

Spanish Religiosity: an Interpretative Reading of the Religion Monitor Results for Spain

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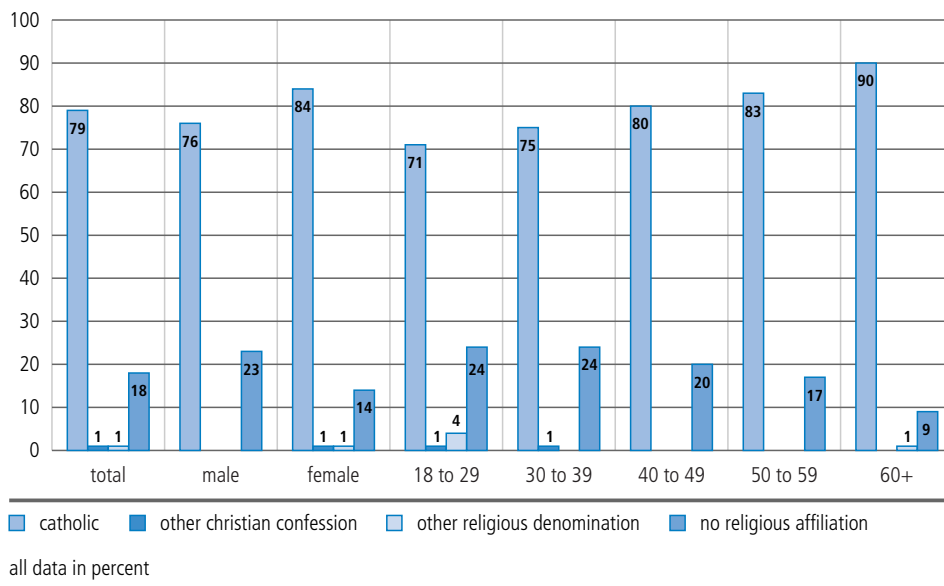
This is a tentative, preliminary interpretative reading of the survey results of the 2007 Religion Monitor in Spain. It will not attempt to cover all the data but only those that bear some comparative significance to Spain.¹ The results alone offer a static yet in-depth picture of the religious situation in Spain at the time of the survey (October 2007). Only longitudinal surveys going back several decades to the 1960s—a time which marks a turning point in the process of secularization in Spain as well as throughout Western Europe—would give us a more accurate view of the dynamic transformation of Spanish religiosity. Nonetheless, the availability of data on five different deciles permits some speculative yet reliable extrapolation on some clear accumulative trends across generations.²

Confessional and denominational affiliation or religious “belonging”

The overwhelming majority of Spaniards (79 percent) define themselves as Catholic, while only 1 percent of the survey’s respondents claim to belong to a different Christian confession, and another 1 percent claims to belong to a non-Christian religious denomination. The number of Spaniards with no religious affiliation, however, already surpasses 18 percent.

These figures appear to reveal two significant facts. The first one is the extremely low level of religious pluralism in Spanish society and the absence of any meaningful religious competition in Spain. The Catholic Church has a nearly absolute monopoly on the Spanish religious market. Second, the only significant denominational dynamic in Spain appears to be the progressive growth of “the unchurched,” that is, those who declare no religious affiliation. In the case of Spain, this means those who explicitly and positively affirm that they no longer “belong” to the Catholic Church. Indeed, one of the most significant developments in recent years has been the many instances in which Spaniards have

Figure 1: Confessional and denominational affiliation

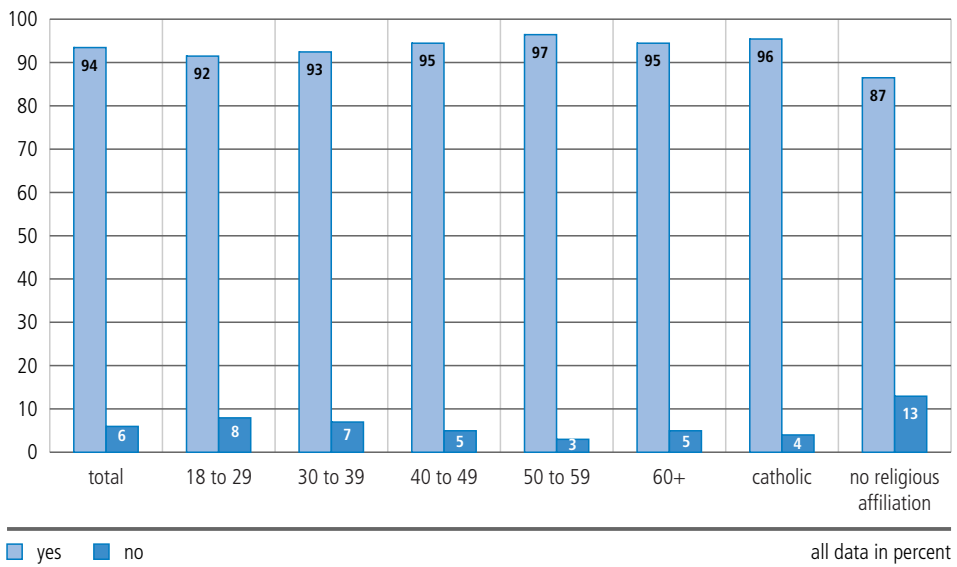


taken legal action in the courts to force the Catholic Church to take their names off its membership, that is, baptismal rolls.

The progressive and consistent decline of affiliation with a Christian confession -meaning in 97 percent of the respondents an affiliation with the Catholic Church - per decile (90 percent of those over 60 years old, 83 percent of those in their 50s, 80 percent of those in their 40s, 75 percent of those in their 30s, and 71 percent of those between 18 and 29 years old), along with the consistently inverse growth of those who declare no religious affiliation (from 9 percent of those at least 60 years old to 24 percent of those in their 20s), would seem to indicate that we are observing a clear longitudinal accumulative growth of those without religious affiliation rather than just a life-cycle indicator. The fact that the number of those who grew up without a religious education is only 6 percent and shows only minimal variation per decile, while those who claim to have received a religious education rises to 94 percent, also with minimal variation per decile, would seem to confirm the dramatic recent growth of those without religious affiliation. Indeed, 87 percent of those with no religious affiliation claim to have received a religious education.

At the same time, the movement in the opposite direction appears to be much weaker. Only 4 percent of self-proclaimed Catholics claim to have received

Figure 2: "Has religion been part of your up-bringing?"



no religious education as children. Curiously, the proportion of those without religious affiliation among the youngest cohort remains exactly the same (24 percent) as the proportion among those in their 30s, which may point to a degree of stabilization in the process of Catholic de-confessionalization. Conversely, there seems to be some new dynamic of change in religious denominational affiliation among the young, as the number of those who belong to other non-Catholic religious denominations has risen to 5 percent (of which 1 percent is Islam, 1 percent is Buddhism, and 3 percent are other religions).

This development may be an indication of some novel dynamic of religious conversion among the young, but it may also reflect the growth in the number of newly arrived immigrants who are likely to belong to other religious denominations. Indeed, given the fact that the number of recently arrived immigrants—over 3 million in the last five years—already constitutes over 7 percent of the Spanish population as well as the fact that large proportions of them are likely to be non-Catholics, one may infer that these new religious minorities may be underrepresented in the relatively small sample of 1001 respondents on which the survey in Spain is based. For example, it is clear that Muslims are underrepresented. The same can be said about newly arrived Romanians, who already constitute one of the largest national groups of immigrants in Spain and are pre-

sumably mostly Orthodox Christians. If one includes the increasing number of Ukrainians and Bulgarians, many of whom are also likely to be Orthodox, then it would seem that Orthodox Christians are also clearly underrepresented in the sample. This issue is only 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 Jews and Muslims were expelled 500 years ago.

Finally, there are noticeable gender differences in religious affiliation. Almost one-fourth of Spanish men (23 percent) declare no religious affiliation, while the number of women without religious affiliation has fallen to 14 percent (see figure 1). At the same time, 84 percent of the women and only 76 percent of the men who responded to the survey claim to belong to a Christian confession. As we will see throughout this report, gender remains a crucial differential factor across most of the dimensions of religiosity measured in the survey.

