as expected) about the contents of economic transactions. As a result, both sophisticated economic agents and the people at large may end up in a very opaque situation, leading to fear, a situation that is hard to tackle with rational means. Trust is then needed. Trust, of course, must be properly invoked, and the proper ritual (with its proper public officiants) must be attended to.

5. Conclusion

In order to compare we must understand the basic units of comparison, in this case, national populations. For this, we have to introduce a context and a narrative that are, to a great extent, specific to each country, even though they may be shared, in part, by others. Thus, we need to be alert to the difference between religious specialists/churches and the general population—religious enthusiasts and common laymen included—and other actors in the country under consideration. We must also see how the whole field of actors and their relations evolve over a period of time.

In the Spanish case, the narrative, if reduced to the short story I’ve focused on, deals with the last 60 years: 30 years before the transition to democracy and 30 years after it. The present situation allows for several interpretations. Seen from the Catholic Church’s viewpoint, the resiliency of a large majority’s general feelings of belonging to the church and the strong religious commitment of a third of the population seem positive. Yet, on the other hand, the church now finds itself in a rather complicated predicament. It must face the growth in membership of other religious groups (mainly due to immigration), plus an occasional belligerent secularist adversary. The church must face these challenges not having been trained by past experience to handle such complexity and being prone to revert to deeply rooted institutional practices of accommodating the powers that be.

The critical point, however, lies elsewhere. As we look into people’s religious life forms and imageries, the picture may seem more disquieting. While church and

7 Eric Voegelin, “Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Essays”, in *Modernity without Restraint* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 243-315.

8 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 209.



state quarrel and immigrants keep arriving, the population at large seems to be drifting away. Its behavioral traits—such as the sizable disparity between religious feelings, on the one hand, and sex, family and politics, on the other—suggest a low degree of personal coherence. This, in turn, fits a pattern of fuzzy beliefs, including a soft spot for magical thinking and its everyday manifestations, the reasons for which are based on a mixture of ancient traditions and current inducements. For some observers, this may look like a step forward in a quasi linear process of (modern) secularization. To me, it seems like another avatar in a familiar, recurrent drift, one that, under different guises, has been repeatedly observed at critical times in Europe's history.

www.religionsmonitor.com

Internet portal for identifying individual levels of religiousness

Religion is a highly personal matter. At www.religionsmonitor.com, users can generate a profile of their individual level of religious belief.

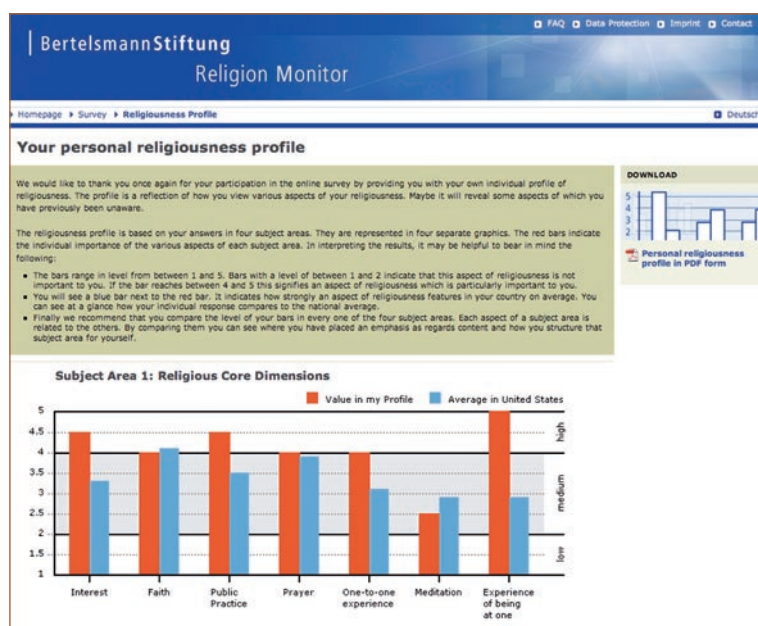
“How religious am I?” “To what extent do religious attitudes influence my daily life?” These questions are of concern not only to members of traditional religious communities, but also to many who do not adhere to conventional religious beliefs. The Religion Monitor provides all interested parties with support as they look for answers.

More than just an academic tool for specialists, the Religion Monitor offers Internet users around the world the chance to examine their own level of religiousness—regardless of whether they are religious in a traditional sense or whether their attitudes are informed by more individual experiences.