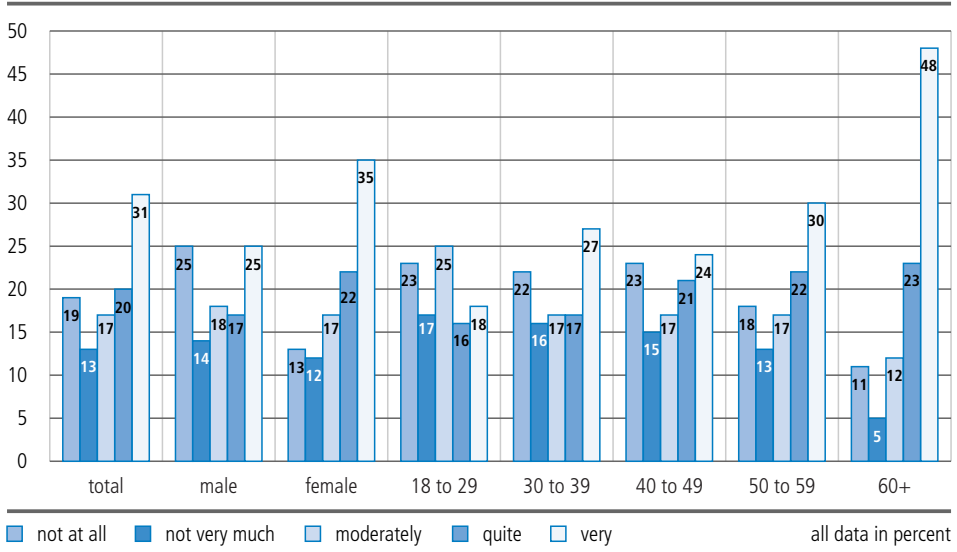
Religious Belief³

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 respondents who believe rather strongly (20 percent) in God. The proportion of respondents who express some moderate belief in God (17 percent) or a weak belief (13 percent) represent 30 percent of the Spanish population. 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 (18 %) since the 1998 survey conducted by the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

As a result, the number of “unbelievers” exactly matches the number of Spaniards with no religious affiliation. Thus, 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. At the same time, however, 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).

While age only appears to be a significant differential factor in religious belief between those who are younger than and those who are older than 50, gender once again appears to be a highly significant differential factor. While only 13 percent of women declare “no belief” in God, the number of unbelievers among Spanish men (25 percent) is almost twice as high. The gender difference is equally

Figure 3: "To what extent do you believe in God or something divine?"



pronounced among those who declare a very strong belief in God, at over one-third (35 percent) of all women and only one-fourth (25 percent) of all men.

Other indicators of religious belief, such as a belief in the afterlife reveal similar gender differences, although at a significantly lower level of belief throughout the Spanish population.

For example, the number of Spaniards who do not believe in an afterlife is 30 percent, and there are significant gender differences (38 % of men as opposed to 22 % of women). By contrast, the number of those who express a very strong belief in life after death falls to 18 percent, again with significant gender differences (15 % of men vs. 22 % of women). Even among confessional Catholics, the proportion of those who strongly believe in an afterlife drops to 38 percent, which is just slightly above the combined 36 percent of Catholics who either believe “not at all” or “not very much” in an afterlife. Even among the highly religious, less than half (48 %) has a strong belief in life after death, while 5 percent has no belief at all, and an additional 5 percent chose not to answer the question or claimed to not know. Thus, belief in the afterlife appears to be receding as a core religious belief.

There are some indications, however, that a certain degree of belief in life after death remains and that it may be revived even in the absence of theistic religious beliefs. For example, 5 percent of those classified as “non-religious” manifest a strong belief in an afterlife. There are also some noticeable age differ-

**Table 1: “To what extent do you believe in an afterlife?—
e.g. immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation”**

	not at all	not very much	moderately	quite	very
total	30	14	19	16	18
male	38	15	17	13	15
female	22	12	21	18	22
18 to 29	23	23	23	13	17
30 to 39	33	19	17	14	14
40 to 49	38	11	16	17	12
50 to 59	34	11	17	15	19
60+	23	6	20	17	28
catholics	22	14	21	18	20
non-religious	69	17	9	2	3
religious	29	18	23	17	9
high religious	5	2	17	22	48

All data in percent

ences that indicate a less consistent and less clear trend than the progressive decline in the belief in God has. While the percentage of individuals who do not believe in life after death remains relatively constant (in the mid-30s range) for the middle-aged deciles (i.e., for those between 30 and 59 years old), the proportion of non-believers among the youngest cohort drops significantly (to 23 %), which is the same percentage one finds among the oldest respondents.

The proportion of those who manifest a strong belief in an afterlife shows a similar trend. It decreases from 28 percent among the oldest cohort (i.e., those 60 years and older) to 12 percent among the middle cohorts (those in their 40s) and rises once again to 17 percent among the youngest cohort. This increase in the belief in life after death among the young in Spain matches similar trends across Europe and may be viewed, as Andrew Greeley has argued, as an indication of there being a strong hope for transcendence even in secularized Europe (Greeley 2003). Nevertheless, a longitudinal study would be needed in order to determine whether this is a life-cycle phenomenon or a significant change in the social imaginary.

Other beliefs traditionally associated with Christianity appear to have become even more marginal. Only 21 percent of respondents affirm some strong belief

in the “efficacy of angels,” while the percentage of people who do not believe in the agency of angels or are skeptical of it rises to 61 percent of the Spanish population and 55 percent among self-proclaimed Catholics.

Table 2: “To what extent do you believe in the efficacy of angels?”

	not at all	not very much	moderately	quite	very
total	46	15	17	13	8
male	51	19	15	10	4
female	41	12	19	15	11
18 to 29	46	26	16	9	3
30 to 39	53	17	14	9	5
40 to 49	52	15	15	11	6
50 to 59	51	8	17	13	9
60+	34	10	22	20	13
catholics	38	17	20	14	9
non-religious	90	7	3	0	–
religious	47	21	19	8	4
high religious	14	9	22	30	20

All data in percent

Even one fourth of the highly religious show little or no belief in angels. The age differentials are consistent throughout all deciles, and the younger the cohort, the lower the belief in angels. Once again, gender differences are highly visible. The number of women who express a strong belief in the influence of angels is almost double the proportion of men (26 % as opposed to 14 %), while the proportion of non-believers goes in the opposite direction (53 % of women as opposed to 70 % of men).

The belief in demonic agency is even less widespread and skepticism about it is generally more consistent across the entire Spanish population and among all age groups. There are also no significant gender differences, and the rate among Catholics is almost at the same level as it is among those with no religious affiliation.

Only 7 percent of respondents declare some strong belief in the efficacy of demons. On the other hand, the percentage of people who do not believe in demonic agency or are strongly skeptical of it stands at 82 percent. Even among the

Table 3: “To what extent do you believe in the efficacy of demons?”

	not at all	not very much	moderately	quite	very
total	69	13	10	4	3
male	70	13	10	4	2
female	67	12	11	5	3
18 to 29	56	21	15	6	2
30 to 39	71	14	9	2	1
40 to 49	74	12	6	4	2
50 to 59	75	5	13	4	4
60+	69	10	11	6	4
catholics	65	14	12	5	3
non-religious	95	3	2	–	0
religious	68	16	11	2	1
high religious	52	13	15	12	6

All data in percent

highly religious, the proportion of non-believers and skeptics climbs to 65 percent, while the proportion of people who strongly believe in it only reaches 18 percent. 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 disenchanting world (Taylor 2007).

Curiously enough, this process of de-magicization is accompanied by a certain re-enchantment of the universe, which is expressed by a growing belief in astrology. The percentage of respondents who express strong belief in astrology reaches 16 percent among the general population but rises to 21 percent among the young. The differences between Catholics and those without religious affiliation are less pronounced than in other creedal categories. The number of strong believers in astrology is 17 percent among Catholics and 11 percent among those with no religious affiliation. Even among the “non-religious,” or those who claim to have absolutely no belief in God, angels or devils, 8 percent of them express a strong belief in astrology. Here again, gender differences are significant. The number of women (21 %) who believe strongly in astrology is almost double that of men who do so (11 %), while the share of women who do not believe in astrology or are very skeptical of it (54 %) is much smaller than that of their male counterparts (73 %).

Table 4: “To what extent do you believe in astrology?”

	not at all	not very much	moderately	quite	very
total	46	17	19	11	5
male	55	18	15	7	4
female	38	16	23	15	6
18 to 29	30	24	25	14	7
30 to 39	51	21	16	8	4
40 to 49	51	17	15	11	5
50 to 59	53	11	16	13	4
60+	47	12	24	12	6
catholics	44	18	21	12	5
no religious affiliation	58	18	13	7	4
non-religious	62	18	12	5	3
religious	44	17	21	12	6
high religious	40	15	22	17	5

All data in percent

Viewed comparatively and in terms of what the Religion Monitor defines as the “ideological dimension” of religiosity (i.e., the combination of a belief in God with one of the afterlife), Spain ranks slightly above Germany, well above France, slightly below Austria and Switzerland, and well below other much more religious Catholic societies such as those of Italy and Poland (Huber and Klein 2008).

Public religious practices

In terms of church attendance, one can divide the Spanish population into three roughly equivalent groups. Approximately one third of Spaniards (34 %) attend religious services regularly, if you group together the respondents who “go to Mass” at least weekly (24 %) with those who do so one to three times a month (10 %). Over one third of Spaniards (38 %) attend religious services irregularly, including 27 percent who go either “a few times a year,” and the 11 percent who go even less frequently than that. Just over a fourth of Spaniards (28 %) claim never to attend Mass.

These figures do not differ significantly from those reported in the 1998 ISSP, where 36 percent of respondents claimed to go to church at least two to three times a month. Thus, it would seem that religious churchgoing may have stabilized in Spain after a dramatic drop in the previous decades. By contrast, the number of those who never go to church has increased significantly, from 20 percent according to the 1998 ISSP, to 28 percent today. However, the European Values Survey (EVS) has already registered similar figures of non-churchgoers: 26 percent, according to the 1991 EVS, and 30 percent according to the 1998 EVS (Greeley 2003).

Table 5: “How often do you take part in religious services?”

	more than once a week	once a week	one to three times a month	a few times a year	less often	never
total	5	19	10	27	11	28
male	4	14	9	26	12	33
female	5	23	10	27	10	24
18 to 29	3	7	5	33	10	42
30 to 39	2	8	9	33	13	34
40 to 49	3	16	13	27	13	27
50 to 59	6	17	11	26	12	28
60+	9	39	10	17	9	15
catholics	5	23	12	31	11	17
no religious affiliation	0	1	2	10	10	77
non-religious	–	–	–	9	12	79
religious	0	9	11	39	16	26
high religious	17	51	15	15	2	1

All data in percent

Looking at the five age cohorts, however, there are significant differences between the oldest, the two middle and the two youngest cohorts. Well over half (58 %) of the older cohort (i.e., those who are either retired or close to retirement) are regular churchgoers, while only 15 percent of them never attend Mass. The attendance rate of the two middle cohorts is significantly lower. Only one third of those in their 50s (34 %) and of those in their 40s (32 %) are regular churchgoers,

while the number of non-practitioners almost doubles to 28 percent and 27 percent respectively. This 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. Only 19 percent of those in their 30s, and 15 percent of the youngest cohort are regular churchgoers, while the number of those who never attend has climbed to 34 percent and 42 percent respectively. Thus, it would seem that this dramatic decline cannot be explained simply in terms of a life-cycle phenomenon. Instead, it seems to point to an across-the-board unchurched of the Spanish population. Even among self-proclaimed Catholics, the number of regular churchgoers only reaches 40 percent, while 17 percent of them never attend Mass. Furthermore, as is to be expected, there are also significant gender differences. While only 27 percent of Spanish men are regular churchgoers, the percentage of women churchgoers increases to 38 percent. By contrast, 33 percent of men and 24 percent of women never attend church.

Furthermore, when asked how seriously they take their church attendance, a clear majority (53 %) of Spaniards responds that going to Mass is not very important for them, while only 28 percent considers it to be of much importance.

Table 6: “How important is it to you to take part in religious services?”

	not at all	not very much	moderately	quite	very
total	40	13	19	15	13
male	44	12	21	14	9
female	35	15	16	16	16
18 to 29	50	22	17	6	3
30 to 39	51	14	19	10	6
40 to 49	43	12	21	15	9
50 to 59	39	8	18	17	16
60+	20	11	18	24	27
catholics	29	14	23	19	15
no religious affiliation	84	10	4	1	1
non-religious	86	11	3	–	–
religious	42	17	27	11	3
high religious	4	6	16	33	41

All data in percent

Here again, the age differences are very consistent, and the younger the cohort, the less relevant churchgoing becomes. One third of self-proclaimed Catholics consider churchgoing to be of little importance, while only one fourth considers it of significant importance. Even one tenth of the highly religious do not appear to take churchgoing very seriously. This decline in the value put on churchgoing clearly signals a significant change in Spanish religiosity. At the same time, however, without looking at other expressions of individual religiosity, it is impossible to interpret this as a mere religious decline or loss (as in the traditional theories of secularization would tend to do) rather than as a modern transformation.

Comparatively speaking and in terms of the measurement of the intensity of public religious practice, Spain ranks well above other Western European societies such as France, Great Britain and Germany, slightly above Austria, and significantly below Italy and, even more so, Poland (Huber and Klein 2008).

Private Religious Practice

Looking at the private religious practice of personal prayer, the overall numbers do not differ dramatically from the numbers for church attendance. The number of individuals who pray regularly is significantly larger than the number of regular churchgoers: 31 percent pray at least daily and an additional 12 percent at least weekly. Thus, the number of those who pray weekly (43 %) is significantly larger than the number of weekly churchgoers (24 %). If the proportion of those who pray at least once a month (5 %) is added to this figure, the number of those who pray regularly is close to half of the Spanish population (48 %). By contrast, the number of those who never pray (32 %) is also larger than the number of those who never go to church (28 %), meaning that there is a significant number of churchgoers who never pray. Moreover, 20 percent of self-proclaimed Catholics also confess to never praying.

Once again, the age differences are significant. While only 13 percent of the oldest cohort never prays, the number among the youngest cohort climbs to 43 percent. On the other hand, the proportion of those who pray daily is basically the inverse, with 60 percent of the oldest cohort doing so, but only 12 percent of the youngest one. Gender differences are also equally pronounced. The proportion of males who never pray (41 %) is almost twice as large as the proportion of women who never pray (21 %). Likewise, analyzed from the opposite angle, 38 percent of women but only 23 percent of men pray daily.

Table 7: “How often do you pray or say personal prayers?”

	several times a day	once a day	more than once a week	once a week	one to three times a month	a few times a year	less often	never
total	10	21	5	7	5	8	10	32
male	7	16	4	6	4	8	12	41
female	13	25	6	8	5	8	8	23
18 to 29	3	9	6	6	4	14	13	43
30 to 39	4	13	8	6	6	11	12	40
40 to 49	10	17	6	6	3	11	10	36
50 to 59	9	23	5	9	7	6	8	33
60+	23	37	2	8	5	2	7	13
catholics	12	24	7	9	6	10	11	20
no religious affiliation	2	2	0	0	2	3	6	85
non-religious	–	1	–	1	0	1	8	90
religious	4	14	6	9	9	15	15	28
high religious	31	49	8	7	0	1	2	2

All data in percent

When asked how important prayer is for them personally, individuals responding to the survey provided answers that were generally consistent with reported practice.

For example, prayer is of little or no importance for 41 percent of respondents, a figure that corresponds exactly with the number of those who said they never or only rarely pray. Prayer is important for only 38 percent of the Spanish population and, as such, it may be the greatest indicator of the difference between the highly religious and the merely religious. On the other hand, prayer is of little or no importance for 43 percent of the religious, while it holds much relevance for only 25 percent of them. By contrast, 86 percent of the highly religious attach much importance to prayer, while only 2 percent consider it to be of little importance. Here again, there are significant age differences. Prayer is important for 61 percent of the oldest cohort, but it becomes progressively less important for each of the younger cohorts and only 19 percent of the youngest cohort considers prayer important. The proportion of those for whom prayer is of little or no importance is almost exactly the inverse. Only 19 percent of the

Table 8: “How important is personal prayer for you?”

	not at all	not very much	moderately	quite	very
total	28	13	21	19	19
male	34	16	18	18	13
female	23	10	23	20	24
18 to 29	33	22	26	11	8
30 to 39	37	16	19	16	11
40 to 49	29	14	23	18	15
50 to 59	31	9	17	20	22
60+	15	4	19	27	34
catholics	17	14	24	23	21
no religious affiliation	76	8	7	2	5
non-religious	81	13	4	2	–
religious	24	18	31	15	10
high religious	–	2	12	37	49

All data in percent

oldest cohort considers prayer unimportant, while it is unimportant for 55 percent of the youngest cohort. This decline in church religiosity is clearly not being compensated for by a vibrant individualized and private religiosity. Comparatively speaking, however, when it comes to the degree of intensity of private religious practice, Spain ranks slightly above Austria and slightly below Switzerland (Huber and Klein 2008).

If the practice of meditation is also taken into account as a sign of private individual religiosity, the outlook is a bit more optimistic. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that—at least in the case of Spain—the Religion Monitor is committing a fundamental categorical error. In Spanish, the verb “meditar” has the general connotation of reflexive, self-absorbed thinking, but it does not necessarily have a religious or even spiritual connotation. With this in mind, the extraordinarily high figures for the practice of meditation in Spain only make sense if one takes this semantic connotation into account. In fact, as a result of this linguistic overlap, a surprising majority (51 %) of respondents claims to practice meditation daily, while only 14 percent of Spaniards claim never to practice it (for detailed data see Summary Statistics on CD-Rom: table 6, pg. 25). At the same time, as has already been pointed out, the proportion of those claiming

to pray on a daily basis was significantly lower (31 %), while the proportion of those who claim never to pray was significantly higher (32 %). Even more surprisingly, the non-religious claim to meditate almost as frequently (48 %) as self-proclaimed Catholics (51 %), while only 25 percent of the non-religious claim that they never meditate.