The online questionnaire is taken from the survey carried out globally on behalf of the Religion Monitor. Once they have responded to the questions, users can generate their own “religiousness profile” and compare it to the findings for their country of residence.

Within months of going online, thousands of people in almost 100 countries have made use of this opportunity. In order to make the survey accessible to even more people, the online questionnaire—already available in German, English, Spanish and Turkish—will be translated into other languages, including Arabic.

To supplement its survey of individuals, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has developed a new group platform for the online questionnaire that is of particular interest to school classes, church communities and congregations or university seminar groups.





Comments on www.religionsmonitor.com

◦ Outstanding service

“The online survey is an outstanding service! My students filled it out during religion class. Suddenly even those youngsters were willing to discuss their feelings and religious experiences who had previously been hesitant to discuss their attitudes and who had labeled themselves atheists.”

Religion teacher

◦ Astounding results

“The Religion Monitor generated astounding results at one of the family get-togethers our parish regularly organizes. One evening we were discussing the extent to which children should be given a religious education. By answering the survey’s questions it became clear that our attitudes were not as similar as we had originally thought.”

Church assistant

◦ Multifaceted nature of religiousness

“Initially my personal profile surprised me, since I was classified as ‘highly religious,’ even though I don’t belong to a church. Your questionnaire makes clear, however, that religiousness is much more than just the teachings of the major religions. A personal quest to discover life’s meaning is much more multifaceted—and is often not taken seriously. Thank you for appreciating this phenomenon as well.”

Survey respondent

The Bertelsmann Stiftung

Dedicated to promoting responsibility in an open society—the Bertelsmann Stiftung works with independent experts to develop approaches for ensuring society’s ongoing viability. For more than 30 years it has been committed to increasing social participation and efficiency.

Our mission

Founded by Reinhard Mohn in 1977, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is a private operating foundation. It is politically nonpartisan and works independently of corporate influences. Our projects derive from our founder’s original vision: to stimulate social change that leads to increased social participation and efficiency.

Our core beliefs

Together, we are the society we live in. As a result, we all bear responsibility for society’s future. As a foundation, we at the Bertelsmann Stiftung consider ourselves a key societal player. If we are to work together to shape the future, we must be resolute, courageous and open to new ideas. Our core values are freedom, solidarity, competition and goodwill, and only when all four come together does society become truly humane. To ensure this is the case and to inspire us in our endeavors, we search for best practices worldwide and, in exchange, offer up our own ideas within an international dialogue.

Our goals

At the Bertelsmann Stiftung, we are committed to:

- Ensuring that individuals take responsibility for shaping society
- Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to develop his or her skills and talents
- Dismantling the impediments that prevent individuals and society as a whole from realizing their full potential

We believe these are the prerequisites for promoting social participation and integration in a globalized world. Together with political, business and civil society actors, we develop effective, viable solutions designed to achieve these goals. In working for change, we focus on both individuals and society as a whole, as well as on political and economic systems.

Our core issues

On both the German and international level, we address the issues of social development, education, health, employment, culture, social participation and integration.



In doing so, we identify future challenges early on and develop long-term strategies. In today's globalized world, cross-cultural and interreligious encounters are gaining in importance. The Religion Monitor and other projects within the Cultural Orientations Program are therefore key elements in our ongoing work.

How we work

Together with independent experts, our 300 employees design innovative projects addressing issues of key social importance. In carrying out our projects, we focus on transparency and quality. We thus offer concrete, future-ready solutions for political, business and social contexts. In serving as a catalyst for change, we rely on cross-border competition as a way of identifying the globe's best ideas and approaches.

This commitment is illustrated by just a few of our projects: Demographic Change Campaign, Work/Life Balance, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Early Childhood Education, Initiative for Employment, Alliance for Healthy Schools and Education, Center of Excellence for Communities and Regions, Corporate Social Responsibility, Agenda: Modern Governance and the Neue Stimmen International Singing Competition.

The Fundación Bertelsmann

Dedicated to promoting social change based on values such as freedom, solidarity, competency and humanity, the Fundación Bertelsmann works in favour of strengthening civil society by seeking sustainable social solutions for the future.

Our mission

The Fundación Bertelsmann develops and conducts its own projects, which are designed to contribute to social change through the development of innovative proposals.

zen commitment constitutes an essential foundation to the progress of society, which is why we concentrate all our efforts on the promotion thereof.

Our goals

At the Fundación Bertelsmann, we are committed to the following:

- promoting social change,
- preparing society for the future,
- developing civic responsibility.