No less surprising is the fact that there are practically no age differences. A surprisingly high number of older Spaniards, 63 percent, claims to meditate daily, but the proportion only decreases slightly for the two next cohorts, 56 percent and 50 percent respectively. Even among the two youngest cohorts, the proportion of those who claim to meditate daily is surprisingly high, 43 and 42 percent respectively. For the youngest cohort this means more than thrice the proportion of those who pray daily. The age differences at the lower end of those who claim never to meditate are also insignificant.

Even more suspicious is the fact that, when it comes to meditation, there appear to be no gender differences. Exactly the same proportion of men and women (14 %) claim never to meditate, and exactly the same proportion of men and women (51 %) claim to meditate daily. This is clearly an anomaly that should not be misconstrued as an indicator of private religiosity. On a comparative international scale, if one were to take this meditation indicator seriously, one would have to rank Spain (together with Brazil, another obvious anomaly) at the very high end of the scale along with India and Indonesia, and have it towering well above all other European countries, with double and triple their rates of meditation (Huber and Klein 2008).

Individual religious experience

The levels of individual religious experience in Spain would have to be much higher if meditation were indeed to be used as an indicator of individual religious experience. However, given the low levels of self-reported religious experience, there is clearly no correlation. 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 (see Summary Statistics: table 10, pg. 30). Even among the highly religious, only 40 percent claim to have such communicative experiences with God frequently, while 26 percent of them claim they have never or only rarely had such a personal communicative experience. Among self-proclaimed Catholics, only 16 per-

cent claim to have had the experience that God wants to communicate with them, while 61 percent claim that such experiences are either nonexistent or very rare. Once again, there are the predictable gender differences between men and women responding to the survey, but the age differences are less pronounced, particularly at the lower end of those who claim to have had such a communicative experience with some frequency. Only 28 percent of the oldest cohort claims to have had such a communicative experience with some frequency, while this proportion is halved for the next cohort to 14 percent and then drops to 10 percent for the next cohort, then 9 percent for those in their 30s, and falls to only 5 percent for the youngest cohort. Gender differences are likewise pronounced. Twice the number of women (19 %) claim to have such an experience frequently, while only 9 percent of male respondents make the same claim. At the same time, however, the number of women who have never or only rarely had such an experience is very high (61 %) and not that different from the rate for men (72 %).

The personal experience of divine intervention is slightly higher across the board. Twenty percent of respondents claim to have had such a personal experience with relative frequency, while the number of those who claim never to have had such an experience drops from 44 percent to 34 percent (see Summary Statistics: table 10, pg. 31). Likewise, the age differences are very pronounced between the oldest cohort and those in their 50s, but they then remain relatively constant for the other cohorts. Gender differences are also more pronounced for those who claim to have the experience of divine intervention frequently (27 % of women as opposed to 14 % of men). However, the difference is less pronounced at the higher end of those who claim never or only rarely to have such an experience (61 % of women as opposed to 72 % of men). Comparatively speaking, when it comes to having a personal communicative experience with God or something divine, Spaniards rank surprisingly low, just above Russia and slightly lower than Germany and Austria (Huber and Klein 2008).

The proportion of Spaniards who report personal experiences of being “at one with all” is significantly higher across the board. Once again, however, I suspect that this is not a reliable measure of a religious experience. The word “*todo*” in Spanish simply means “everything,” but it has no religious, spiritual, mystical or pantheistic connotations. In my view, using this word merely indicates an attitude of contentment with life and society and the absence of alienation. Only 19 percent of Spaniards claim to have been deprived of such an experience of being “at one with all,” while the experience of divine communication was unknown to 44 percent of the Spanish population (see Summary Statistics: table

10, pg. 32). Even more suspicious is the fact that there are no gender differences: The same proportion of men and women (9 %) claim to have such an experience of oneness very frequently. Moreover, the only minimal age differences would seem to confirm that we are not dealing with a religious experience here. Those who claim to have had the experience of “being at one with all” very frequently are: 13 percent of the oldest cohort, 12 percent of the next cohort, 8 percent of the two next cohorts, and 5 percent of the youngest cohort. Inversely, the number of those who claim never to have had such an experience remains suspiciously low and relatively constant: 11 percent of the oldest cohort, 13 percent of those in their 50s, 19 percent of those in their 40s, and only 24 percent of the youngest cohort.

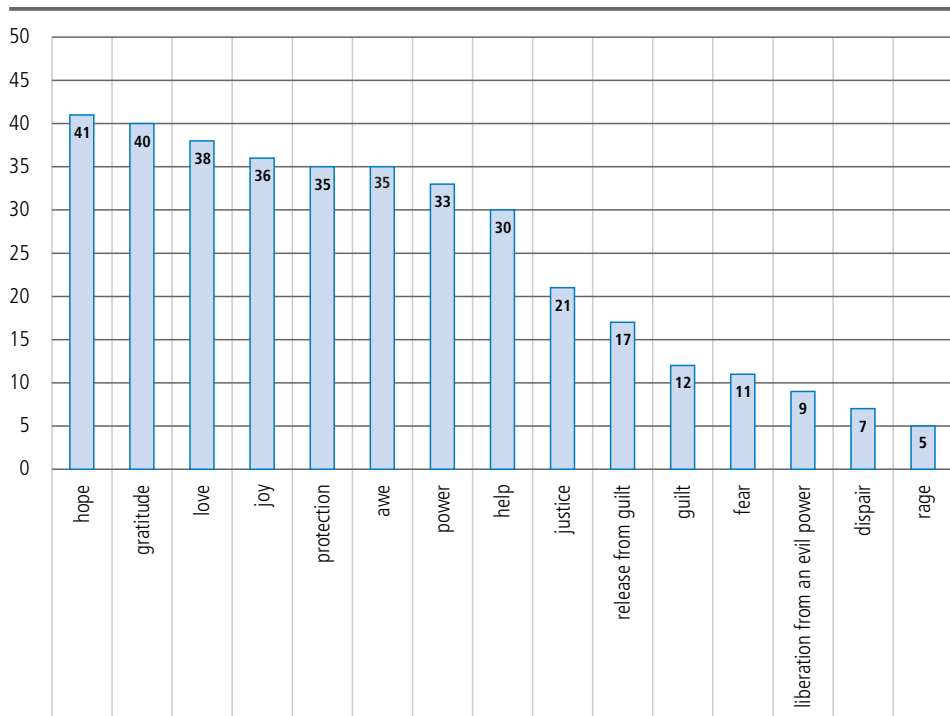
Comparatively speaking, when it comes to the intensity of the experience of mystical or pantheistic oneness, Spain would be ranked along with Italy, Poland and the United States. The implausibility of this being the case calls into question the reliability of this category as a measurement of personal religious experience. For the same reason, I find the attempt to distinguish between theistic and pantheistic models of spirituality problematic when it comes to analyzing Spain (Huber and Klein 2008).

Images and conceptions of God

The attempt to get at the Spanish social imaginary and to see the implicit and explicit ideas and images that Spaniards associate experientially with God is revealing. When asked which kinds of emotions they feel with respect to God and how frequently they have such emotions, the responses are largely positive. The most frequently experienced emotions in relation to God are love, hope, gratitude and joy.

A similar proportion of Spaniards claim to experience such sentiments with respect to God with relative frequency, while an almost equal number of Spaniards (37 % to 41 %) claim to experience such sentiments never or only rarely (for the following details see Summary Statistics: table 15, pages 64–78). At a slightly lower level, approximately 35 percent of Spaniards claim to associate God in their lives with the sentiments of awe, protection, strength and help. Inversely, roughly 45 percent of Spaniards claim to have absolutely or relatively no such sentiments in relation to God. Again, as one would expect, the gender differences are substantial. Women tend to have experiential associations with God characterized by these positive sentiments much more frequently than

Figure 4: "How often do you experience the following in relation to God or something divine?" (often/very often)*



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

all data in percent

men. The age differential also tends to be consistent in that the older the cohort, the greater and more frequent the association. These sentiments seem to be the predominant ones of the Catholic divine imaginary.

Another sentiment that a significant proportion (21 %) of Spaniards frequently associate with God is justice. It is significant that there are practically no gender differences on this point, and the age differences are also less significant. Another common sentiment (17 %) without gender differences is the frequent association of God with a release from guilt. Even at this lower level and with minimal gender or age differences, one finds the frequent association of God with guilt (12 %), fear (11 %), liberation from an evil power (9 %), despair (7 %) and rage (5 %), all of which are sentiments more typically associated with Reformed Christianity than with Catholicism.

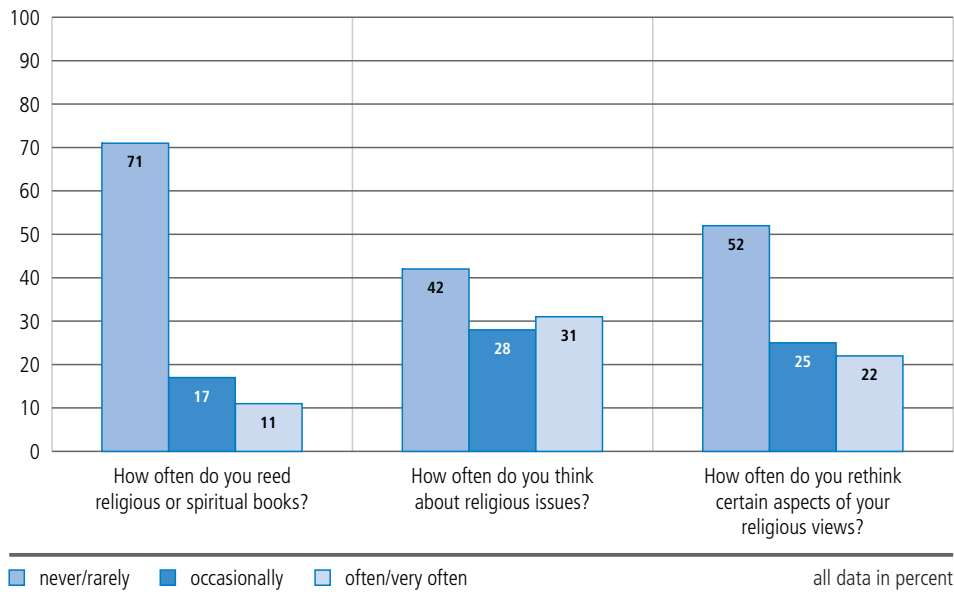
Religious knowledge, religious reflexivity, religious quest

I would be inclined to group together the indicators of the intellectual dimension of religiosity with those pointing to a critical reflexive attitude toward religion as well as with those indicating some evidence of a personal religious quest (for detailed data on these indicators see Summary Statistics: table 10, pgs. 29, 35, and 36). First of all, if the frequency with which people read religious or spiritual books are taken to be an indicator of the intellectual and purely cognitive dimension of religiosity, then these scores are extremely low. The overwhelming majority (71 %) of the Spanish population either never (46 %) or very rarely (25 %) reads religious or spiritual books. Only 11 percent of the respondents claimed to read such books with some frequency, so it can be surmised that the proportion of Spaniards who read the Bible with some frequency is also extremely low. Even among the highly religious, the proportion of those who read religious literature frequently (31 %) is smaller than the proportion of those who practically read no books of this kind (39 %). It is significant that the gender differences for this indicator are less marked than for other indicators of religiosity as well as the fact that the age differences are minimal. At the same time, however, one could argue that these low levels are not only an indicator of the lack of cognitive religious interest but could also be a reflection of the Spanish population's overall low level of literacy.

The much higher (yet still relatively low) levels of response to the question about how often individuals think about religious issues may be a better indicator of the overall intellectual and cognitive interest in religion in Spain. The proportion of those who practically never think about religion (42 %) is much larger than the proportion of those who think about it frequently (31 %). The gender differences here are significant yet less pronounced than they were for other indicators of religiosity. While only 28 percent of Spanish men think frequently about religious themes, the proportion of women who reflect on religion is not significantly higher (33 %). Likewise, there are the predictable age differences in that the younger the respondent, the less frequently he or she thinks about religion, although the difference between the two youngest cohorts is minimal.

There is also not much evidence for a critical, reflexive attitude toward one's religious beliefs or positions. In fact, only 22 percent of Spaniards are prepared to rethink certain aspects of their religious views. When it comes to this indicator, there are some gender differences (19 % for men as opposed to 25 % for women), but these are not very significant. Most significantly, if the oldest cohort

Figure 5: Religious knowledge and religious reflexivity



is disregarded, there are practically no age differences. The two youngest cohorts are only slightly below the Spanish average of 22 percent (17 % and 16 % respectively) and the next two cohorts (for those 40 to 59 years old) share the near same proportion. Given that gender and age differences appear to be so significant on every relevant indicator of religiosity, I would venture to say that whenever one finds a response with minimal age or gender variation, one can rightfully suspect that we are dealing not with an indicator of a particular aspect of Spanish religiosity per se but, rather, with a general characteristic of the Spanish social character or culture.

There is certainly little evidence that Spaniards are religious seekers (see Summary Statistics: table 13, pgs. 39 and 48). If anything, they are generally rather content with their religious attitudes. Only 16 percent of Spaniards have a strong interest in learning more about religious issues. When it comes to this indicator, the gender differences are surprisingly small (14 % of men as opposed to 18 % of women). The age differences are likewise relatively small, with the two youngest cohorts being below the average (12 % and 9 % respectively) and even the oldest cohort is only slightly over the average (21 %). There are no remarkable differences (or, at least, not ones as pronounced as might expect) between self-proclaimed Catholics and those respondents claiming no confession. Only 17 per-

cent of Catholics—as opposed to 11 percent of those without a confession—have a strong interest in religious issues.

When asked specifically to what extent they are searching for something in their religious beliefs, a clear majority (51 %) responded “not very much” or “not at all.” Those who search with some frequency (15 %) or very frequently (8 %) together only add up to 23 percent of the population. Noticeably, this is one of the few entries in which the “don’t know/no answer” response is significantly high (5 %). Moreover, it is also rather high, for all groups: for men and women, for all age cohorts, for self-proclaimed Catholics and for those claiming no confession.

Religious tolerance and attitude toward religious pluralism

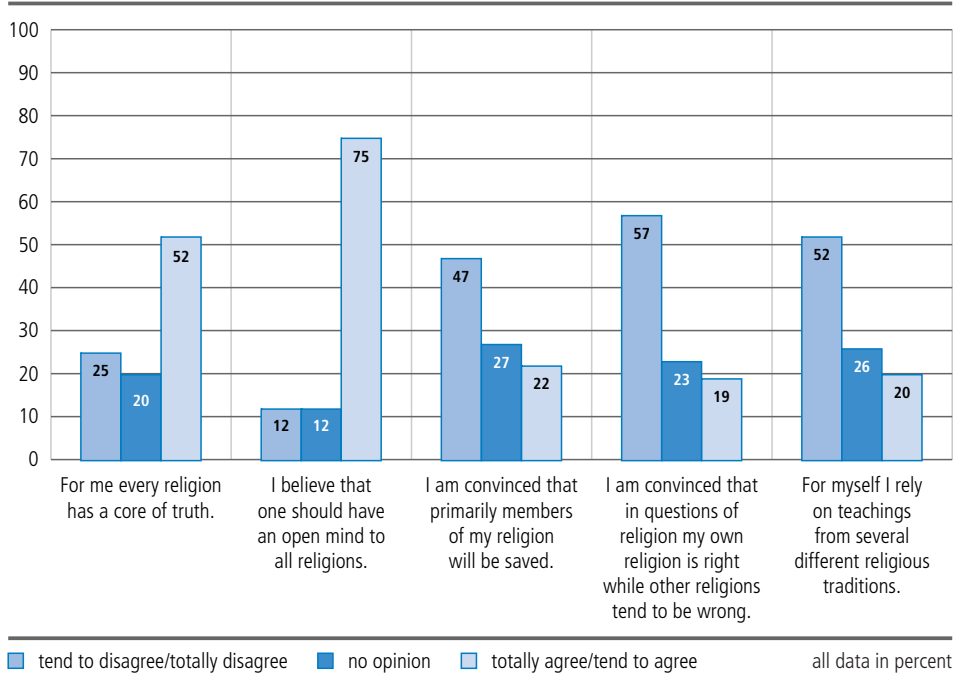
Given the relatively low score on the intellectual, critical and reflexive dimensions of religiosity, it seems rather surprising that there should be high scores on the indicators of religious tolerance and the rather positive attitudes toward religious pluralism and toward other religions. One can only suspect that the responses measure not so much a critically well-thought-out engagement with those issues, but, rather, a relative indifference to those issues, as if they were merely matters of taste. In fact, a majority of Spaniards (52 %) agrees strongly with the sentiment that each and every religion has a core of truth, while only 25 percent disagrees with this sentiment. Women appear to be more open to this proposition than men do (57 % to 47 %, respectively). At the same time, though, there are practically no differences between the five age cohorts. Interestingly enough, self-proclaimed Catholics appear to be much more open to this than those who claim no confession (59 % to 22 %, respectively). Of this last group, 61 percent strongly disagree with the proposition that each religion has some core of truth. In analyzing the responses associated with this indicator it quickly becomes very clear that what we are dealing with here is not so much a measurement of attitudes toward religious pluralism as a measurement of the acceptance of the validity of the truth claims of religion in general.