We believe that, by identifying latent problems in society, responding with innovative models and contributing to equipping society with the social competencies and structures that allow it to sustainably develop, we will reach these goals—our goals. We are convinced that citi-

Who we are and how we work

The Fundación Bertelsmann was created in 1995 in Barcelona by Reinhard Mohn. During the first ten years of its existence, the Fundación Bertelsmann oriented its activities at the library sector, thereby developing projects to promote a reading culture and improve public libraries. At the end of this period in 2005, the Board of Trustees, under the chair of Liz Mohn, decided to reorient its strategy to promoting new projects under the motto of Civic Responsibility.

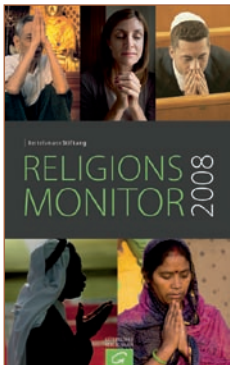


Since then, the Foundation has centred its projects on strengthening civil society in cooperation with representatives of politics, science, economy, the Third Sector and, above all, in cooperation with youth, given that the civic education of this generation is indispensable for the sustainable development of a responsible and participative civil society.

The Foundation's new strategy is based on four projects:

- the promotion of Community Foundations, because being the closest institutions to the citizen they are the most dynamic in their development worldwide.
- the promotion of Youth Participation, because strengthening civil society has to begin with education on civic values at the earliest age
- the dissemination of a New Corporate Culture, because today only a corporate culture, which is based on trust, dialogue and staff participation, can provide for entrepreneurial and social success.
- Dialogue and Action, because dialogue is the ideal means for initiating the necessary reforms to promote an active civil society, the key guarantor of democratic societies.

Publications



Religionsmonitor 2008

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Ed.), Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1st edition 2007,
288 pages, paperback, ISBN 978-3-579-06465-9
EUR 14,95 [D] / EUR 15,40 [A] / SFr 27,50

Written for a general audience, this volume details findings from Religion Monitor surveys carried out in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

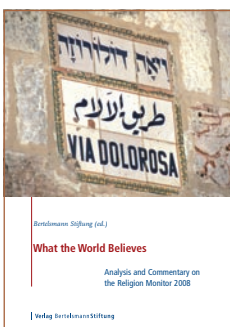
Authors include Bishop Wolfgang Huber, Walter Cardinal Kasper, Paul Zulehner and others.



Was glaubt die Welt?

Analysen und Kommentare zum Religionsmonitor 2008

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Ed.), Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1st edition 2008,
800 pages approx., hardcover, ISBN 978-3-89204-949-4
Publication date: December 15, 2008



What the World Believes:

Analysis and Commentary on the Religion Monitor 2008

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Ed.), Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1st edition 2008,
800 pages approx., hardcover, ISBN 978-3-89204-989-0
Publication date: December 15, 2008

This specialized publication discusses the Religion Monitor's findings from an international perspective. Detailed analysis is provided by experts such as José Casanova, Hans Joas, Volkhard Krech and David Voas.

Data from the Religion Monitor are evaluated on an ongoing basis. Findings for individual countries are available for download at the website www.religionsmonitor.de. In addition, interested parties can participate in the online survey at www.religionsmonitor.com. Visitors to both websites can subscribe to a free online newsletter that provides regular updates detailing current developments.

Contact

Our experts would be glad to answer any questions you might have about the Religion Monitor. We also appreciate suggestions and feedback.

Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh

Dr. Martin Rieger Telephone: +49 5241 81-81599 martin.rieger@bertelsmann.de
Matthias Jäger Telephone: +49 5241 81-81504 matthias.jaeger@bertelsmann.de

Fundación Bertelsmann, Barcelona

Michaela Hertel Telephone: +34 93 268 7444 michaela.hertel@fundacionbertelsmann.org

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Bertelsmann Stiftung
Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
D-33311 Gütersloh
www.religionsmonitor.de

Cultural Orientations Program

Dr. Martin Rieger

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Spain continues to be a country greatly influenced by religion: four out of five Spaniards are religious and one in four is highly religious. Yet the level of religiousness in Spain is not as high as in other Catholic countries such as Italy and Poland. What's more, it has relatively little influence on everyday life there. Those are only some of the insights provided by the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor.

The Religion Monitor analyzes religiousness around the globe in unprecedented depth. Religion specialists, theologians, sociologists and psychologists provide a comparative view of the world's major faiths and personal level of belief based on a representative survey of more than 21,000 people from all global regions and religious traditions.

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