The next question, which regards whether one should have an open mind to all religions, can be viewed as a much more authentic measure of tolerance. An even larger majority (75 %) of Spaniards agree with this sentiment, while only 12 percent disagree with it. There are slight gender differences, with women being more open-minded than men (77 % and 72 %, respectively). There are practically no age differences. Once again, self-proclaimed Catholics agree with

the proposition to a larger extent than those claiming to be non-religious (77 % and 63 %, respectively). At the same time, however, the disparity between those who disagree with and those who agree with the proposition is larger and therefore more revealing. In fact, only 9 percent of Catholics disagree strongly with the proposition that one should be open to all religions, while the number is more than double (21 %) among those claiming no religion. 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 toward “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 toleration 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 (Huber and Klein 2008). Surprisingly, the differen-

Figure 6: “To what extent do you agree with the following statements?”



ces in attitudes toward religious pluralism appear to be minimal between highly religious countries, such as Italy and Poland, and highly secular countries, such as France and Great Britain. The actual level of religious pluralism within the country also appears not to matter much. Most surprisingly, the United States, which is arguably the most religiously pluralistic country in the world, scores rather low when it comes to attitudes about religious pluralism and ranks at the bottom of the group next to such radically different countries as Israel, Morocco and Russia. That being the case, it is easy to call into question the meaning and significance of these comparative international results.

In my view, the more significant fact is that the old Catholic doctrine of *extra Ecclesia nulla salus* (“Outside the Church, there is no salvation”) appears to enjoy a relatively low level of support in Spain. Only 10 percent of Spaniards agree completely with the proposition that “primarily members of (their) own religion will be saved,” while an additional 12 percent tend to agree with the proposition to some extent. By contrast, the proportion of Spaniards who disagree completely with the proposition (33 %) and those who tend to disagree (14 %) is much larger. More men tend to agree with the traditional Catholic doctrine than women do (25 % as opposed to 20 %) while the proportion of those who disagree with it is identical for both genders (47 %). There are also significant differences between the three youngest cohorts, who tend to disagree most (between 52 % and 60 %) with the proposition, and the two oldest cohorts who tend to agree with the proposition most (24 % and 38 %, respectively). Likewise, there are naturally also pronounced confessional differences, with Catholics tending to agree more (22 % as opposed to 5 %) and disagree less (46 % as opposed to 72 %) with the traditional Catholic proposition than those without a religious confession do. At the same time, though, even among the highly religious, the proportion of those who agree with the traditional Catholic doctrine is only slightly higher (38 %) than the proportion of those who disagree with it (33 %). These figures most likely reveal both a decreasing degree of acceptance of the exclusivist claims of the Catholic Church and a decreasing relevance of a belief in heaven.

The proportion of those who agree with the proposition that “in questions of religion, (their) own religion is right while other religions tend to be wrong” is even lower (19 %), while the proportion of those who disagree with it is significantly higher (57 %). Even among the highly religious, only 31 percent agree with the exclusive validity claims of one’s own religion, while 42 percent disagree with it. Not surprisingly, Spaniards also reveal a relatively low level of missionary zeal and readiness to sacrifice themselves for their religion (for detailed data on these indicators see Summary Statistics: table 16, pgs. 82–84, 86, 87, 89–90).

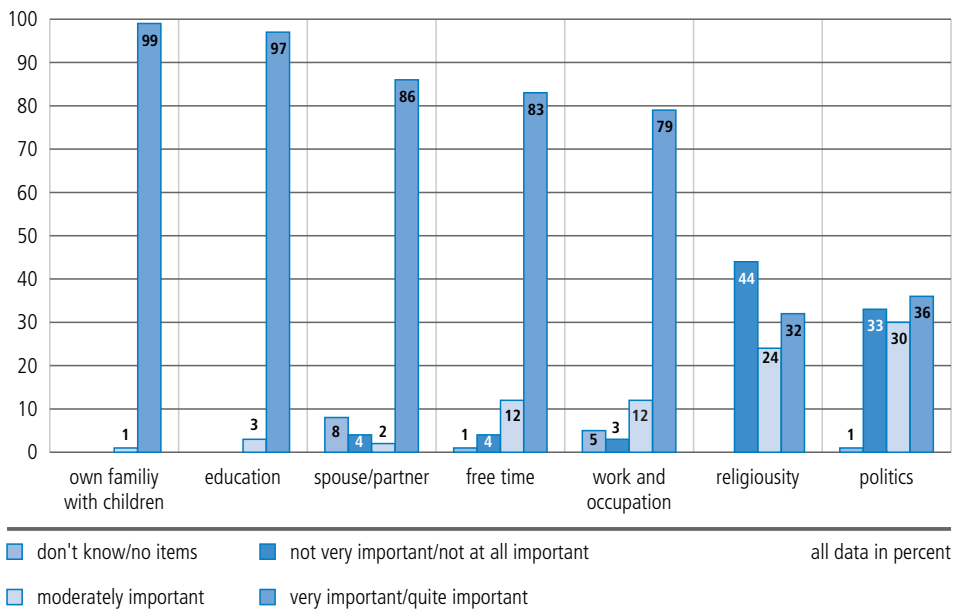
The question as to what extent people “rely on teachings from several different religious traditions” offers a better indicator of both the extent to which people may be exposed to other religions and the extent to which they may be receptive to them. Only 20 percent of Spaniards claim to rely on teachings from different religious traditions, while a majority (52 %) claims not to do so. Here again women, the older age cohorts and the highly religious tend to be more open to different religious traditions than men, the youngest age cohorts, and the non-religious.

Relative relevance of religion

There are two types of questions in the Religion Monitor that can 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 and children, 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. Family and children are “very important” for 93 percent of Spaniards, “quite important” for 6 percent and of moderate importance for the remaining 1 percent. The proportion of those for whom family and children are “not very important” or “not at all important” is not even measurable in the sample. It is a perfect zero.

Following family and children in (still relatively high yet decreasing) importance are: education (97 %), spouse/partner (86 %), free time (83 %), and work and occupation (79 %). By contrast, the relative personal importance of religiosity pales in comparison. Instead, it is “very important” for only 17 percent of respondents, and “relatively important” for an additional 15 percent. By contrast, religiosity is “not at all important” to 23 percent of the respondents and “not very important” to an additional 21 percent. Thus, the proportion of those for whom religion is of little or no importance (44 %) is much larger than the proportion of those for whom it is very or quite important (32 %). Moreover, there are pronounced gender differences and even more pronounced age differences, particularly at the extremes. The younger the cohort, the lesser the personal importance of religiosity. Only 15 percent of the youngest cohort claims that religiosity is important, while a majority (56 %) of the oldest cohort finds it to be so (for detailed data on the relative importance of certain areas of life see Summary Statistics: table 1, pgs. 11–17).

Figure 7: “How important are the following areas of life for you personally?”



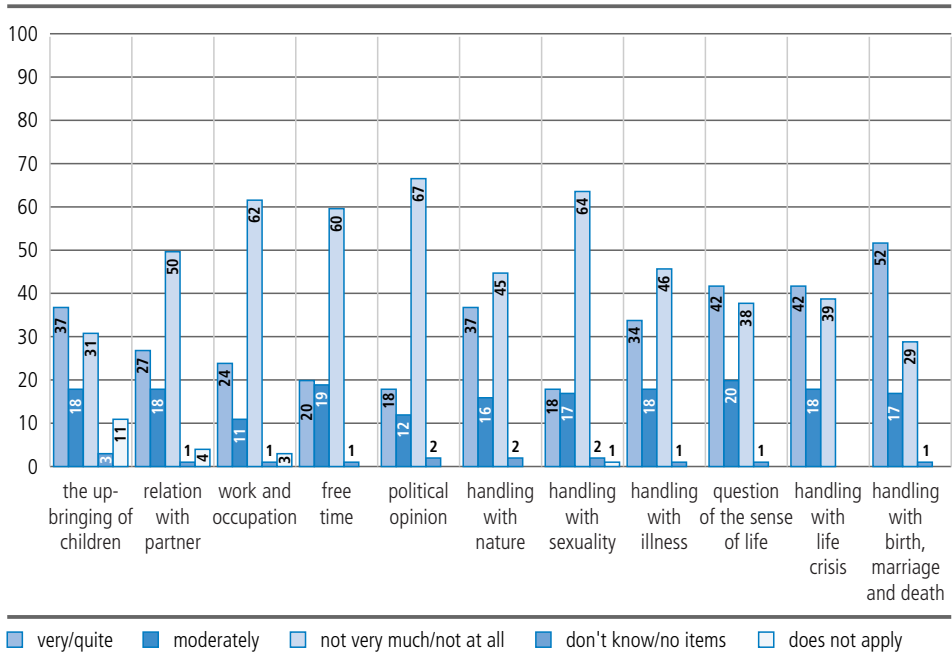
At the same time, however, politics are not more personally relevant for Spaniards than religiosity is. In fact, politics are very important for only 14 percent of respondents and quite important for an additional 22 percent. The proportion of Spaniards who attribute personal importance to politics is therefore only slightly higher (36 %) than the proportion of those who attribute a similar positive importance to religiosity (32 %). Moreover, when it comes to the relevance of politics, there are practically no gender differences and only minimal age differences. Politics are less relevant to the two youngest cohorts and the oldest one. Interestingly enough, when it comes to the relevance of politics in personal life, there is practically no difference between religious and non-religious individuals. In fact, politics are of little importance to 36 percent of the non-religious and to 33 percent of the highly religious, while they are “very important” to 41 percent of the non-religious and to 42 percent of the highly religious.

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 %) of Spaniards claim that their religious be-

liefs have practically no influence on their political opinions, while less than one fifth (18%) claim that they have significant influence. In this case, there are practically no gender and only minimal age differences (for detailed data see Summary Statistics: table 14, pgs. 53–63). Even among the highly religious, the proportion of those who claim that religion is important for their political opinions is basically the same (40%) as the proportion of those for whom their religious beliefs have no influence on their political opinions. Thus, Spaniards clearly tend to maintain a rather clear separation between religion and politics.

The differentiations between religion and both work and free time appear to be equally rigid. Indeed, the proportion of Spaniards who claim that religion has no influence upon their work or occupation is 62 percent, and only 24 percent claim it has some influence. The proportions that claim that their religious beliefs have some influence on their free time are almost identical (60% and 20%, respectively). Most striking, however, and especially considering the emphasis Catholic doctrine puts on sexual morality, is the clear separation Spaniards make

Figure 8: “To what extent do your religious beliefs affect the following areas of your life?”*



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

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. Instead, the majority (51 %) 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. Thus, it would appear that Spanish sexual mores have clearly been secularized and seem to have been completely differentiated from religious morality. It is also 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. In fact, even 26 percent of the highly religious claim that their religious beliefs have no influence upon their attitudes toward sexuality, and the proportion of those who claim that it wields significant influence is only 41 percent. This is much lower than the proportion of those who claim that their religion influences their work or profession (58 %) or their free time (54 %).

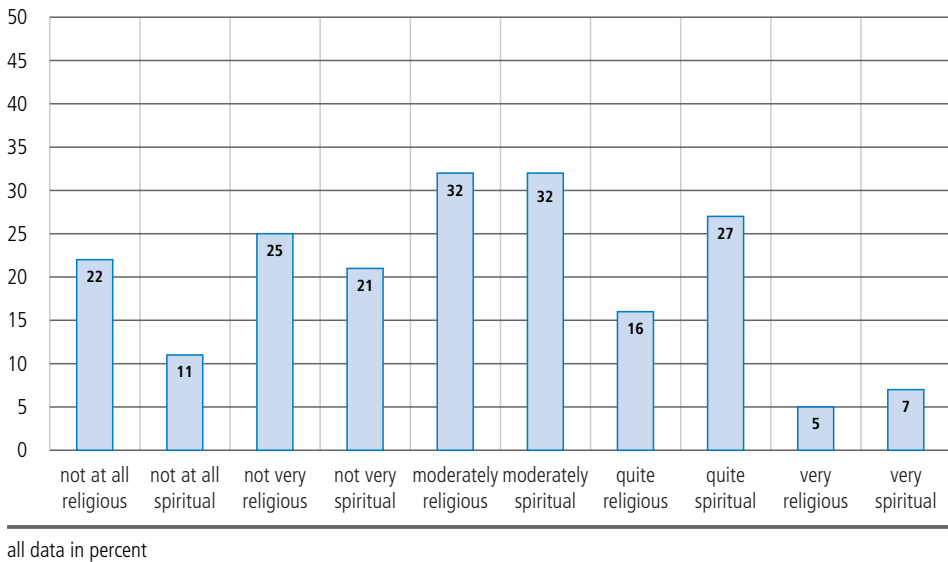
Similarly, 50 percent of Spaniards claim that their religious beliefs have no influence upon their relationship with their partner(s). The influence of religion appears to be only slightly higher in the attitude toward nature and in coping with illness. The proportion of Spaniards who attribute some influence to religion in their relationship with nature is smaller (37 %) than the proportion of those attributing either no or only little influence to religion (45 %). Surprisingly, the proportion is even smaller when it comes to coping with disease (34 % and 46 %, respectively). 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. The proportion of those for whom religion is important in raising children (37 %) is larger than the proportion of those for whom it is unimportant (31 %). Similar proportions apply when it comes to handling life crises and when it comes to questions concerning the meaning of life, with 42 percent believing that religion is important and 38 percent and 39 percent, respectively, believing that religion is unimportant in these areas. Religion becomes very important for a majority (52 %) of Spaniards only when it comes to key events in one's family such as births, marriages and deaths. Indeed, only 29 percent of the respondents found religion to be unimportant in when it comes to important passages in life. There are, however, significant gender and pronounced age differences, particularly between the oldest and the youngest cohorts. The proportion of young Spaniards for whom religion is of little importance even in life passages is larger (43 %) than the proportion of those for

whom it is important (40%). Among the oldest cohort, religion is unimportant for only 13 percent, while it is important for 71 percent.

Individual self-image of religiosity and spirituality

According to the survey, it appears that Spaniards tend to underestimate the importance of their own religiosity. When asked to what extent they would describe themselves as religious almost half of the population (47%) defined themselves as either “not at all religious” (22%) or “not very religious” (25%). By contrast, only 5 percent of Spaniards describe themselves as “very religious,” while an additional 16 percent define themselves as “quite religious.” Thus, the proportion of Spaniards who define themselves as quite religious (21%) is much smaller than the proportion of those who express a strong belief in God (51%), significantly smaller than those who attend religious services at least monthly (34%), and much smaller than those who claim to pray at least weekly (43%). The discrepancy between the higher self-reported rates of religious belief and practice and the lower rates of religious self-image could be an indication that Spaniards have a very high image of what a religious person is and believe that they do not measure up to that image. However, such an interpretation would only be plausible if religiosity had a positive image to which Spaniards aspired—but fail—to live up to.

I am inclined to interpret the discrepancy between self-reported religiosity and religious self-image as an indication that Spaniards would prefer to think of themselves as less religious than they actually are. Spaniards would apparently prefer not to present themselves as being religious, since being religious is not considered to be a positive personal trait in a predominantly secular culture. This discrepancy is consistent across gender and all age cohorts, although it is much more pronounced among men than it is among women, and it is particularly pronounced among the youngest cohort, a fact which could be understood as providing confirmation of social pressure to conform to secular norms. Indeed, only 6 percent of young Spaniards between 18 and 29 years of age describe themselves as religious. By contrast, 34 percent of the same group reported believing in God, 24 percent claimed to pray at least weekly, and 15 percent reported at least monthly church attendance. Thus, the actual practice is significantly higher than the self-image or, at least, the public self-recognition. If my reading is correct, this could be viewed as evidence that secular assumptions have turned the secularization thesis into a self-fulfilling prophecy (Casanova

Figure 9: "Religiosity and spirituality (self description)"

2006). 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.

On the other hand, Spaniards seem less reluctant to define themselves as “spiritual.” Indeed across gender and all age groups, their spiritual self-image is consistently much closer to their self-reported religious practice than to their religious self-image. In fact, the proportion of Spaniards who describe themselves as either “not at all spiritual” (11 %) or “not very spiritual” (21 %) is smaller than the proportion of those who claim practically no church attendance (39 %) and those who claim to pray practically not at all (42 %). Thus, it would seem that to be spiritual but not religious carries a positive self-image.

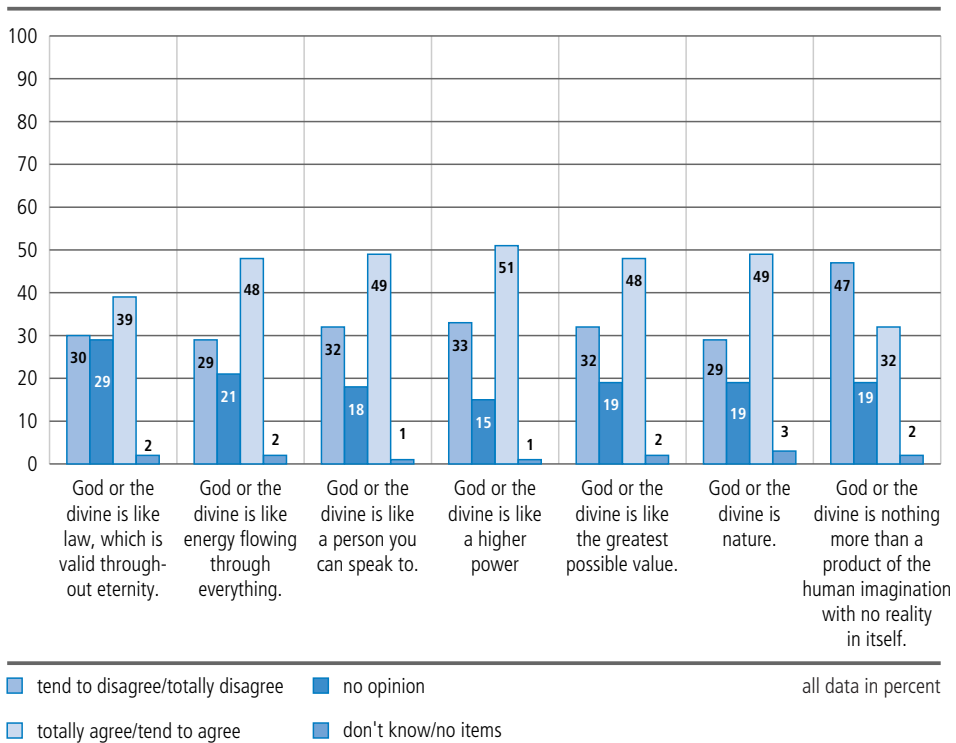
Conclusion

In summary, one may say that the rates of belonging to a religious community (79 %) are much higher than the rates of a firm belief in God (51 %) and even much higher than the rates of regular church attendance (34 %). All three rates are significantly lower among men than they are among women, and they tend

to decrease consistently with younger and younger age groups. On the other hand, there are some indications that the drastic process of secularization of the last decades may have slowed down, if not stopped altogether. Moreover, there are no signs that new forms of individual religiosity have emerged to compensate for the decrease in traditional church religiosity, nor is there much indication of religious interest, reflexivity or concern.

Spaniards tend to attribute relatively little importance to religion in their private, individual lives and even less importance to it in public life, preferring instead to maintain a rigid distinction between the religious and the secular spheres of politics, work and leisure. The more surprising result of the Religion Monitor survey was the extent to which Spaniards maintain a similarly distinct separation between religion and sexuality, which appears to have become largely secularized and differentiated from religion. Rather, religion only attains some

Figure 10: "To what extent do you agree with the following conceptions about God or the divine?"*

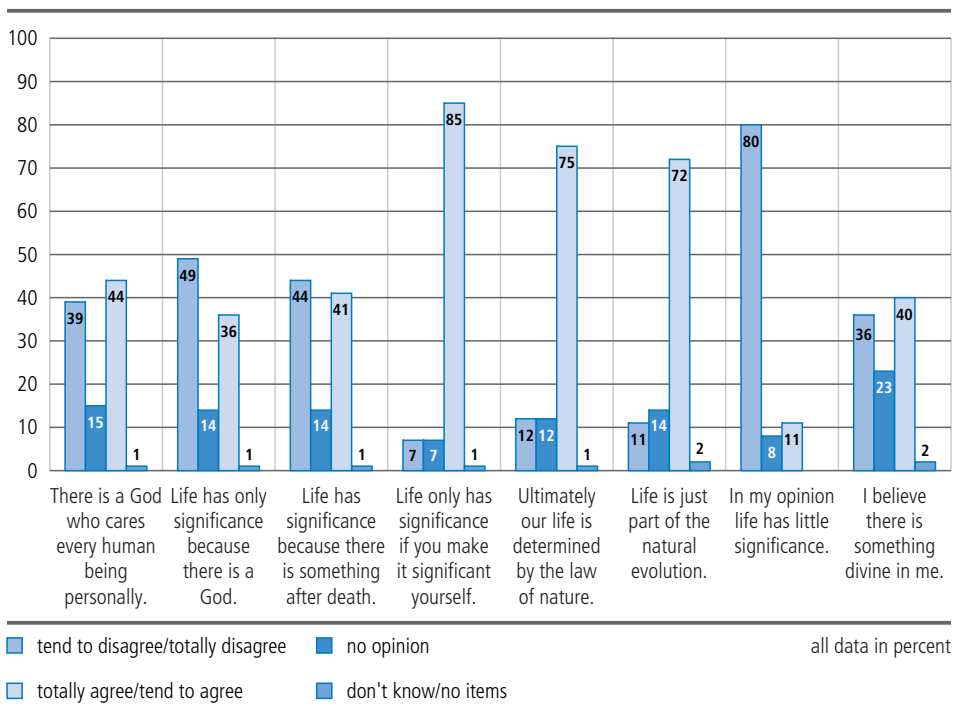


* Selection: Respondents who do not describe themselves as "not at all religious"/"not at all spiritual."

degree of importance when it comes to raising children and dealing with key events in family life.

On the other hand, the Spanish religious worldview is still predominantly a theistic one with surprisingly positive images of God. The most widespread images of God are those of “a higher power” (51 %), “an energy flowing through everything” (48 %), “the greatest possible value” (48 %) or as “nature” (49 %). At the same time, however, these more impersonal—and even pantheistic—images of God are held in conjunction with more traditionally Christian ideas of God as being like “a person you can speak to” (49 %) or as somebody “who cares about each human being personally” (44 %) and even in conjunction with more typically deistic convictions, according to which God is “like a law that is valid throughout eternity” (39 %). The proportion of those who agree with the proposition that God is “nothing more than a product of the human imagination with no reality in itself” is smaller (32 %), while the proportion of those who disagree (47 %) with that proposition is much larger. Interestingly enough, there are practically no gender and only minimal age differences, and even more surprisingly, the

Figure 11: Statements about a higher reality
 “How strongly do you agree with the following statements?”



proportion of those who do not have a religious confession who disagree with the proposition that God is simply a human projection is significantly large (29 %) and similar to the proportion of self-proclaimed Catholics who actually agree with the proposition (27 %; for more details see Summary Statistics: table 18, pgs. 100–106).

The responses to other general survey questions would seem to confirm that the Spanish imaginary maintains a tension between a more traditional conception of religion anchored in Christian transcendence and a more secular conception grounded in immanent, exclusive humanism. A majority of Spaniards (49 %) disagrees with the proposition that “life only has significance because there is a God,” while 35 percent agrees with the proposition.

The distance between those who disagree (44 %) and those who agree (41 %) with the proposition that “life has significance because there is something after death” is much smaller. In fact, the overwhelming majority (85 %) of respondents—with few gender or age differences (for details see Summary Statistics: table 17, pgs. 92–99)—affirm that “life only has significance if you make it significant yourself,” and only 7 percent of the respondents disagree with such a proposition. Moreover, a large majority (80 %) of Spaniards appear to believe that life is meaningful in any case and only 11 percent of respondents agree with the proposition that “life has little significance.”

Furthermore, such an optimistic attitude toward life is held in conjunction with more typically modern scientific conceptions of the universe. Practically the same proportion of Spaniards agrees with the propositions that “life is only part of natural evolution” (72 %) and that “ultimately, our life is determined by the laws of nature” (75 %). At the same time, the proportion of Spaniards who believe that “there is something divine within me” is larger (40 %) than the proportion of those who do not hold this belief (36 %). Such a faith in human divinization is larger among women (44 %) than it is among men (34 %) and much more widespread among the older (56 %) than among the younger cohorts (23 %). As is to be expected, a belief in personal divinization is particularly high (77 %) among the highly religious. At the same time, however, even 14 percent of those without a religious confession believe in human divinization.

Endnotes

- 1 I would like to offer a caveat about a potential shortcoming of the national survey that simply reflects our deeply ingrained methodological nationalism. The main assumption of the survey is that it is based on a representative sample that is all Spanish and therefore offers a representative image of “Spanish” religiosity. But without samples representing different regions, we cannot be sure that the national results do not even out, average, and therefore obscure significant regional differences between, for example, Andalusia and Catalonia, or Euskadi and Galicia. We know, for example, that an all-German representative sample would only serve to average and hide significant differences in eastern and western German religiosity and thereby serve to distort, rather than reveal, the national religious situation. One may suspect that there are also significant regional differences in Spain that are not simply the function of different rates of modernization along rural/urban and traditional/modern indices, but rather, reflect different cultures and possibly different social imaginaries.
- 2 I will point out wherever the results of the 2007 Religion Monitor appear to vary significantly from the results of the 1998 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) in Spain. I will organize my interpretative reading according to general categories that primarily correspond to the core dimensions of religiosity used by the Religion Monitor. At times, though, I will slightly adjust the categories, and on two occasions I will add additional ones and provide the rationale for doing so.
- 3 Belief in the existence of God remains the core element of a religious consciousness within the Christian tradition and therefore I will analyze this dimension of religiosity under the category of “religious belief” rather than under the category of “ideological dimension of religiosity,” which seems unnecessarily broad and abstract.

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